

Oral Examination for Board Certification in Clinical Health Psychology:

Organizing yourself and preparing for the exam



Objectives

- Gain information about the four portions of the clinical health psychology oral examination
- Develop a better understanding of what to expect on examination day
- Identify methods of preparation for the examination
- Learn about virtual adaptations of the examination

Presenters

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Oral Examination

- Typically scheduled 3 times/year
- \$450 fee for oral examination
- Assessment Center Model
 - Candidates meet with a different examiner for each module of the 4-hour oral examination
- **Collegial in nature**

Oral Examination

- 4 modules:
 - Ethical and Legal Issues
 - Professional Issues
 - Practice Sample or Distinguished Senior Candidate Portfolio
 - Standardized Clinical Case Assessment & Integration
- 5 cross-cutting competencies assessed:
 - Science base & application, interpersonal interactions, individual/cultural diversity, ethical & legal foundations, professional identification*

Oral Examination New

Cross Cutting Competencies for Those Applying After 12/18

Foundational Competencies

- Professionalism
- Reflective Practice/Self-Assessment/Self-Care
- Scientific Knowledge and Methods
- Relationships
- Individual and Cultural Diversity
- Ethical Legal Standards and Policy
- Interdisciplinary Systems
- Evidence-Based Practice

Functional Competencies

- Assessment
- Intervention
- Consultation
- Research/Evaluation
- Supervision
- Teaching
- Management/Administration
- Advocacy

What to Expect On Exam Day (in person or virtual)

- Who will be there?
 - You, examinees, examiners, (examiners in training, location staff)
- Spans 5 hours, inclusive of breaks.
- Restroom.
- You will be assigned a (virtual) room, examiners will come to you.
- Information for each task will be provided in each section with clear parameters stated.
- You will NOT be given feedback that day.



Virtual

- Make sure to choose an environment that limits distractions and where you can be alone.
- You will be asked to **show your exam environment**.
- Allowed to bring copies of the materials you submitted for the written section such as your work samples.
 - Standardized case section: allowed to take notes or use a clinical interview outline, but whatever you write on we will request for you to shred after the exam.
- **Provide a phone number**, on which you can be reached the day of the exam.
 - This is a back-up in case there are unforeseen connectivity issues.

What are the Examiners Looking for?



- Many things, none of which are secret or are meant to trick you.
- **Think Out Loud.**
 - **Tell** the examiner what you are thinking.
 - What would be different if you had more or less information?
 - What would you have done differently if you could change ____?

Mistakes

- Be prepared to manage your anxiety.
 - The examiners want to know what you know, not prove what you don't know
 - Utilize your self-coaching/self-soothing strategies
- What to do ~~if~~ **when** you goof up.
 - Identify your mistake and address it (Name it!)
 - Show flexibility and critical thinking as information changes

General Encouragement

- Eat
- Hydrate
- Dress professionally (even during virtual exams)
- Be polite
- Set aside plenty of travel time
 - log in early
- Maintain confidentiality
 - Can still support fellow candidates



Questions About Preparing for the Oral Exam

- How did you go about preparing for the oral exam?
- Were there any unique methods you utilized to prepare for each of the exam portions:
 - Ethical and Legal Issues?
 - Professional Issues?
 - Standardized Clinical Case Assessment and Integration?
 - Practice Sample?

How to Prepare for Ethical Issues

How to Prepare

- Read through the latest [APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct](#)
- Read through your state licensing board code of ethics and any code of ethics at your institution
- Consider reviewing a book of case studies related to health service psychology and have someone quiz
- Review laws in your state pertaining to the practice of psychology
- If you work in an institution or federal agency (VA/DoD), review how state laws and ethical principles are applied in your unique settings

How to Navigate

- Remember that ethical and legal principles are applied not only in the ethics section, but throughout all portions of the exam
- Be prepared to discuss ethical issues you have faced in your practice setting (not just those you provided in your practice sample)
- Be able to discuss broader interprofessional ethics scenarios and population health ethics
- Identify how issues of diversity may come to play in any ethical or legal situations faced
- Identify some of the unique ethical scenarios faced by those practicing health psychology compared with other areas of psychology

How to Prepare for Standardized Clinical Case Assessment and Integration

How to Prepare

- Review a full health psychology textbook covering major health disorders and consider making notecards related to evidence-based assessment and intervention processes for each disorder
- Quiz yourself on these assessment and intervention practices
- Review your standardized health psychology assessment template with the latest literature; update if appropriate

How to Navigate

- Remember to bring a blank standardized assessment/intake template with you
- If you don't ask something, the examiner will not offer the information – so don't be afraid to reference your template to make sure you review all relevant areas
- Time your questions well – you only have 20-25 minutes to gather information.
- It's OK if you haven't treated either of the cases given to you. Reference what you know from the literature from your review and denote how you might refer/consult

How to Prepare for Professional Issues

How to Prepare

- Familiarize yourself with the [APA Guidelines for Psychological Practice in Health Care Delivery Systems](#)
- Identify examples of how your professional activities align with each of the guidelines
- Be able to demonstrate identification as a CHP through involvement in professional organizations and professional development
- Be able to discuss professional self-assessment and how you remain up-to-date with professional competencies

How to Navigate

- No outside notes or materials are used during this portion of the exam
- Don't hesitate to reference your personal statement – and be prepared to provide additional examples
- If asked about a controversial CHP issue (ex., Rx privileges for psychologists), you will not be judged on your opinion; what is important is demonstrating an informed understanding of other perspectives
- Remember, this is an opportunity to highlight your accomplishments!

How to Prepare for Practice Sample Discussion

How to Prepare

- Review your case: What clinical practice areas of health psychology might be addressed?
- Be clear on how you decided on this case, rationale for your interventions, and conclusions reached
- How the case exemplifies your professional practice

How to Navigate

- Expect questions that go beyond the case and examine your professional knowledge and skills:
 - controversies, problems, and gaps in our knowledge base
- Demonstrate a reasonable, rational, and defensible approach

Telehealth Practice

- How has your practice changed over a short period of time due to the Covid-19 pandemic and telehealth?
 - What makes it easier or more difficult for your specialty
 - What are some of the ethical issues related to this model of care

Upon Passing the Orals...

- Chair of exam committee sends results to ABPP Central Office
 - Candidates receive notice within 1 month
- Use of title 'Board Certified in Clinical Health Psychology'
- Immediately conferred membership (Fellow status) in the American Academy of Clinical Health Psychology
- 20 CEU credits
- Recognition at ABPP Convocation at APA national convention

Questions?

Additional Resources

- [American Academy of Clinical Health Psychology Website](#)
- [ACHP Video Tutorials](#)

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