NORTH CAROLINA PASTORAL COUNSELING BOARD
-The North Carolina State Board of Examiners of Fee-Based Practicing Pastoral Counselors-
P.O. Box 447, Kernersville, NC 27285-0447
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PASTORAL COUNSELING CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION: CLINICAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

Description and Instructions for Preparation

Instructions

The certification examination on clinical theory and practice tests conceptual knowledge of basic theories and principles of pastoral counseling and, to a limited extent, also the applicant's understanding of those concepts in relation to his or her own case material. It also tests knowledge of the content of The Code of Ethics of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors and of the Fee-Based Practicing Pastoral Counselor Certification Act. The closed-book exam of three hours will consist of multiple choice and short essay questions. Questions are organized under five headings:

I. The Code of Ethics
(15 minutes – multiple choice)

II. Article 26. Fee-Based Practicing Pastoral Counselors
(20 minutes – multiple choice)

III. Individual Pastoral Counseling and Psychotherapy
(70 minutes – essay)

IV. Marriage, Family, or Group Counseling and Psychotherapy
(45 minutes – essay)

V. Religion, Theology, and Ethics of Pastoral Counseling
(60 minutes – essay)

The questions for Sections III and IV require that applicants demonstrate a knowledge of a single primary psychological theory that they employ in their own counseling. The theory should be one that is generally established and recognized professionally or at least reasonably well developed in concept and method for use in pastoral counseling and psychotherapy. The exam does not test knowledge of theories other than those which applicants claim as primary. It is expected that applicants will use good professional judgment in selecting their theories and will be able to demonstrate a solid grasp of their essential features, including a knowledge of their main terms, concepts, and principles and methods.

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Section V includes questions relating to the psychological understanding of religion, the relation of theological and ethical principles to one's pastoral counseling practice, pastoral identity, and the theology of one's own faith tradition in relation to one's work as a pastoral counselor.
Knowledge of specific theological or ethical position, or a specific pastoral theological position is required. Insofar as psychology is involved in this section, it can be the same theory or theories as were used in Sections III and IV.

Instructions for Preparation

Applicants are required to bring the following documents to the exam (typed, double space):

(1) A one-page statement defining their general understanding of pastoral counseling and themselves as a pastoral counselor, including an indication of the principal theory or theories out of which they do their counseling;
(2) Two brief counseling reports: one illustrating their work in individual pastoral counseling and psychotherapy which demonstrates their competency in dealing with transference/counter transference dynamics; the other illustrating their work in either marriage, family, or group counseling and psychotherapy.

Counseling reports which must be typed but may be single spaced, should be limited to two pages each and should include some verbatim material. All identifying information must be eliminated or disguised.

It is suggested that applicants prepare for this exam by reviewing the theoretical content of their own principal psychological and theological theories—their key terms, concepts, principles, and leading representative(s)—and by being prepared to write specifically and succinctly about them. Because time is limited and much could be said on all questions, careful preparation that focuses on central themes and concepts will enable applicants to write succinctly and to the point.

Beyond basic books in the various psychological and theological traditions, the Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling (Abingdon Press, 1990) is suggested as the most useful general reference for preparation.

In order to complete the essay portion of the exam, the multiple choice portion must be passed. A thorough and detailed review of Article 26 will assist candidates with the multiple choice examination portion of the exam.