

Daniel Collins, NC Psychology Board
895 State Farm Road, Suite 101
Boone, NC 28607

Julie Zimmerman, MA, LPA
Piedmont Correctional Institution
1245 Camp Rd.
Salisbury NC, 28147

Re: proposed rule change under 21 NCAC 54.2008

09/12/19

Mr. Collins,

I attained my MA in Clinical Psychology from Appalachian State University in the Spring of 2004 and my license as a Psychological Associate in October 2004. Since April 2004 I have been working as a Staff Psychologist in the Department of Public Safety Adult Corrections Division. In the NC prison system Psychological Associates are labeled as Staff Psychologists. Despite having 15 years of experience (plus a six month internship in the prison system) and despite passing the EPPP at the doctoral level (641) according to current rules I have to have an hour of supervision each month. Having continued supervision makes it seem as if I am being told that I am not competent on my own and will never be completely trusted. I have never had a complaint made against me to the board and I feel that I am respected as a clinician by my peers, some of whom are Master's level and some Doctoral level. I have known many wise, knowledgeable and more than competent Master's level "psychologists" (psychological associates) in the Department of Public Safety. My two main mentors, John Vogler and Sandy Huffman, were ASU alumni who spent their career in the prison system working over 30 years and then returning after retirement as contract employees. Their guidance and expertise over the years shaped many clinicians' practice. But even with their experience and knowledge they had to be supervised until the end of their career, often by much less experienced clinicians. At some point the supervised begin to surpass the supervisors, and it becomes more of a collaboration amongst colleagues. I would never want to work in a vacuum, with no input from other professionals. I often consult with others and will of course continue to do so whether it is called supervision or simply gaining insight and knowledge from other clinicians. I take advantage of that opportunity much more frequently than the mandated one hour a month. I feel that allowing Master's level psychological associates to practice independently will put them on par with the way other professionals, such as LCSW's and LPC's are treated. It has been shown that persons in those professions are able to function appropriately without career long supervision, and there is no reason LPA's can't do the same.

Thanks for your consideration,

Julie Zimmerman