

Board of Counseling

Guidance on Emotional Support Animals

Licensees who are asked by clients to write letters or otherwise advocate for clients' use of emotional support animals, therapy animals, or other animal-assisted accommodations are advised to consider whether the licensee has relevant training and/or experience to support such advocacy.

Licensees are also advised to consider the plan for treatment, appropriate documentation, and the justification for their advocacy, based on clinical reasons.

Sections of the standards of practice for licensed professional counselors* that may be applicable include guidance to:

18VAC115-20-130 B. 1. Practice in a manner that is in the best interest of the public and does not endanger the public health, safety, or welfare;

18VAC115-20-130 B. 2. Practice only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience and appropriate professional experience and represent their education training and experience accurately to clients;

18VAC115-20-130 B. 3. Stay abreast of new counseling information, concepts, applications and practices which are necessary to providing appropriate, effective professional services;

18VAC115-20-130 B. 4. Be able to justify all services rendered to clients as necessary and appropriate for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes;

18VAC115-20-130 C 5. Maintain client records for a minimum of five years or as otherwise required by law from the date of termination of the counseling relationship.

**Similar standards of practice are found in regulations for marriage and family therapists, licensed substance abuse treatment practitioners, and certified substance abuse counselors*