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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: WD	.	
03/30/2021	.	
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The Committee on Criminal Justice (Burgess) recommended the following:

1           **Senate Substitute for Amendment (526946) (with title**  
2 **amendment)**

3  
4           Delete lines 16 - 25  
5 and insert:

6           Section 1. Subsection (3) and paragraphs (b) and (c) of  
7 subsection (4) of of section 491.005, Florida Statutes, are  
8 amended to read:

9           491.005 Licensure by examination.—

10           (3) MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY.—Upon verification of



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11 documentation and payment of a fee not to exceed \$200, as set by  
12 board rule, plus the actual cost of the purchase of the  
13 examination from the Association of Marital and Family Therapy  
14 Regulatory Board, or similar national organization, the  
15 department shall issue a license as a marriage and family  
16 therapist to an applicant who the board certifies has met the  
17 following criteria:

18 (a) ~~Has~~ Submitted an application and paid the appropriate  
19 fee.

20 (b) 1. Obtained one of the following:

21 a. A minimum of a master's degree in marriage and family  
22 therapy from a program accredited by the Commission on  
23 Accreditation from Marriage and Family Therapy Education.

24 b. A minimum of a master's degree with major emphasis in  
25 marriage and family therapy or a closely related field from a  
26 university program accredited by the Council for Accreditation  
27 of Counseling and Related Educational Programs and graduate  
28 courses approved by the board.

29 c. A minimum of a master's degree with an emphasis in  
30 marriage and family therapy or a closely related field, with a  
31 degree conferred date before July 1, 2026, from an  
32 institutionally accredited college or university and graduate  
33 course approved by the board.

34 ~~Has a minimum of a master's degree with major emphasis in~~  
35 ~~marriage and family therapy or a closely related field from a~~  
36 ~~program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for~~  
37 ~~Marriage and Family Therapy Education or from a Florida~~  
38 ~~university program accredited by the Council for Accreditation~~  
39 ~~of Counseling and Related Educational Programs and graduate~~



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40 ~~courses approved by the Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage~~  
41 ~~and Family Therapy, and Mental Health Counseling.~~

42       2. If the course title that appears on the applicant's  
43 transcript does not clearly identify the content of the  
44 coursework, the applicant shall provide additional  
45 documentation, including, but not limited to, a syllabus or  
46 catalog description published for the course. The required  
47 master's degree must have been received in an institution of  
48 higher education that, at the time the applicant graduated, was  
49 fully accredited by an institutional ~~a regional~~ accrediting body  
50 recognized by the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary  
51 Accreditation or publicly recognized as a member in good  
52 standing with the Association of Universities and Colleges of  
53 Canada, or an institution of higher education located outside  
54 the United States and Canada which, at the time the applicant  
55 was enrolled and at the time the applicant graduated, maintained  
56 a standard of training substantially equivalent to the standards  
57 of training of those institutions in the United States which are  
58 accredited by an institutional ~~a regional~~ accrediting body  
59 recognized by the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary  
60 Accreditation. Such foreign education and training must have  
61 been received in an institution or program of higher education  
62 officially recognized by the government of the country in which  
63 it is located as an institution or program to train students to  
64 practice as professional marriage and family therapists or  
65 psychotherapists. The applicant has the burden of establishing  
66 that the requirements of this provision have been met, and the  
67 board shall require documentation, such as an evaluation by a  
68 foreign equivalency determination service, as evidence that the



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69 applicant's graduate degree program and education were  
70 equivalent to an accredited program in this country. An  
71 applicant with a master's degree from a program that did not  
72 emphasize marriage and family therapy may complete the  
73 coursework requirement in a training institution fully  
74 accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and  
75 Family Therapy Education recognized by the United States  
76 Department of Education.

77 (c) ~~Has~~ Had at least 2 years of clinical experience during  
78 which 50 percent of the applicant's clients were receiving  
79 marriage and family therapy services, which must have been ~~be~~ at  
80 the post-master's level under the supervision of a licensed  
81 marriage and family therapist with at least 5 years of  
82 experience, or the equivalent, who is a qualified supervisor as  
83 determined by the board. An individual who intends to practice  
84 in Florida to satisfy the clinical experience requirements must  
85 register pursuant to s. 491.0045 before commencing practice. If  
86 a graduate has a master's degree with a major emphasis in  
87 marriage and family therapy or a closely related field which did  
88 not include all of the coursework required by paragraph (b),  
89 credit for the post-master's level clinical experience may not  
90 commence until the applicant has completed a minimum of 10 of  
91 the courses required by paragraph (b), as determined by the  
92 board, and at least 6 semester hours or 9 quarter hours of the  
93 course credits must have been completed in the area of marriage  
94 and family systems, theories, or techniques. Within the 2 years  
95 of required experience, the applicant must ~~shall~~ provide direct  
96 individual, group, or family therapy and counseling to cases  
97 including those involving unmarried dyads, married couples,



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98 separating and divorcing couples, and family groups that include  
99 children. A doctoral internship may be applied toward the  
100 clinical experience requirement. When a registered intern is  
101 providing clinical services through telehealth, a licensed  
102 mental health professional must be accessible by telephone or  
103 other electronic means. ~~A licensed mental health professional~~  
104 ~~must be on the premises when clinical services are provided by a~~  
105 ~~registered intern in a private practice setting.~~

106 (d) ~~Has~~ Passed a theory and practice examination designated  
107 by board rule ~~provided by the department.~~

108 (e) ~~Has~~ Demonstrated, in a manner designated by board rule,  
109 knowledge of the laws and rules governing the practice of  
110 clinical social work, marriage and family therapy, and mental  
111 health counseling.

112

113 For the purposes of dual licensure, the department shall license  
114 as a marriage and family therapist any person who meets the  
115 requirements of s. 491.0057. Fees for dual licensure may not  
116 exceed those stated in this subsection.

117 (4) MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING.—Upon verification of  
118 documentation and payment of a fee not to exceed \$200, as set by  
119 board rule, plus the actual per applicant cost of purchase of  
120 the examination from the National Board for Certified Counselors  
121 or its successor organization, the department shall issue a  
122 license as a mental health counselor to an applicant who the  
123 board certifies:

124 (b) 1. Has a minimum of an earned master's degree from a  
125 mental health counseling program accredited by the Council for  
126 the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs



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127 which consists of at least 60 semester hours or 80 quarter hours  
128 of clinical and didactic instruction, including a course in  
129 human sexuality and a course in substance abuse. If the master's  
130 degree is earned from a program related to the practice of  
131 mental health counseling which is not accredited by the Council  
132 for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational  
133 Programs, then the coursework and practicum, internship, or  
134 fieldwork must consist of at least 60 semester hours or 80  
135 quarter hours and meet all of the following requirements:

136       a. Thirty-three semester hours or 44 quarter hours of  
137 graduate coursework, which must include a minimum of 3 semester  
138 hours or 4 quarter hours of graduate-level coursework in each of  
139 the following 11 content areas: counseling theories and  
140 practice; human growth and development; diagnosis and treatment  
141 of psychopathology; human sexuality; group theories and  
142 practice; individual evaluation and assessment; career and  
143 lifestyle assessment; research and program evaluation; social  
144 and cultural foundations; substance abuse; and legal, ethical,  
145 and professional standards issues in the practice of mental  
146 health counseling. Courses in research, thesis or dissertation  
147 work, practicums, internships, or fieldwork may not be applied  
148 toward this requirement.

149       b. A minimum of 3 semester hours or 4 quarter hours of  
150 graduate-level coursework addressing diagnostic processes,  
151 including differential diagnosis and the use of the current  
152 diagnostic tools, such as the current edition of the American  
153 Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of  
154 Mental Disorders. The graduate program must have emphasized the  
155 common core curricular experience.



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156           c. The equivalent, as determined by the board, of at least  
157 700 hours of university-sponsored supervised clinical practicum,  
158 internship, or field experience that includes at least 280 hours  
159 of direct client services, as required in the accrediting  
160 standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and  
161 Related Educational Programs for mental health counseling  
162 programs. This experience may not be used to satisfy the post-  
163 master's clinical experience requirement.

164           2. Has provided additional documentation if a course title  
165 that appears on the applicant's transcript does not clearly  
166 identify the content of the coursework. The documentation must  
167 include, but is not limited to, a syllabus or catalog  
168 description published for the course.

169  
170 Education and training in mental health counseling must have  
171 been received in an institution of higher education that, at the  
172 time the applicant graduated, was fully accredited by a regional  
173 accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education  
174 Accreditation or its successor organization or publicly  
175 recognized as a member in good standing with the Association of  
176 Universities and Colleges of Canada, or an institution of higher  
177 education located outside the United States and Canada which, at  
178 the time the applicant was enrolled and at the time the  
179 applicant graduated, maintained a standard of training  
180 substantially equivalent to the standards of training of those  
181 institutions in the United States which are accredited by a  
182 regional accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher  
183 Education Accreditation or its successor organization. Such  
184 foreign education and training must have been received in an



185 institution or program of higher education officially recognized  
186 by the government of the country in which it is located as an  
187 institution or program to train students to practice as mental  
188 health counselors. The applicant has the burden of establishing  
189 that the requirements of this provision have been met, and the  
190 board shall require documentation, such as an evaluation by a  
191 foreign equivalency determination service, as evidence that the  
192 applicant's graduate degree program and education were  
193 equivalent to an accredited program in this country. Beginning  
194 July 1, 2025, an applicant must have a master's degree from a  
195 program that is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of  
196 Counseling and Related Educational Programs, Masters in  
197 Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council, or an  
198 equivalent accrediting body, as determined by board rule, which  
199 consists of at least 60 semester hours or 80 quarter hours to  
200 apply for licensure under this paragraph.

201

202

203 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

204 And the title is amended as follows:

205 Delete line 3

206 and insert:

207 amending s. 491.005, F.S.; revising the licensure  
208 requirements for licensure by examination by marriage  
209 and family therapists; revising education  
210 requirements; for purposes of clinical experience,  
211 deleting a requirement that a licensed mental health  
212 professional be on the premises when a registered  
213 intern is providing clinical services in a private





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214 setting; requiring a licensed mental health  
215 professional to be accessible by telephone or  
216 electronic means when a registered intern is providing  
217 services through telehealth; requiring the board to  
218 designate a theory and practice examination by rule;  
219 providing additional organizations that may accredit  
220 educational programs for purposes of licensure as a  
221 licensed mental health counselor; for purposes of  
222 clinical