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**ISSUE DATE: MAY 5, 2008**  
**RULE ADOPTIONS**  
LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY  
DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
**State Board of Marriage and Family Therapy Examiners**  
**Professional Counselor Examiners Committee**

**Adopted Amendments: N.J.A.C. 13:34-15.2, 15.4, 24.2 and 24.3**

**Continuing Education**

Proposed: June 4, 2007 at 39 N.J.R. 2199(a).

Adopted: February 14, 2008 by the State Board of Marriage and Family Therapy Examiners, James Verser, Ed.S., Chairperson.

Filed: April 10, 2008 as R.2008 d.120, **with substantive and technical changes** not requiring additional public notice and comment (see N.J.A.C. 1:30-6.3).

Authority: N.J.S.A. 45:8B-13 and 35.

Effective Date: May 5, 2008.

Expiration Date: March 22, 2009.

**Summary of Agency-Initiated Changes:**

The Committee has determined that the phrase "social and cultural diversity" does not accurately address the topics it believes must be covered in the three continuing education hours required by the amendments to N.J.A.C. 13:34-15.2, 15.4, 24.2 and 24.3. As indicated in the Summary of the proposal, the Committee modeled the new requirements upon requirements imposed upon physicians by P.L. 2005, c. 53, which states that "[c]ultural awareness and cultural competence are essential skills for providing quality health care to a diverse patient population." The Committee believes that cultural awareness and cultural competence will not be achieved if licensees are required to take classes in social and cultural diversity; they will be achieved if licensees are taking continuing education hours dedicated to incorporating knowledge of social and cultural diversity into their professional and rehabilitation counseling practice. The Committee believes the term "social and cultural competence" more accurately indicates the type of continuing education hours licensees should complete. The Committee, therefore, has amended N.J.A.C. 13:34-15.2, 15.4, 24.2 and 24.3, on adoption, to change the term "social and cultural diversity" to "social and cultural competence."

**Federal Standards Statement**

A Federal standards analysis is not required because the adopted amendments are governed by State statute and are not subject to any Federal requirements or standards.

**Full text** of the adoption follows (additions to proposal indicated in boldface with asterisks **\*thus\***; deletions from proposal indicated in brackets with asterisks **\*[thus]\***):

13:34-15.2 Contact-hour requirements for licensed professional counselors

(a)-(b) (No change.)

(c) A licensee shall complete at least three of the 40 contact hours of continuing education as required by N.J.A.C. 13:34-15.1 in the subject area of social and cultural **\*[diversity]\* \*competence\***. For the purposes of this subsection, **\*social and\*** cultural **\*[diversity]\* \*competence\*** includes, but is not limited to, an understanding of the cultural context of relationships~~\*,~~ issues and trends in a diverse society related to such factors as culture, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental and physical characteristics, education, family values, religious and

spiritual values, socioeconomic status\*[:]\*\*;\* and unique characteristics of individuals, couples, families, ethnic groups and communities including any of the following:

1. Multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns between and within diverse groups nationally and internationally;
2. Attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences, including specific experiential learning activities;
3. Individual, couple, family, group, and community strategies for working with diverse populations and ethnic groups;
4. Counselors' roles in social justice, advocacy and conflict resolution, cultural self-awareness, the nature of biases, prejudices, process of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination, and other culturally supported behaviors that are detrimental to the growth of the human spirit, mind, or body;
5. Theories of multicultural counseling, theories of identity development and multicultural competencies; and
6. Ethical and legal considerations relating to issues of diversity.

(d) Beginning December 1, 2008, the three contact hours of continuing education in the subject area of social and cultural \*[diversity]\* **\*competence\*** shall be completed every biennial period and shall be in addition to the required five contact hours of continuing education in ethics and legal standards as set forth in (b) above.

(e) (No change in text.)

#### 13:34-15.4 Approval of courses or programs

(a) The following are acceptable sources of continuing education courses, programs and articles as long as the courses, programs or articles fall within the content areas set forth in (c) **\*or (d)\*** below or are directly related to professional counseling:

1.-4. (No change.)

(b)-(c) (No change.)

(d) A course or program in the subject area of social and cultural \*[diversity]\* **\*competence\*** for the purpose of fulfilling the three contact hour\*[s of]\* continuing education requirement **\*shall be obtained consistent with (a) above or\*** shall be subject to the approval of the Committee. A course or program in the subject area approved by the Board of Marriage and Family Therapy Examiners, the Board of Social Work Examiners, or the Alcohol and Drug Counselor Committee shall be deemed acceptable by this Committee.

#### 13:34-24.2 Contact-hour requirements for licensed rehabilitation counselors

(a)-(b) (No change.)

(c) A licensee shall complete at least three of the 40 contact hours of continuing education as required by N.J.A.C. 13:34-24.1 in the subject area of social and cultural \*[diversity]\* **\*competence\***. For the purposes of this subsection, **\*social and\*** cultural \*[diversity]\* **\*competence\*** includes\*,\* but is not limited to\*,\* an understanding of the cultural context of relationships\*[:]\*\*;\* issues and trends in a diverse society related to such factors as culture, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental and physical characteristics, education, family values, religious and spiritual values, socioeconomic status; and unique characteristics of individuals, couples, families, ethnic groups and communities including any of the following:

1. Multicultural and pluralistic trends, including characteristics and concerns between and within diverse groups nationally and internationally;
2. Attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences, including specific experiential learning activities;

3. Individual, couple, family, group, and community strategies for working with diverse populations and ethnic groups;
4. Counselors' roles in social justice, advocacy and conflict resolution, cultural self-awareness, the nature of biases, prejudices, process of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination, and other culturally supported behaviors that are detrimental to the growth of the human spirit, mind, or body;
5. Theories of multicultural counseling, theories of identity development and multicultural competencies; and
6. Ethical and legal considerations relating to issues of diversity.

(d) Beginning December 1, 2008, the three contact hours of continuing education in the subject area of social and cultural \*[diversity]\* **\*competence\*** shall be completed every biennial period and shall be in addition to the required five contact hours of continuing education in ethics and legal standards as set forth in (b) above.

(e) (No change in text.)

#### 13:34-24.3 Approval of courses or programs

(a) The following are acceptable sources of continuing education courses, programs and articles as long as the courses, programs or articles fall within the content areas set forth in (c) **\*or (d)\*** below or are directly related to rehabilitation counseling:

1.-4. (No change.)

(b)-(c) (No change.)

(d) A course or program in the subject area of social and cultural \*[diversity]\* **\*competence\*** for the purpose of fulfilling the three contact hour\*[s of]\* continuing education requirement **\*shall be obtained consistent with (a) above or\*** shall be subject to the approval of the Committee. A course or program in the subject area approved by the Board of Marriage and Family Therapy Examiners, the Board of Social Work Examiners, or the Alcohol and Drug Counselor Committee shall be deemed acceptable by this Committee.