

Occupational Reform Board Survey
Chair, Board of Mental Health Practice

1. The public purpose and assumptions that underlie the creation of the license?

The License structure was created for and intends to protect the public. Because of a set of healthy regulations, including a standard of appropriate training, only trained and endorsed mental health providers are providing services. The public is protected in that by seeing someone who is licensed, they will receive a certain standard of care that will (in almost all cases) help the client. Without the license, clients may not know the true credentials of someone they see for mental health care. Some clients could be emotionally or mentally damaged by the experience.

2. A statement from YOUR point of view about the effectiveness of the regulations for this profession?

The regulations help maintain a good minimum standard of care. The regulations are not meant to be burdensome or restrictive. They maintain at least a standard of care that will be helpful to public consumers. The regulations in the past have been effective. New regulations that are in process have been streamlined appropriately. They are not perfect, but they provide a good minimum standard to guide practitioners, and help define for the public what constitutes effective mental health care. Many practitioners will seek to work at much higher standards of care.

3. What the harm may be if the occupation is no longer licensed, certified, or regulated?

Chaos. There would likely be some people who would act as if they have been effectively trained but are not. They could (probably would) be dispensing care that could be harmful. I fear that lack of licensing and regulation could lead to advice-driven counseling, episodes of dual relationships, and inability to effectively deal with countertransference. These are significant issues in the counseling practice that trained and licensed practitioners effectively negotiate.