

WMHCA Application Guidelines for Continuing Education Approval

The Washington Mental Health Counselors Association (WMHCA) continuing education approval program was established to meet the needs of agencies, hospitals, individuals, and social service organizations desiring to offer continuing education to mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, and social workers. Continuing Education providers must apply and meet certain criteria before being authorized to provide continuing education.

Once the completed application and appropriate fees are processed, the application will be reviewed by the WMHCA Continuing Education Coordinator. After this review, the applicant will be awarded a **Continuing Education Provider Number** that can be used to advertise CE credits.

A. Course Information

1. Acceptable Courses

The CE program or course must be relevant and contribute to the advancement, extension and enhancement of the professional competence of the licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed mental health counselor or licensed social worker ([WAC 246-809-610](#)). WMHCA only approves courses designed for post-graduate level professionals.

2. Courses Not Accepted

Courses or workshops primarily designed to increase practice income or office efficiency are not eligible for CE credit.

3. Course Content Requirements

The content of a course shall be related to direct or indirect patient/client care. Such courses shall cover pragmatic aspects of practice (i.e. counseling theory and skills, consultation, insurance risks and benefits, managed care issues, supervision training). ***Applicants must de-identify or change any identifying information if discussing particular case examples related to the topic during the presentation.***

4. Courses Must Meet Scope of Practice Guidelines

Scope of practice definitions for Licensed Mental Health Providers taken from RCW 18.225.010

- a. **Mental health counseling** means the application of principles of human development, learning theory, psychotherapy, group dynamics, and etiology of mental illness and dysfunctional behavior to individuals, couples, families, groups, and organizations, for the purpose of treatment of mental disorders and promoting optimal mental health and functionality. Mental health counseling also includes, but is not limited to, the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental and emotional disorders, as well as the application of a wellness model of mental health.
- b. **Independent clinical social work** means the diagnosis and treatment of emotional and mental disorders based on knowledge of human development, the causation and treatment of psychopathology, psychotherapeutic treatment practices, and social work practice as defined in advanced social work. Treatment modalities include but are not limited to diagnosis and treatment of individuals, couples, families, groups, or organizations.

- c. **Marriage and family therapy** means the diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders, whether cognitive, affective, or behavioral, within the context of relationships, including marriage and family systems. Marriage and family therapy involves the professional application of psychotherapeutic and family systems theories and techniques in the delivery of services to individuals, couples, and families for the purpose of treating such diagnosed nervous and mental disorders. The practice of marriage and family therapy means the rendering of professional marriage and family therapy services to individuals, couples, and families, singly or in groups, whether such services are offered directly to the general public or through organizations, either public or private, for a fee, monetary or otherwise.

B. Types of Courses

1. Lunch and Learn

This is a one hour in house training. Attendees are not charged a fee and the training is only offered one time. It is not open to the public

2. Single Event

A one-time workshop or event. If provider wishes to offer the workshop another day after the initial approval, then applicant must submit a copy of the initial approval and pay an additional fee.

3. Multiple Workshops

A workshop that is repeated 2 or more times within 365 days. Approvals for multiple workshops are good for one year. Applicant can add additional dates by emailing dates along with approval number.

4. Series Workshop or Conference

Series workshop is offered over multiple days. Only one certificate is given after all sessions of the workshop have been completed. Participants must be present ALL days. A conference can be multiple workshops presented over a few consecutive days. It would have multiple presenters. This is for a single approval.

5. Series Multiple

Same as a series workshop except approval is good for one year and the series can be presented multiple times.

5. Distance Learning Courses

A course which is electronically delivered through text or recorded audio/video. Distance Learning Courses must meet state and national standards. Additional information on distance learning courses follow in the next section. These courses must involve tests of comprehensions.

C. Distance Learning Courses

1. Department of Health Requirements

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/ProfessionsNewReneworUpdate/MentalHealthCounselor/ContinuingEducationInformation#7>

“Distance learning programs, approved by an industry-recognized local, state, national, or international organization or institution of higher learning. These programs must require tests of comprehension upon completion. Law limits practitioners to 26 hours of distance learning programs per reporting period.”

2. NBCC Requirements <https://www.nbcc.org/Resources/CEProviders>

- a. **Text Distance Learning** credit measurements are as follows. One (1) CE hour will be offered for each 6,000 words of text. Text of less than 6,000 words will be measured on a proportionate basis; e.g., 3,000 words of text will be measured as one-half (.5) hour. CE credit will be given in .25 (hour) increments with the minimum amount of text being 1500 words. Lesser amounts of text do not qualify for CE’s.
- b. **Audio and Visual** credit measurements are as follows. One (1) CE hour will be offered for each sixty (60) minutes, of listening and/or viewing time. Audio and visual distance learning will be measured by the actual amount of time that the participant will listen to and/or view the program. CE credit will be given in .25 (hour) increments with the minimum amount of time being 15 minutes. Lesser amounts of listening and viewing time do not qualify for CE’s.

E. Instructor Requirements

1. Must be Qualified: Qualified instructors have a **master’s degree or higher** from an accredited educational institution in an area related to the content being provided.

2. Copy of Instructor CV or Resume: CV or Resume must demonstrate the instructor has at least 5 years of work experience in an area related to the subject matter of the course.

3. Copy of Instructor License: A copy of the license (or certification) in an area related to the subject matter of the course. The license or certification shall be current, valid, and free from restrictions due to disciplinary action by any association, governmental agency, or other industry recognized entity.

4. Bio: A brief description stating why presenter is qualified to present. Can be an except form promotional information.

Exceptions to these instructor requirements are subject to WMHCA board approval.

F. Other Application Information

1. Learning Objectives

Applicant must clearly state measurable learning objectives. Course objectives must be relevant to mental health counseling, social work, and marriage and family therapy, and shall state clearly how the course content will help the clinician become a more proficient practitioner in providing direct patient/client care. Please refer to scope of practice definitions to assist you in ascertaining whether your course content is appropriate for accreditation. One hour of instruction equals one CE hour. A good guideline is 1 objective for every hour of instruction. Please list learning objectives for each module of the curriculum.

2. Course Outline

Applicant must submit a detailed timed agenda. The agenda must include scheduled breaks. CE's are only given during times of instruction. Please include in the agenda the topics that are being covered. As example without specific topics is below. Also include who is presenting each section if multiple presenters are involved.

Instructional Hours Example

Start	Stop	Time	Content	Presenter
9:00	10:00	60		
10:00	10:30	30		
10:30	10:45		Break	
10:45	12:00	75		
12:00	1:00		Lunch	
1:00	1:30	30		
1:30	2:30	60		
2:30	2:45		Break	
2:45	3:30	45		
3:30	4:30	60		
	Total	360	6 hours	

3. Formal Evaluations Formal evaluation of each continuing education activity is required. The Continuing Education Provider must submit a copy of the evaluation mechanism that will be used with the original application, and the CE provider must, within 45 days of the date of the CE Activity, submit copies of all completed evaluations or a composite of the completed evaluations. If doing a Distance Learning Course applicants must submit a test of comprehension.

4. Application Fee

An application fee is based on the number of CE's being approved, the number of times it is being presented and the method of delivery. Standard time for processing applications is **4 to 6 weeks**. Please note: approval must be received prior to advertising CE credits. Please make sure applications are accurate and complete. **Fees are non-refundable.**

- a. **Expedited Fee:** If application needs processed in less than 4 weeks an expedited fee will be charge. Standard time for processing expedited applications is **1 to 2 weeks**.
- b. **Consult Fee:** If your application is missing anything and you need to consult with someone regarding getting it approved there will be an additional fee. This includes exchanges via email and phone. This includes if we have to ask for additional information more than one time. If your application is rejected, you can pay the consult fee and resubmit it as long as you do so within 30 days.

G. Appeal process

1. An applicant must contact WMHCA within 30 calendar days of the date the rejection is sent to the applicant for the purpose of requesting a meeting or to confer with the review committee to defend the information provided in the application. This may be done in person or in writing.

2. The applicant may request one additional review. If the application is rejected a second time, the application will not be accepted until the requested revisions are made. Additional charges may incur.

H. CE Provider requirements

1. A program evaluation must be obtained from each attendee prior to awarding certificates.

2. Participants requesting CE credits must be provided with a certificate or document that includes the participant's name, the name of the activity, the number of CE credit hours approved, the date(s) of the activity, the signature of the program coordinator, and the WMHCA provider number.

3. Submit within 45 days of the completion of the event(s):

- a. A copy of each completed evaluation *OR* a composite of the completed evaluations
- b. A copy of the program flyer or brochure
- c. Attendance List