

What's New with NBFE?

The Official Newsletter of the National Board of Forensic Evaluators



Providing Quality
Training,
Certification, and
Advocacy for
forensic evaluators
since 2003



Get qualified for
psychological
testing! **p. 6**



Learn how to help
NBFE continue
with its mission
p. 6



Separating the Weed From the Chaff

NBFE Executive Director Makes Automated Decision Matrix
for Clients Using Medical Marijuana Available for Free

In a national webinar presented for NAADAC, the Association for
Addiction Professionals last month, we unveiled a new automated version
of the decision matrix, which mental health professionals can use to guide
them in decision-making. [Click here](#) to access it, and feel to share!

2

NEW FOLKS

View a listing of new
CFMHEs, CCCEs, and
NBFE personnel

2

ETHICS TRAINING

Needs ethics CE hours?
Read about our
upcoming training

3

WHY FORENSICS?

Read a reprint of an
article exploring the
benefits of forensics

NBFE Welcomes New Personnel and CFMHEs

Join us in welcoming and recognizing new additions to the NBFE family!

Alexander Henderson, Ph.D. of Mount Pleasant, SC (CFMHE #000141 and CCCE #000031)

Ruoxi, Chen, Ph.D., LMFT, LPC of Monroe, LA (CFMHE #000142 and CCCE #000030)

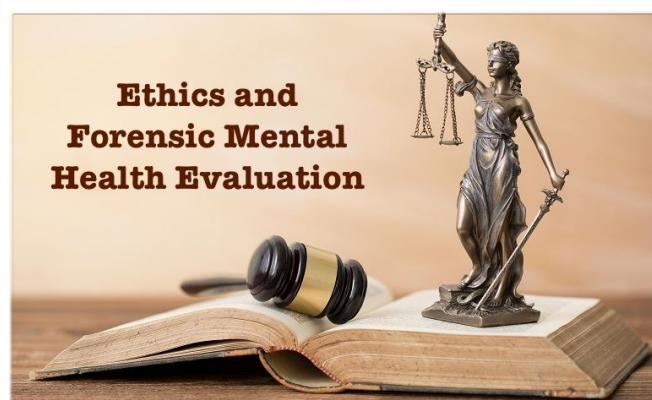
Dr. Karla Sapp, NCC, CCMHC, MAC, LPC, CPCS, BC-TMH of Hinesville, GA (CFMHE # 000143)

Amber Madden, MA, LPCC of London, KY (CFMHE #000144)

Jerome Washington, LMHC of Tamarac, FL (CFMHE #000145)

Ekam, Essien, LPC, CPCS of Fayetteville, GA, Southern Regional Director of NBFE

Jeffrey Gallup, MA, LPC-S, NCC of Mansfield TX, Training Committee Chair



Get Your Ethics Hours!

NBFE is presenting a 3-hour webinar entitled “Ethics Update: Ethical Issues in Forensic Mental Health Evaluation” on Friday, 1/10 at 2pm EST. It’s not too late to reserve a seat.

Hour 1 consists of a lecture on ethics, hearsay, and *ex parte* when conducting a forensic evaluation, hour 2 provides an update on the 2020 AMHCA *Code of Ethics* cross-referenced with guidelines published by ABFP, ACA, and AAMFT, and hour 3 involves a panel review of audio from a disciplinary hearing involving a forensic evaluator. [Register here!](#)

NBFE EXPANDS CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP PROGRAM

In the past several months, NBFE trained new CFMHE applicants in Naples, FL (May), W. Palm Beach, FL (August), and Seattle, WA (October).

Next month (February), we’ll be training a new group of applicants in Orlando, FL at the [Florida Mental Health Counselors Association annual conference](#). We will then be presenting in [Atlanta, GA](#) (May), [Las Vegas, NV](#) (July), and [Ormond Beach, FL](#) (August). Please refer your colleagues who are interested in certification. They can attend via live webinar broadcast if they prefer.



The article “Three Reasons to Add Forensic Evaluations to Your Practice” was awarded “Article of the Year” at the 2019 American Mental Health Counselors Association’s annual conference in Washington, DC (pictured on the right). Read this reprint of the article!



Building Your Practice Three Reasons to Add Forensic Evaluations to Your Practice

*This is the first article in the new
“Building Your Practice” department.*

*By Aaron Norton, LMHC, LMFT, MCAP,
CCMHC, CRC, CFMHE*

Aaron Norton provides psychotherapy, clinical and forensic evaluation, clinical supervision, and professional consultation at his practice, *Integrity Counseling*, integritycounseling.net, in Largo, FL. Awarded Mental Health Counselor of the Year by AMHCA and Counselor Educator of the Year by Florida Mental Health Counselors Association (FMHCA) in 2016, he is an adjunct instructor at the University of South Florida, executive director of the National Board of Forensic Evaluators, and president-elect of FMHCA. Consulting editor of *The Advocate Magazine* and also AMHCA’s Southern Region director, he is finishing his doctoral dissertation in Counselor Education and Supervision at USF. Learn more at anorton.com; email him at: me@anorton.com.



REASON #1: Forensic Mental Health Evaluation Is a Lucrative Means of Diversifying Your Practice

How would you like to earn a six-figure salary that is fairly stable even during times of economic recession?

Many clinical mental health counselors (CMHCs) I have spoken to who earn more than \$100,000 per year do so in part because they conduct forensic mental health evaluations, evaluations intended to be used in court or for legal proceedings.

Most forensic evaluations cost \$1,000 to \$5,000, with evaluators often charging \$150 to \$500 per hour for their service. One evaluator in my state told me that he works three to 15 hours per week and earns \$250,000 a year. Why does forensic evaluation pay so much? Because forensic evaluators provide a vital, highly specialized service. They have expertise above and beyond the average CMHC, and attorneys, courts, and clients involved in critical legal proceedings often recognize the importance of a highly skilled expert when the stakes are high.

REASON #2: Forensic Mental Health Evaluations Is Meaningful, Interesting, Important Work That Benefits Society



In the judicial system, *everyone* is a stakeholder—individuals, children, families, employers, employees, law enforcement officers, school systems, government agencies, communities; so, everyone. Forensic evaluations are challenging, because there are many threats to the validity of client self-report. For justice to best be served, the court

system needs qualified experts who can align several data points to formulate a clearer picture of a client’s mental health. Many CMHCs find this task intellectually stimulating and impactful, considering their work a vital service to the community.

Many states and jurisdictions have lengthy waiting periods for forensic evaluations, and shortages of qualified forensic evaluators have resulted in lawsuits alleging violation of due process. The courts need more evaluators, and our profession can supply them.

REASON #3: Forensic Mental Health Evaluation May Sharpen Your Clinical Skills

Five years ago, I decided to pursue certification as a forensic mental health evaluator. Though I

had been conducting forensic substance abuse evaluations for a few years, I lacked some degree of confidence in my work. I remember thinking, “Even if I never do very many forensic evaluations, I bet this training will sharpen my clinical skills. It should make me a better diagnostician.” Today, I’m all the more convinced that this is true, and I believe that my therapy clients have benefitted from this professional growth as well. Additionally, training in this specialty area has helped me to become more confident in my skills and more accepting of my professional limitations.

Ethical, Legal, and Professional Challenges

Forensic mental health evaluation may be rewarding and meaningful, but it has its challenges. First, CMHCs are generally more accustomed to their role as therapist rather than to the role of an independent evaluator, and they struggle with adopting this role. In the world of forensic evaluation, you are not a client advocate, nor are you helping a client to accomplish goals. Instead, the truth is your client, and you must maintain objectivity (see Section I.D4 of the AMHCA Code of Ethics; download free from amhca.org/learn/ethics).

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Building Your Practice

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Second, remember that historically, this specialization was the domain of clinical and forensic psychologists and psychiatrists, not CMHCs, nor our master's-level allies in clinical social work and marriage and family therapy. Some state and local jurisdictions still have statutes, guidelines, and practices that discriminate against non-psychologists in the forensic mental health arena. For example, the ability to administer and interpret psychological tests—a vital component of quality forensic evaluations—has been limited by at least five states, despite the fact that our national counseling organizations concur that testing clearly falls within the scope of practice of CMHCs (for more on this, download National Board of Forensic Evaluator's (NBFE) "Can Licensed Mental Health Counselors Administer and Interpret Psychological Tests?" from tinyurl.com/ydxjde6w). Additionally, some statutes appear to exclude CMHCs from conducting forensic evaluations.

The good news is that thus far, every statute sent to me from any state that appears to exclude CMHCs from forensic evaluation has on further scrutiny been found to only slightly limit CMHCs. Typically, such statutes govern only one or two types of

forensic evaluations, such as competency or civil commitment. Many other types of forensic mental health evaluations (e.g., violence potential, criminal responsibility, domestic violence, substance abuse, child custody/divorce, personal injury, immigration, sentencing variations, etc.) are available to CMHCs.

A Call to Action

I won't be happy until every U.S. court agrees that the professional identity of a licensed mental health professional—clinical mental health counselor, clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, clinical or forensic psychologist, psychiatrist, psychiatric nurse practitioner—shouldn't determine whether that professional is a suitable expert witness. Rather, the individual's unique training, experience, knowledge, and expertise should be determining factors. In jurisdictions where this is not the case, I call on state chapters of AMHCA to advocate relentlessly for professional equality, perhaps using the shortage of qualified evaluators in the court system as a major talking point. ●

Forensic Mental Health Evaluation—How to Get Started

Consider watching a free, two-hour webinar I presented last year ("Introduction to Forensic Mental Health Evaluation for Counselors," viewable at youtu.be/WFBbbvvrSv8). It covers:

- The definition of forensic mental health evaluation,
- Differences between forensic and clinical evaluations,
- The role of the expert versus the fact witness,
- An overview of different types of forensic evaluations,
- Qualifications required to administer and interpret psychological tests used in forensic evaluation,
- Ethical considerations for forensic evaluation,
- The admissibility of testimony by expert witnesses,
- How counselors can become forensic evaluators, and
- An overview of resources.

If you are interested in forensic evaluation after viewing this webinar, then I recommend that you consider becoming a Certified Forensic Mental Health Evaluator (CFMHE). Though not required to conduct forensic evaluations, certification is an excellent way to ensure that you are following an established national standard and to demonstrate to the courts that you are a recognized, vetted expert. To learn more about the credential, visit the National Board of Forensic Evaluators (NBFE) nbfe.net, a nonprofit public charity founded in 2003 by Norman E. Hoffman, PhD, EdD, LMHC, LMFT, NCC, CCMHC, CFMHE.

Whether or not you pursue forensic certification, it will be important to establish yourself as an expert witness and a forensic evaluator. Here are some additional strategies:

- **Participate in formal training in forensic evaluation and the role of an expert witness**, whether with NBFE or with other organizations, such as the Global Institute of Forensic Research (gifrinc.com).
- **Obtain credentialing in your area(s) of specialization within the forensic realm**. For example, AMHCA offers the Diplomate and Clinical Mental Health Specialist (DCMHS) credential in several specialized areas of clinical mental health counseling, attesting that you are an advanced practitioner (amhca.org/career/diplomate).
- **Create a detailed curriculum vitae (CV)**. To establish yourself as an expert, in addition to the components of a typical resume, include in your CV a transcript of every professional training you have taken, every presentation you have given, and every article you have written in your specialization area. You should also keep a list of all the court cases and case numbers you have worked on.
- **Forge relationships with referral sources**, such as attorneys, probation officers, government agencies, and other forensic evaluators. Take attorneys out to lunch to discuss your services. Offer in-service training in your area of specialization for the Public Defender's Office, District Attorney, or local law firms. Consider clinicians and other forensic evaluators as allies, not competition. They may have different specializations than you, or want to refer to you if they have a conflict of interest with a potential client or if they are not available.

**LOOKING FOR A WAY TO BETTER ESTABLISH YOURSELF
IN THE FORENSIC MENTAL HEALTH ARENA?**



IT STARTS RIGHT HERE

NBFE now has vacancies for regional director and committee member volunteer positions that help us accomplish our mission of quality training, certification, and advocacy for forensic mental health professionals. It's a great resume enhancer!



Visit nbfe.net/volunteers to learn more!

Feeling insecure about your testing skills?

Get Qualified for Level C Psychological Testing with NBFEE's 40-Hour "Testing for Forensic Populations" Workshop

- All graduates are guaranteed Level C testing qualification with Psychological Assessment Resources (PAR), one of the country's largest psychological test distributors
- Learn from experienced experts in testing and forensic evaluation
- Explore tests for malingering, personality testing, competency, violence and sexual violence potential, child abuse, parenting/child custody, substance abuse, intelligence and adaptive functioning, and psychopathy
- Work at-your-own pace and on your own schedule while also getting "hands-on experience," access to instructors, and feedback from experts with our unique hybrid "on demand"/assignment review course design

Feel confident about your evaluations!



The National Board of Forensic Evaluators (NBFE) has been approved by the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 6189. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. NBFE is solely responsible for all aspects of the program. This workshop has been approved for 40 hours of continuing education (32 general hours, 4 domestic violence hours, and 4 ethics hours) with the Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage & Family Therapy, & Mental Health Counseling, CE Broker Tracking # 20-628296 (Phase 1), 20-628294 (Phase 2), 20-628298 (Phase 3), and 20-628300 (Phase 4) (CE Broker Provider #50-15823). Note: Phases 1, 2, and 3 include 9 general hours and 1 hour of ethics/professional boundaries, and Phase 4 includes 5 general hours, 4 domestic violence hours, and 1 hour of ethics/professional boundaries. NBFE is recognized and endorsed by the American Mental Health Counselors Association.

**\$500 DISCOUNT FOR ALL CFMHES
AND CFMHE APPLICANTS AND
CANDIDATES!**



Reserve your slot now at [NBFE.net/Event-3016221](https://nbfe.net/Event-3016221).
Email valentino@nbfe.net for discount code!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



From all of us at NBFE!



Happy Holidays!

FROM ALL OF US AT NBFE!





NBFE is a grass-roots, national nonprofit public charity founded by Dr. Norman Hoffman (pictured on left) in 2003 because there were no reputable national boards that would certify

clinicians from all of the mental health professions (i.e., clinical mental health counseling, clinical psychology, clinical social work, marriage and family therapy, and psychiatry) in the specialized area of forensic mental health evaluation. We are member-supported and depend on your contributions to thrive. Consider making NBFE your designated AmazonSmile organization and/or becoming a contributing member in 2020!



NBFE IS A 501(C)(3) NONPROFIT PUBLIC CHARITY



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When you purchase items from Amazon, Amazon will forward 0.5% of the item's cost to support NBFE in its mission to provide quality training, certification, and professional advocacy for forensic evaluators. It costs you nothing extra!

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HELP US HELP CLINICIANS

Make a tax-deductible donation to NBFE, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charity in 2020!



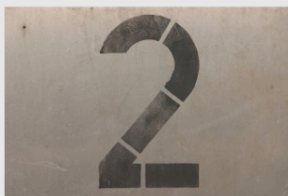
5 LEVELS OF NBFE SPONSORSHIP

NBFE was founded in 2003 due to the absence of a national board providing quality training and certification in forensic evaluation for **ALL** licensed mental health professionals, not just psychologists. NBFE operates with a primarily volunteer staff and depends on contributing members to accomplish its mission. There are 5 options for sponsorship.



CONTRIBUTING MEMBER FOR \$60

- Your name will be listed on NBFE's website as a "contributing member."
- You will receive a certificate of recognition and a receipt for your tax-deductible contribution.



BRONZE SPONSOR FOR \$250

- Your logo will be placed on NBFE's website along with a link to your website for one year
- You will be mailed a special edition 15 oz. "Keep Calm and Call a Certified Forensic Mental Health Evaluator" coffee/tea mug.
- You will receive a certificate of recognition and a receipt for your tax-deductible contribution.



SILVER SPONSOR FOR \$500

- Your logo will be placed on NBFE's website along with a link to your website for one year
- Your CFMHE renewal fee will be waived for one year
- You will be mailed a special edition 15 oz. "Keep Calm and Call a Certified Forensic Mental Health Evaluator" coffee/tea mug.
- You will receive a certificate of recognition and a receipt for your tax-deductible contribution.



GOLD SPONSOR FOR \$1,000

- Your logo will be placed on NBFE's website along with a link to your website for one year
- CEU certificate fees for webinars and CFMHE renewal fees waived for all NBFE webinars for one full year
- You will be mailed a special edition 15 oz. "Keep Calm and Call a Certified Forensic Mental Health Evaluator" coffee/tea mug.
- You will receive a certificate of recognition and a receipt for your tax-deductible contribution.



PLATINUM SPONSOR FOR \$5,000

- CFMHE renewal fees waived **for life**
- Lifetime display of your logo and link to your website on NBFE's website
- CEU certificate fees waived for one full year
- You will be mailed a special edition 15 oz. "Keep Calm and Call a Certified Forensic Mental Health Evaluator" coffee/tea mug.
- You will receive a certificate of recognition and a receipt for your tax-deductible contribution.

Submit your donation at <https://secure.affinipay.com/pages/national-board-of-forensic-evaluators-inc/payments> today!