



The Biofeedback Certification International Alliance

(formerly the Biofeedback Certification Institute of America)

Guidelines & Policies For Mentoring Candidates for Board Certification in Neurofeedback

BCIA believes that mentoring is essential to ensuring quality in the delivery of neurofeedback services and that it is critical to the training of beginning providers. This document is intended to provide a framework for mentoring of candidates for Board Certification. We recognize that each state has its own definitions and regulations of professionals who offer neurofeedback services. Both the mentor and BCIA candidate should operate within applicable local, state, and federal laws as well as in accordance with the ethical principles of their profession/occupation. Mentoring does not substitute for supervision required for professional licensure or supervision required for insurance reimbursement.

Definitions

An individual becomes a BCIA candidate for certification by submitting an application with documentation of the educational prerequisite and payment of a filing fee. Mentoring is the process of transmitting knowledge and skills from the trained to the untrained or the experienced to the inexperienced practitioner. Mentoring also involves a relationship between a mentor and candidate that promotes the development of skill, knowledge, responsibility and ethical standards in the practice of biofeedback. Through mentoring, the candidate learns to apply knowledge to specific practice situations.

Purpose

Mentoring is unique in that it can provide guidance and support that is not available through any other source of professional development. Ideally, mentoring can be a professionally rewarding experience for both mentor and candidate, enhancing the quality of work and ultimately benefit the patient/client and the public.

Mentoring of BCIA Candidates

I. Obligation of the Mentor

Experienced professionals have an obligation to provide mentoring to those entering the field, thus ensuring that new providers are adequately trained.

II. Qualifications

The following criteria are required for an individual to serve as a mentor of a candidate for BCIA certification.

A. BCIA Certification

The mentor must be BCIA certified. Occasionally, because of geographic location or other special circumstances, a candidate cannot be mentored by a professional who is BCIA certified. If there is a professional available who by exceptional merit and experience would be able to provide appropriate mentoring, a special review of his/her credentials is requested prior to starting training.

- B. Experience
The mentor must have at least two years experience in the practice of neurofeedback and with a similar anticipated client base as the candidate.
- C. Mentor Qualifications and Limitations
 1. A mentor should operate within applicable local, state, and federal laws as well as in accordance with the ethical principles of their profession/occupation. Mentors should operate within the limits of their expertise, training and professional license/credential.
 2. Mentorship does not substitute for supervision required for professional licensure or supervision required for insurance reimbursement. These are unique and separate contractual agreements between two professionals.
- D. Professional Commitment
BCIA expects mentors to:
 1. be active in the field of neurofeedback and their professional area as evidenced by affiliations with professional organizations and as required for BCIA recertification.
 2. be free of active sanction by a disciplinary proceeding.
 3. demonstrate involvement in formalized training and participation in professional development in the practice of mentoring. This may include workshops, continuing education programs, and study of current literature.
 4. have expertise with the candidate's client population and methods of practice.
 5. be knowledgeable about issues related to diversity such as race, language, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, and disability.
 6. be both technically and clinically experienced with a major time and career commitment to the field of applied psychophysiology and biofeedback.

III. Procedures

- A. The BCIA certificant should file a Mentor Application and await approval from BCIA prior to beginning clinical training. A new application should be filed for each prospective candidate.
- B. BCIA strongly encourages each prospective candidate to file their certification application and have it approved prior to beginning clinical training.
- C. BCIA recommends a written agreement for mentoring which should be signed by both the mentor and candidate prior to starting to work together. It should be amended and renegotiated as needed to reflect any necessary changes. The agreement should include but not be limited to the following:
 1. obligations of the mentor and the candidate.
 2. a set period of time (no more than one year) or renegotiated at the end of the time.
 3. a statement to abide by the ethical principles of the mentor's profession and the BCIA Professional Standards and Ethical Principles of Biofeedback.
 4. a plan to address conflicts between mentor and candidate.
 5. a fee charged for mentoring.
 6. a process for termination of mentoring relationship.
 7. an evaluation or performance appraisal to be done at specified intervals.
 8. format and scheduling of conflict-resolution.

- D. Mentoring should be documented by both the mentor and candidate.
- E. We strongly advise that the mentor verify the professional liability insurance of the candidate when the treatment of patients is involved.
- F. Original signatures for all phases of mentoring should be provided to BCIA.

IV. Liability Issues

Although it is rare for a mentor to be held liable for the mistakes made by a candidate, we advise prudence when the treatment of patients is involved. It is ill advised to treat patients without obtaining professional liability insurance. In order to avoid liability problems, we strongly advise that the following risk management procedures be instituted by the mentor.

- A. Monitor the candidate's professional functioning as well as the mentoring process on a regular basis. Document all interactions.
- B. Ensure that neurofeedback services are performed according to accepted standards.
- C. To protect patient confidentiality, a mentor should insist on an informed consent form regarding disclosure of information if the identity of the client/patient is evident.
- D. Identify any practice that might pose a danger to patients/clients and quickly take remedial action.
- E. Identify any inability to practice due to impairment by alcohol, drugs, illness, stress or personal problems.

V. The Mentoring Relationship

Mentors must maintain objectivity and have no conflict of interest. The mentoring relationship is important because it should promote the development of knowledge and skills and standards of care. Although the mentor is in a position of power, the candidate must be treated with respect. This position must not be used to exploit the candidate in any way, including sexual harassment.

The mentor also has an obligation to the patients/clients of the candidate, and must take appropriate action against unethical conduct of the candidate and one's self. If the mentor believes that the candidate is unqualified to deliver biofeedback services, this must be clearly stated through an evaluation or some other appropriate method.

VI. Clinical Mentoring Requirements for BCIA Certification

BCIA requires that a mentor application be submitted and approved prior to starting the mentoring process and that a new application be submitted and approved for each prospective candidate.

BCIA recommends that mentoring of neurofeedback training with patients/clients should take place after the candidate is a pre-qualified BCIA applicant and completes didactic training through an accredited training program, unless the training is part of a degree granting program from an accredited college or university that offers course work concurrently with practicum.

All mentoring requirements may be completed through direct contact or through the use of live phone and/or web meetings. Fax and email may be used as supportive technologies to assist in the transfer of information. The only exception is the “direct observation” requirement, which must be met through direct person-to-person observation.

VII. Neurofeedback Mentoring Requirements

The mentoring requirements involve two essential components: practical experience and mentoring contact hours. Mentoring should be provided by a Board certified clinician (BCN) and may be done remotely via e-mail and telephone except for the two hours of required face to face contact.

A. Mentoring Contact Hours

The mentor and candidate must have a minimum of 25 contact hours together. This time is to be used for the review of 10 sessions of personal neurofeedback, 100 patient/client sessions, and 10 case conference presentations. At least two of these hours must involve direct face-to-face observation during which time the mentor is to directly observe the candidate in his/her technical expertise, proficiency in placements of electrodes, patient/client preparation/orientation to neurofeedback procedures, etc. The remaining 23 hours may be accomplished through either face-to-face, electronic, or phone contact or any combination of these means. If distance is prohibitive for this meeting with your mentor, any professional who also meets all the requirements of a BCIA approved mentor may be used to complete the 2 hours of direct observation.

B. Practical experience

1. Personal Neurofeedback Training: The mentor should review the candidate’s self-regulatory skills demonstrated with no less than 10 sessions (minimum 20 minutes/session) of personal training involving neurofeedback. The candidate may elect to become the patient/client to be taught by the mentor or review their completed neurofeedback sessions with the mentor.
2. Client Contact: The mentor should review the candidate’s work with patients/clients. Client contact and treatment should be done with a variety of conditions and should involve not less than six clients over a minimum of 10 weeks. This should be done through conducting at least 100 neurofeedback sessions (minimum 20 minutes/session). The mentor should make sure the candidate has good skills in neurofeedback as well as proper and proficient use of equipment and hook-up techniques
3. Case Study Presentations: The candidate should demonstrate good skills in assessment, setting up a treatment plan and treatment sessions. This should be demonstrated with no less than 10 case study presentations. Ideally these should be actual cases being handled by the candidate but it may also involve cases presented by the mentor to broaden the candidate’s exposure to a wide variety of cases.

VIII. Continuing Education Credit

In order to receive accredited (Category A) hours for BCIA recertification, an approved Mentor Application should be on file with BCIA. A mentor may earn 5 Accredited (Category A) hours for each pre-approved candidate who is mentored for a minimum of 15 contact hours.

IX. Clinical Mentoring for Non-Credentialed Providers

BCIA has confirmed its support for our BCIA Professional Standards and Ethical Principles of Biofeedback stating that practitioners must operate within applicable local, state, and federal laws as well as in accordance with the ethical principles of their profession/occupation. BCIA requires that when treating a medical or psychological disorder, one must carry a current health care license/credential in a BCIA approved health care field issued by the state in which you practice or agree to work under the supervision of an appropriately credentialed health care professional. Practitioners should also operate within the limits of their expertise, training and professional license. Mentorship does not substitute for supervision required for professional licensure or supervision required for insurance reimbursement.