

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST THE BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY - LESSON 1

For the past year, in response to SDPA members' complaints about their contacts with the California State Board of Psychology, the SDPA Government Affairs Committee has been conducting an investigation into these complaints. In follow-up to a Survey we emailed to SDPA members in Fall of 2022, the GAC members have been conducting phone interviews with volunteer respondents about their experiences with the Board of Psychology. Members' complaints against the BoP fall into two categories – Administrative (delays in processing licensing applications, etc.) and Enforcement (harsh Board disciplinary actions against psychologists for non-egregious mistakes, etc). Detailed results of our investigation will be published in the coming months. However, there were consistent recommendations from our member respondents about two steps that SDPA members can take immediately to protect against an enforcement action by the Board of Psychology. We do not want to wait to share these simple, important steps, so here they are:

1. **PURCHASE THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF ADDITIONAL LICENSING BOARD DEFENSE INSURANCE.** The Trust Sponsored Professional Liability Insurance Program automatically covers only \$10,000 for Licensing Board Defense. However, it offers a maximum add-on Licensing Board Defense Insurance coverage of \$100,000, for an additional premium of \$75 annually. Some respondents against whom the Board of Psychology took disciplinary actions reported incurring legal fees of over \$100,000 for their Board defense. In our email survey of SDPA members, a whopping 40% of respondents reported that they had NO additional Licensing Board defense insurance.
2. **CONSULT WITH AN ATTORNEY BEFORE RESPONDING TO ANY BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY INQUIRY OR BEFORE RESPONDING TO A SUBPOENA OR LEGAL REQUEST OF ANY KIND.** This advice holds true regardless of how trivial or benign the question from the Board or the legal request might seem. In addition to the SDPA membership benefit of one free legal consultation from our SDPA attorney per year, the Trust provides free legal consultations as part of your professional liability insurance benefit. CPA also provides one free legal consult per year for its members.

Always remember that the California Board of Psychology exists to serve the consumers, not to serve the psychologists. Protect yourself!

Janet Farrell, Ph.D.

SDPA Government Affairs Committee