

Law on mental health care professions

The 30th 2016 mail the law concerning the Mental Health Care Professions in Belgium was voted. This law regulates two newly created health care professions namely 'clinical psychologist' and 'clinical orthopedagogue'. These professions are regulated in the range of autonomous professions regulated by the general law on the professions in health care (Royal decree nr 78 on the Practice of the health care professions¹

The practice of psychotherapy is also regulated in the context of this RD 78 as a specialized professional activity of the health care professions of physicians, clinical psychologists and clinical orthopedagogues.

For professionals exercising the new health care professions and practicing psychotherapy who do not respond to the new legal criteria large transitory measures are installed in order to regulate their professional practice.

In the law 'Clinical psychology is defined as the regular exercise of autonomous acts, towards humans and in the context of a scientifically based clinical psychological framework, having as a purpose to prevent, evaluate, screen or apply a psycho-diagnosis of real or supposed psychological or psychosomatic suffering and the treatment or guidance of this person'.

Recognition as a clinical psychologist and being authorized to practice clinical psychology requires a university degree of Master in psychology in the domain of clinical psychology including internship, supervised post-master internship of minimum one year in an aggregated health care institution under the supervision of a aggregated internship supervisor and a certain amount of clinical experience.

In the near future the different concepts of the law will be operationalized by the Federal Council for the mental health care professions. Most importantly the concept of 'clinical' will be defined more clearly. If the advice of the Superior Health Council (CSS, 1915)² is followed, the concept will refer to the entire field of application of scientific psychology in the large domain of health care. This includes a diverse range of psychological assessment methods and interventions in the mental and somatic health care aiming at psycho-education, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of people suffering from psychological problems or disturbances.

N. Van Broeck

More information on the website of the Ministry of Health and Social affairs

FR: <http://www.health.belgium.be/fr/sante/professions-de-sante/professions-de-la-sante-mentale>

NL: <http://www.health.belgium.be/nl/gezondheid/zorgberoepen/geestelijke-gezondheidszorgberoepen>

¹ Arrêté Royal sur l'exercice des professions de soins de santé-LPSS; Koninklijk besluit 78 omtrent de uitoefening van de beroepen in de gezondheidszorg-WUG)

² Avis n° 9194 of the Superior Health Council

