



ALASKA STATE BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS

POSITION STATEMENT: CONTINUING EDUCATION – BEHAVIORAL ADDICTION

Date: August 24, 2021

Status: Approved

Organized by: The Alaska State Board of Social Work Examiners

Adopted by: The Alaska State Board of Social Work Examiners

PURPOSE:

The Alaska Board of Social Work Examiners takes the following position regarding behavioral addictions.

HISTORY:

Multiple inquiries were submitted to the Licensing Examiner for the Alaska State Board of Social Work Examiners regarding the acceptance of Behavioral Addiction continuing education courses being applicable for Substance Abuse Education required under 12 AAC 18.112 and 12 AAC 18.210.

SUPPORTIVE DISCUSSION AND MATERIALS:

A behavioral addiction is identified as a behavior that produces short-term reward that may create persistent behavior despite knowledge of adverse consequences and diminished control over the behavior. The essential feature of a behavioral addiction is the failure to resist an impulse, drive, or temptation to perform an act that is harmful to the person while the repetitive engagement in these behaviors will ultimately interfere with the persons functioning in other life domains.

SUMMARY:

Although behavioral and substance addictions share many similarities there is not enough evidence to diagnostically classify a behavioral addiction as a substance addiction. Furthermore, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th Edition (DSM-5) separates substance related disorder and addictive disorders, identifying “gambling disorder” as a “non-substance-related disorder.”

Although there is currently insufficient data to classify other proposed behavioral addictions at this time, other examples of a behavioral addiction may include but are not limited to:

- Compulsive Shopping/Buying
- Internet Addiction
- Video/Computer Game Addiction
- Sexual Addiction
- Pathological Skin Picking
- Excessive Tanning
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders