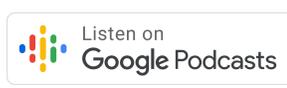


42| Licensure in Psychology: Purpose and Process – With Dr. Joel Kamper

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Speakers: Joel Kamper, Ryan Van Patten, John Bellone



Intro Music 00:00



Ryan Van Patten 00:17

Welcome, everyone, to Navigating Neuropsychology: A voyage into the depths of the brain and behavior. I'm Ryan Van Patten...

John Bellone 00:24



...and I'm John Bellone. Today we're talking all about the licensure process for becoming a psychologist including what the requirements are, when and how to apply, study strategies for the "E Triple P" (EPPP), which is the national licensure exam, and also a bit about the new EPPP Part 2. We'll walk you through the process and help you prepare for the different steps along the way. This episode will be specific to trainees, obviously those who have not yet obtained their psychology license. Unlike many of our episodes, which are targeted to the field of neuropsychology, this episode is applicable to anyone who would consider becoming licensed as a psychologist. So to those up-and-coming neuropsychologists out there, please feel free to share this episode with all of your psychologist friends. We had Dr. Joel Kamper join us for this conversation. Joel is a board certified neuropsychologist at the Tampa VA. Joel has lectured multiple times on licensure in psychology and he played a role in the development of the EPPP Part 2 that was just rolled out in certain states, which is why we thought he would be a particularly appropriate person to have on for this episode. So, without further delay, here's our conversation about licensure with Joel.



Intro Music 01:36



John Bellone 01:45

Joel, welcome to NavNeuro. We're really excited to have you.



Joel Kamper 01:48

Excited to be here. Thank you.

John Bellone 01:49



So maybe we should just give a quick overview for our audience about today's episode. So psychology licensure requirements really differ from state to state, there are some consistencies across states. It also varies widely by country, so today's discussion is going to pertain pretty much to the U.S. - maybe Canada, it will be somewhat applicable to Canadians. But really, it's U.S. focused. In order to make this episode useful we are going to want to focus on the areas where we can talk in generalities. With that said, though, there are some core requirements for licensure - education, degree, supervised clinical hours, EPPP, the application form - every state requires some version of those. Many states also have a jurisprudence exam, which we'll be talking about. But we're going to just start with a few general questions, and then we'll tackle each of the specific areas in turn.

We're going to keep this more discussion based. We will have questions specifically for you, Joel, but I'm licensed and Ryan is almost across the finish line. He's done everything except for submitting the application form, I think. [laughs] He's trying to figure out what state to get licensed in.



Ryan Van Patten 02:59

Which, as we will talk about today, matters a lot.



John Bellone 03:01

It does.



Joel Kamper 03:01

Yes, absolutely.



John Bellone 03:03

Okay. So Ryan, you want to get us started with the first question?

Ryan Van Patten 03:06



Sure. Yeah. So the term "psychologist" is pretty broad. There are research psychologists, school psychologists, clinical psychologists, IO psychologists, and not all psychologists must be licensed. So, Joel, under what circumstances do we need a license in order to do our jobs?

Joel Kamper 03:23



Good question. Typically it's anyone who's providing any sort of health service. So, certainly, clinical psychologists. School psychologists typically need a license. Some IO psychologists will get licensed, but they do not necessarily need to depending on their area of practice. And research folks - like an experimental psychologist typically would not need to get licensed. So really, it's something designed for health service delivery. If you're providing any sort of service to the public.

John Bellone 03:54



Awesome. We should briefly mention how some states provide an opportunity to practice under a supervisor's license outside of a formal training program and before even getting licensed themselves. So, for example, I practice in California, and in California, there's a term "registered psychologist" where someone must have a doctorate and have accrued 1500 hours of qualified supervised professional

experience. Can you think of any other exceptions to people who are practicing under someone else's license but they've already got their doctorate? Other than postdoc?

Joel Kamper 04:27



Right. I mean, some of the definitions vary. So there are other states, I know Michigan is one, but there are plenty of others that have some sort of, like a tiered licensure model like you guys have in California. So that might be called "provisional psychologist" or there's different terms for it, but it's the same thing. It's often folks who have a master's degree, who are either working towards their doctorate or have their doctorate, but are working towards getting the number of hours. You mentioned postdoc experiences as sort of that structured licensed setting where you're working under your supervisors license, but most states, in fact probably all states, would allow for you to accrue hours in what most people would call just a job - where you're working, but you'd have to have a licensed person on site who's providing some sort of supervision. But it doesn't have to be a structured formal postdoc program necessarily.

John Bellone 05:20



And also, even pre-doctoral work where we're working under someone else's license, we're seeing patients on our own years before we get our doctorates. But, you're right, there are some specific requirements like that someone is on-site, a certain amount of supervision hours, things like that, that are going to vary state by state.

Joel Kamper 05:37



And it also goes the other way a little bit, too. So I practice in the VA here in Florida, in Tampa, and I know in our hospital system, and probably most big hospital systems, even if someone is licensed, unless they are credentialed by the hospital system, they still practice under their supervisor's license. So most of my residents are already licensed, but they couldn't go out and practice independently in the hospital system because they couldn't get credentialed to do that. So they're still under my license anyway.

John Bellone 06:04



Yeah, good point. Yeah, I had my license before finishing postdoc.

Ryan Van Patten 06:07



Yeah, the credentialing process is important as well. So I don't want to overlook this next question. It may seem obvious to us, but imagine someone wasn't familiar with the purpose of licensure, and asked you like, "Why do psychologists need to be licensed at all? What's the purpose of going through this process?" What would you say to them?

Joel Kamper 06:27



I feel like this is a - isn't this like a WAIS-III question?

John Bellone 06:31



[laughs]

Joel Kamper 06:33



No, that's a good question. So licenses, in general, are designed to protect the public. So it's supposed to be a mark that you've achieved some minimum level of competence in order to deliver safe, effective services for whatever that might be. So competence is sort of the "word of the day" versus "proficiency" or something like that. Because, with competence, we're speaking to that minimum floor - what do people need to be able to do or know in order to safely practice in that field? And, for us, it's getting licensed, jumping through the hoops, passing the requirements, like you said. But it's meant to protect the public and show that you have the training and aren't just a guy off the street.

John Bellone 07:18



Yeah, I'll score that as a 2-point response for you. [laughs]

Joel Kamper 07:22



[laughs]

Ryan Van Patten 07:22



[laughs] I might go with 1.

Joel Kamper 07:23



All right, all right. [laughs]



John Bellone 07:27

[laughs]

Joel Kamper 07:27

So another thing to keep in mind, too, is that in most, if not all, jurisdictions - and when I say jurisdictions, I'm talking about states or Canadian provinces - the term "psychologist", "licensed psychologist", something like derivative thereof is a protected term. So you could get sued for malpractice if you call yourself that and are not. There are other professional terms people use, like licensed neuropsychologist, which is not really a thing. You're a licensed psychologist who is practicing neuropsychology. But that psychologist term is special and in most, if not all jurisdictions, is going to be protected to some degree. You need the license to call yourself that.



John Bellone 08:07

Yeah, good point. Again, to protect the public because they don't know, right? If someone's calling himself a psychologist, they should have the training to do that.



Joel Kamper 08:15

Right. It's like someone who writes after their name, you know, "Ph.D., comma, ABD". We all know that means that they're trying to skate by with not having quite finished.



Ryan Van Patten 08:24

[laughs]



Joel Kamper 08:26

But, a patient may not know what that means and thinks that it's an extra special certification someone's got or something like that. So there's all these terms that we're fluent and familiar with that the general public probably doesn't know. And so yeah, it's kind of that protection.



Ryan Van Patten 08:40

Yeah, we shouldn't expect them to know, it's not their job.



John Bellone 08:43

Right.





Ryan Van Patten 08:43

So it's good that we have that requirement.



John Bellone 08:47

What is the ABD?



Ryan Van Patten 08:48

All but dissertation.



John Bellone 08:49

Oh, all but dissertation. ABD, right, right, right. [laughs]



Joel Kamper 08:52

Or I've seen, like, Ph.D.-C or Psy.D.-C. I don't remember what the C means.



John Bellone 08:59

Oh, like candidate, maybe?



Joel Kamper 09:02

Yeah, yeah.



Ryan Van Patten 09:02

No. Oh, that's terrible.



Joel Kamper 09:04

Yeah. I've seen that kind of thing.



John Bellone 09:05

I haven't seen that. That's pretty egregious.



Ryan Van Patten 09:07

Yeah. Because you are benefiting from all of the prestige of the Ph.D., and then no one knows what "C" means.



John Bellone 09:15

[laughs] It looks better actually.



Ryan Van Patten 09:16

It could be the first day of grad school and you could say Ph.D.-C, right?



Joel Kamper 09:20

[laughs]



John Bellone 09:20

[laughs] You have an extra letter than everybody else.



Ryan Van Patten 09:23

They think you're boarded in something and they don't know what it is.



Joel Kamper 09:27

Extra fancy. That's right.



John Bellone 09:28

Right. Right. So to make it clear to our audience, this is, yeah, this is not good.

[laughs]



Ryan Van Patten 09:32

[laughs] Yeah.



John Bellone 09:34

Who's in charge, generally, of licensing psychologists?



Joel Kamper 09:38

The state licensing board or provincial licensing board. So every jurisdiction has its own licensing board, which is semi-independent. All of the jurisdictions together make up ASPPB, the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards. APA, as a professional organization, does not license psychologists. It's up to the state licensing board. It's more of a regulatory function.



Ryan Van Patten 10:02

But APA does interface with the licensing boards. For example, if there are ethical complaints, correct?

Joel Kamper 10:09



I believe so. Yes. I don't think APA can intervene because the licensing board is the one that grants that license. But if someone was accused of ethical misconduct, it's most likely going to be the APA Ethics Code that's used as the basis for that. So APA provides the framework, but they don't have an active role, typically, in the licensure process.

Ryan Van Patten 10:32



Right. They would receive the ethics complaint - you know, there's the APA code for psychologists - and then they, say, that the complaint is adjudicated and it is determined that the person is guilty, they would take it to the licensing board, right? You could lose your license from an ethical complaint that it's submitted to the APA.

John Bellone 10:50



As long as it goes then to the next step. Yeah.

Ryan Van Patten 10:53



Right.

Joel Kamper 10:53



Correct. Right. It doesn't need to be illegal necessarily to lose your license. But if you engage in unethical practice, you can lose your license. And APA, the Ethics Code and other materials that they provide are partially the basis for that. Absolutely.

John Bellone 11:08

Right. Right. They provide the regulation. Yeah.



So let's get into the specific steps required for licensure. An easy place to start is education. So my understanding is that most states require a doctoral degree in psychology, Ph.D., or Psy.D. are the most common. I think you can also have an Ed.D, right? Doctorate of education.

Joel Kamper 11:30



Yes.

John Bellone 11:30



It helps if this degree comes from an APA-accredited program because that ensures the person has been adequately trained. If it's not APA-accredited, then the candidate for licensure has to submit academic materials - they have to prove that they've met the training requirements. So can you tell us more about that step? Just the education piece in general?

Joel Kamper 11:51



Yeah, so you're absolutely right. A doctorate or doctoral degree is necessary for full licensure. I know in some states - Michigan being one of them but there are others, that's just the one I'm most familiar with - that you can get a type of license at a master's level. I don't know if you guys have anything like that in California, too? Like a psychological assistant level? Or something like that?

John Bellone 12:17



Yes, definitely you can. Psych assistant.

Joel Kamper 12:19



So you're not a fully licensed psychologist. There are steps along the way. But essentially, I think in every jurisdiction, you need a doctoral degree to be a fully licensed psychologist practicing independently. Yes.

John Bellone 12:32



And again, those are Ph.D.s, Psy.D., Ed.D. I don't know if there are others that you can have. I'm not sure.

Joel Kamper 12:38



I'm not aware of any others. It's possible there's a legacy degree floating around there somewhere. But typically, it's a Ph.D., Psy.D., or Ed.D., like you said, in some sort of professional psychology. So it could be clinical, counseling, school psych, there are others. But like I said, the research folks, someone who gets a degree in experimental psychology, or there's the odd person that just has a doctoral degree in "psychology", not anything more than that - those folks typically wouldn't have the requirements or really the need to get licensed.

Ryan Van Patten 13:11



Makes sense.



John Bellone 13:12

I guess they could, right? If they - they would have to seek further training and...



Ryan Van Patten 13:16

...retread.



Joel Kamper 13:18

Right. And to your question about the steps if you don't come from an accredited program - so I'm trying to avoid that phrase "it depends on the jurisdiction"...

[laughs]



Ryan Van Patten 13:29

[laughs]



Joel Kamper 13:30

But I know it can actually vary quite wildly. So here in Florida, it's written into the law that you need to have graduated from an APA-accredited program. Period. So if you didn't - I know folks who have been practicing for 20 years, who moved here and wanted to practice, but didn't have that checkmark. There are ways around it - getting boarded, getting your ABPP is one, but there are other ways around it. But for some folks, that could be a stumbling block that they can't overcome. I think you guys in California have been a bit more lenient. But I just reading, in preparing for this podcast, that I think the California board is also moving to tighten up those regulations a bit. They talk about a program that's accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the US Department of Education. To my knowledge, that is APA. I don't know of any others that are accredited by the US Department of Education. There may be, but I think more jurisdictions are moving that way.



John Bellone 14:30

Right. Clearly the safest way to become a psychologist is to go to an APA-accredited grad program and then there's no questions.



Ryan Van Patten 14:39

Yeah, I think you said, Joel, that one way around the inability to get licensed due to attending a non-APA-accredited institution was to get boarded. But don't you have to be licensed in order to get boarded? You couldn't get boarded if you weren't already licensed. Like, you couldn't get boarded in neuropsychology if you didn't have a psych license, I believe.



Joel Kamper 14:57

You're absolutely right about that. I was thinking - so if you're coming from a state that's more lenient, so if you've been practicing for a couple decades...



Ryan Van Patten 15:05

I see.



Joel Kamper 15:06

So I know of people, and I'm sure we'll get to this more in a minute - but same thing with postdoctoral hours - people who graduated and practiced in states that didn't require postdoctoral hours at all, and they moved to a state that does, it can be hard to get licensed. Getting boarded is one way around that.



Ryan Van Patten 15:23

I see.



Joel Kamper 15:23

Although that being said, it's certainly possible, and I'm not 100% sure, that to get an ABPP you need to have graduated from an APA-accredited program. So that really is the safest way.



John Bellone 15:36

Right. Right.



Ryan Van Patten 15:37

The fact that things vary so much by state makes it so very complicated. [laughs]



Joel Kamper 15:42

Mm-hmm.



John Bellone 15:43

Yeah, especially if you don't know where you're going to end up, right? A lot of us travel - almost all of us travel for residency and postdoc and jobs and you never know where you're going. This is Ryan's dilemma. Yeah.

Joel Kamper 15:56



Right. And there are some reciprocity movements that are emerging. I know, I think it's called PSYPACT, the ASPPB has launched where there are 11 states where you can practice, not completely, but some, in other jurisdictions. I think telehealth is the big area that they're targeting, without getting an additional license in that jurisdiction. So if you're practicing in Georgia and want to do telemedicine with someone who lives in Alabama, for instance, if both of those states have signed on, you could do that without having to get an extra license. Otherwise, you're going to collect licenses like baseball cards and get a license for every jurisdiction that you're seeing a patient in.



Ryan Van Patten 16:34

[laughs] One for each state.



John Bellone 16:34

Right, California is pretty strict with those in terms of teleneuropsychology, telepsychology. There's certain rules if you see someone outside of the state. Or if you move to another state, you have only a certain amount of time to get licensed. It's complicated.



Ryan Van Patten 16:50

Yeah. So let's move on to supervised clinical hours. Again, states vary with respect to how many hours a candidate must have accrued in order to be eligible. I've heard numbers ranging from 1500 to 6000, which is a big range. To your knowledge, what is typically required? How should candidates be recording their hours? And at what point in their training can they accrue these hours?



Joel Kamper 17:14

Those are all good questions. So as far as the number, it does vary widely and wildly. I think most often that has to do with what are counted as supervision hours. So I know here in Florida, it's 4000 hours, and 3000 to 4000 is about average for most jurisdictions. But ours is 4000 hours, 2000 of which are your internship automatically. And then you need one year of supervised post-internship practice. So either a formal postdoc or a work environment where someone licensed is supervising you. I think for you guys in California, it's 3000. I would imagine the state that has 6000, some of those states are allowing you to count practicum hours and other hours. I don't know of any jurisdiction that requires 6000 hours that all have to be internship and beyond, because that would be a lot. But typically, that

would be like one year prior to internship to capture those practicum hours too.
Okay, what else did you ask there?



Ryan Van Patten 18:17

How should we be recording our hours?



Joel Kamper 18:19

Ah, yes. So that depends on the jurisdiction, of course. [laughs]



Ryan Van Patten 18:25

[laughs]



John Bellone 18:25

We warned everybody up front that we were going to do this. So. [laughs]



Joel Kamper 18:29

Yeah, I know, it's like a bad phrase. I'm trying not to say it. But, different states have different requirements for that, too. So, again, I'm most familiar with Florida. We have a form that the person supervising your 2000 postdoctoral hours signs their name to. It takes about three minutes and you mail it in, and that's it. It's just an attestation. I think you guys have a log or something that has to be completed, right?



John Bellone 18:54

So it actually has to be completed before. There's a supervision agreement that has to happen with your supervisor - in California we're talking about - before you actually start your training. So this is both for internship and postdoc. So it's good to look up your requirements in your state before you even start. As early as possible. Yeah.



Joel Kamper 19:14

Yeah, that would be my recommendation for folks. Just as an aside, if you don't know which state you might seek licensure in and you're considering a couple, whichever state has the most stringent requirements go with that upfront. That way you're safe. I know California used to require the supervisor to be licensed in California and it was a lot of hoops to jump through to get that waived. I know now that you guys have an out of state training option that's a bit more lenient, but there's still a couple extra forms to fill out.

John Bellone 19:44



Yeah, I did my internship and postdoc outside of California. So what I did was a little bit different from someone who got fully trained in California and then practiced here. Yeah. I'm not quite sure.

Joel Kamper 19:55



I've heard of states requiring supervision hours to be recorded. So, for instance, all of the residents in our postdoc programs here in Tampa have to keep a record of all of their postdoctoral supervision hours - so individual and group supervision hours. Florida doesn't require that necessarily. We use it to, you know, if there was ever a question by a licensing board that we have a record of that. But some states will require that you actually submit that. And I believe there's a couple - I want to say Wisconsin is one - that actually require you to track your face-to-face clinical hours too, in some sort of meticulous format, which is kind of a bear. That's the only one I know of that has that requirement.

Ryan Van Patten 20:36



Sounds like grad school all over again.

Joel Kamper 20:38



Yeah, I know. It's like using the what? Time2Track or something?

Ryan Van Patten 20:41



Yeah.

Joel Kamper 20:42



Right. Right. Right.

John Bellone 20:43



Time2Track, I forgot about that.

Ryan Van Patten 20:44



I have nightmares about that. [laughs]

John Bellone 20:45



Yeah. Yeah. [laughs] So just to echo what you said, because it's really important, people should look at - even if there are three or four states that are considering

future licensure - they should look at the requirements for all those states and pick the one that's most stringent, and then try to align what your training is, and the requirements with that state. And track your hours. I mean, even if your state doesn't require it, it's probably just good practice. You don't have to be so meticulous unless your state requires that level of detail. But just to track it, I think, is a good idea in general.



Joel Kamper 21:16

Yeah, definitely.

John Bellone 21:18



There are some places where you can bank your credentials ahead of time, too. So once you check off certain boxes, you finish certain parts, you've finished internship, there are some - there's the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards, ASPPB, which you mentioned before. And also I think the National Psychologists Trainee Register allows you to bank credentials. I personally didn't do this, but I think some people I've talked to have found it beneficial. I don't know what your take on it is?

Joel Kamper 21:48



Well, I did not do it either. I can see it being beneficial, particularly for folks who aren't exactly sure where they're going to land as far as jurisdiction. Yeah, and you can bank your exam scores like the EPPP. You can bank internship and postdoc information. It's also quite helpful if you're someone who sees yourself either practicing across state lines and needing additional licenses or relocating. So folks who, let's say, someone's in the military and their spouse is a civilian psychologist, and they're moving around some, where you need that extra mobility. Just one place to go for everything rather than having to submit different items all the time. I think for some people, quite honestly, it's an anxiety coping mechanism to see those little check marks and you see that, "I've checked this thing off." I mean, it is helpful. It's one of those things, you're being sure that you're doing things the right way. And there's certainly nothing wrong with that. I believe that there is a form of that credentials bank that's now free through ASPPB that anyone can do. I'm less familiar with the National Psychologists Trainee Register, but I think they have some sort of similar arrangement.



John Bellone 23:04

Yeah. And we'll link to a couple of these credentialing banks in case listeners are interested. And yeah, you can put your transcript there, letters of recommendation,

supervisor forms, things like that - internship, what's it called? Internship diploma, those kinds of things.



Ryan Van Patten 23:18

Yeah. So I think we can transition and move on to everyone's very favorite test.



Joel Kamper 23:24

[laughs]



Ryan Van Patten 23:25

Joel, I get the sense that you know what I'm going to say. [laughs]



John Bellone 23:28

[laughs]



Joel Kamper 23:28

Oh, I couldn't possibly. [laughs]

Ryan Van Patten 23:31



So for those who are listening and aren't familiar, this is the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology, or "E Triple P" (EPPP), as we call it. The EPPP is a 225 item, multiple choice test. Covers areas in psychology, such as social psych, stats, research methods, IO psychology, clinical assessment, and therapy, among others. All states require the EPPP. It's scored on a 200 to 800 scale, and a passing score is typically a scaled score of 500, or 70% of the items correct. So, to start off, what advice do you have for licensure applicants as they prepare to take the EPPP?

Joel Kamper 24:12



My advice - and I run our licensure, I don't want to call it a support group because it's more than that, but there's an education seminar we have here at my hospital that I run on licensure information and then we have support resources. So I tell everyone, "You'll get through it. You'll be fine. You'll get through it." I think the EPPP causes a lot of anxiety and for good reason. I mean, it's a big deal. But people sometimes will practice study habits that are less beneficial, or really have a hard time managing test anxiety and that can be detrimental. But just take a deep breath. Everyone goes through this. Everyone tells me they're going to be the first person in, you know, whatever to fail and they'll be fine. People do fail, but you just

take it again. You'll be fine. So I just want to kind of - a word of calm as sort of the first thing there.



John Bellone 25:06

I sometimes referred to this as people going through the Kubler-Ross stages of grief, where...



Joel Kamper 25:12

Yes. [laughs]



John Bellone 25:12

...first you're in disbelief, like, you're not going to take this. There's some way you're not - you're going to get licensed, but you don't have to take this test. And then you start to come to terms with that. But then you get upset about it and you go through the anger phase. You kind of go through it all. I tell students that the sooner you can get to acceptance of the fact that you have to take this test...



Joel Kamper 25:22

[laughs] Right.



John Bellone 25:27

And you just have to put in the effort. You'll get through it, like you said, but you have to just get through that initial disbelief phase and an anger phase, because we all go through that.



Ryan Van Patten 25:42

Are these your students, John? Or is this you?



John Bellone 25:44

[laughs] This is me.



Ryan Van Patten 25:45

I get the sense you're introspecting.



Joel Kamper 25:48

You know, nothing wrong with that.



John Bellone 25:50

Yeah. So I just think that's funny.



Joel Kamper 25:53

One of my residents this year got me a sheriff's badge. Because I'm referred to as the "licensure sheriff". I tell everyone to get themselves licensed. So she gifted me a sheriff's badge. Made me wear it to my talk this year.



John Bellone 26:06

Oh, that's awesome.



Joel Kamper 26:07

That was fun. Yeah.



Ryan Van Patten 26:08

Yeah. So maybe it'd be helpful if we, each of us, share our ideas and tips on study strategies for the EPPP and then in general. I mean, the EPPP is a big test. It covers many different areas, it has the greatest breadth of any test we might take. So, John, you want to start? What were some of your study strategies for the EPPP?



John Bellone 26:30

Yeah, I took it I think, like, over five years ago now. So I'm a little rusty about what the test involved or what my strategies were. For me, spaced repetition is the name of the game. I can't learn anything unless it's repeated several times. And so usually, I'll study something, and then I'll put it down, and then I'll study it the next day or a week later, depending on how much time I have to study. But the spaced repetition is really essential for my learning process.



Ryan Van Patten 27:00

Yeah, I would really concur with that. I definitely agree with spaced repetition. Some people prefer to wait until close to the test and then just cram. You know, that can work for people who learn more quickly than I do, potentially. But especially with a test like this, again, where there's so much breadth and so many different areas to review, and some new information to learn as well. Cramming is really really hard and it's not - the purpose of the EPPP is to ensure that you have broad knowledge in psychology. I approached it in as positive a mindset as I could. To think that this was a chance to brush up on social psychology, on developmental psychology...



John Bellone 27:45

IO.



Ryan Van Patten 27:46

IO is the bane of some clinical psychologists' existence.



Joel Kamper 27:51

[laughs]

Ryan Van Patten 27:51



But there are - I mean, this is scientific work that has happened in these areas that we can benefit from in our lives, in our professional lives. So I know that I'm not going to know everything in these study guides. I'm both reading study guides, I also listen to a lot of audio tracks, which I found helpful during workouts or walks or when I'm driving. Yeah. So that it's just easier to work into my daily life.



John Bellone 28:15

Yeah, my wife, she was such a good sport. Whenever we went on a drive, she would be listening to the study CD that I had. [laughs]



Joel Kamper 28:28

Wow. [laughs]

John Bellone 28:28



She brought some headphones so that she could listen to her music or something. But yeah, Joel, I want to ask you what you think of formal study programs. Personally, I found them to be helpful. I used PsychPrep at the time and did practice exams, practice questions. And then also they had lots of material to study in addition to the audio CDs. So what's your take on those programs?

Joel Kamper 28:52



I think that can be helpful. I think it depends on the person and how they study. So I applaud both of you and your enlightened view to studying and wanting to glean something out of the process. I was a crammer, I'll admit. I am terrible at studying and made myself sign up for the darn thing before I could actually study. I just couldn't sit down to study until I had that, you know, "You're taking this test in X number of weeks" and forced myself to do it. I think for a lot of folks out there if you came from a grad program that has fairly high pass rates - and you can actually

look those up through ASPPB, you can look up your your graduate schools pass rate - most people have, I'd say, probably about 80 to 85% of the knowledge they need to pass the test. IO, school stuff, developmental psych - those were the major areas for me that I needed brushing up on, particularly developmental and IO. But a lot of the basic core knowledge is there. The issue for a lot of people is, you know it, but being able to answer questions and take the test in a structured way can be kind of difficult. I know that ASPPB has some practice tests available, some official ones, but those study programs you mentioned are another great resource. There's lots of practice tests that are offered. What I did was take a practice test, see what my score was, it was shockingly low. I think it was like - so you need a 70% to pass, I think I got a 45% on my first practice test. So I said to myself, "At least it's better than chance." So that was good. [laughs]



John Bellone 30:28

[laughs]

Joel Kamper 30:28

So I scored up the test, I saw the items that I had done poorly in and what areas were mapped on to it - there was a lot of developmental and IO. I had some study guide resources that I read through the materials a few times in those areas, took another test and just kind of repeated. I was able to fairly quickly get myself up to a point where I was doing well. A lot of those tests, I believe, are meant to be extra difficult. So the official ASPPB tests are going to be the most valid for how you're actually going to do. A lot of the third party ones are a little bit more difficult to over-prepare you. So the rule of thumb I heard was about a 10% bump. So on a lot of the third party practice tests, if you're in the mid to high 60s, you should be okay. I found that to be true for myself. Obviously, you don't want to cut it too close. But folks need to remember, this isn't like a GRE or an SAT or something where doing better counts for anything. A 501 is as good as a 799. So other than maybe pride, or you know...



John Bellone 31:35

[laughs] Bragging rights.

Joel Kamper 31:37



Yeah, I mean, it doesn't really behoove folks to over prepare too much. But you want to make sure to account for testing anxiety and some of those other things. Give yourself a buffer, you don't want to cut it too close.



John Bellone 31:48

Yeah. Good point about the test anxiety. Yeah, because that definitely affects everyone to some degree when they sit down in front of the computer.



Ryan Van Patten 31:56

Yeah. And we know in neuropsychology and studying psychometrics that there's a standard error of measurement in every test.



Joel Kamper 32:02

Right.



Ryan Van Patten 32:02

So that applies to us taking the EPPP. There could be a confluence of factors and the day you take the EPPP - anxiety, poor sleep, bad luck on the items that you're guessing on. Such that you may score at the lower end of that range of your true score plus and minus the variability. So you want to study enough so that even the lower end of that range is above the cutoff. That was my idea going in.



John Bellone 32:30

And Joel...



Joel Kamper 32:31

I think...



John Bellone 32:31

Go for it.



Joel Kamper 32:32

That's good. Yeah, no, I think that's a good way to go. For sure.



John Bellone 32:35

You had said that your 40% was better than chance, because it's a four item multiple choice test?



Joel Kamper 32:39

Correct.



John Bellone 32:40

Yep.



Joel Kamper 32:41

Correct. Yes.



John Bellone 32:42

That's good for people to know.

Joel Kamper 32:43



The other thing, just quickly going back to those practice tests, I saved the official practice test for last because I had heard it's the most valid for how you're actually going to do. When I took that I think I got about 15 percentage points higher on that than I did on the third party tests, which was really reassuring to me going in. I took it about a week before. It's like, "Last chance, is there anything you really need to brush up on? Or do you have to even think about rescheduling?" And, you know, that bump was confidence inspiring. My actual score was maybe just a couple points lower than that - so counting for test anxiety. But that's a nice way to go.

John Bellone 33:20



You were living on the edge. For me, I tend to over prepare primarily because the test is quite expensive. So, when I took it I think it was 600 bucks. It probably is going up and will go up. But that was enough to make me sit down and over prepare. [laughs]

Ryan Van Patten 33:35



Yeah, in addition to overall time spent studying, which is an important variable, I think it's important for everyone to think about the strategies they're using for studying and be mindful of that. Plan out how you're going to study and what works best for you. For example, for me - the two of you have been talking about taking practice tests - I took one, but mostly, personally, my study strategy is just a lot of reading, a lot of information. Then I organize it in a way that works for me and focus on areas where I need to learn more. But some people benefit a lot from practice tests and you can use practice tests in different ways. Some people will just, you might take a full practice test and see what score you got, and then adjust your study strategy accordingly. Alternatively, you can take one question at a time, answer a question, go back and check your answer. If it's wrong, look up why it was wrong. Take the next question, and so on. So I encourage listeners who are

studying to think about what has worked for them in the past and be very mindful about how they study. With practice tests for both of you, which of the two methods that I described were you using? Just taking the full test and checking your score? Were you going through one question at a time and looking at the ones you got wrong?

Joel Kamper 34:53



No, it was chunks for me, for sure. So, I think towards the end, I tried to take more full tests. I think right towards the end, I would sit down and make myself do the full practice test in a single session. But early on it was - it wasn't single questions, but it was, maybe, 20 or 30 questions. Then I was getting up and doing like quarter tests at a time. So 50 in a shot. And yeah, not necessarily looking at the overall score of the test, but just on those questions how I was doing. That was nice because it was easier to manage time and those chunks rather than set aside three hours to take a whole practice test.

Ryan Van Patten 35:29



Yeah, that makes sense. One other comment I want to make about what you said, John, about spaced practice is, there is research on memory that shows that spaced practice is better for retention overall. Say you have 10 hours to spend studying. If you spend one hour a day, 10 days in a row versus 10 hours on one day, the former will lead to more learning and retention because that's how our brains work. So in terms of efficiency, I think it's a good idea if possible.

Joel Kamper 36:01



That makes good sense. And I think that goes back to what, Ryan, you're talking about, for listeners to use what method works best for them. There's a lot of truth to that. There are certainly efficient and inefficient ways to study. I think the audio tapes are a fantastic way to study because, yeah, you're not paying maybe quite as close attention as if you're devoting all your attention to it. But it's something that you can be exposed to a lot of that information a lot of times - you know, all the time you're in the car, at the gym, whatever. It's a nice way to study and squeeze in that extra bit of studying that you may not have a chance to do otherwise.



Ryan Van Patten 36:38

Agreed.



John Bellone 36:39

Flashcards, too, work for that as well. Different theories, different psychologists who are associated with those theories. That was helpful for me just to keep in my pocket or to have my phone flashcards.



Joel Kamper 36:50

Yeah, there's an app I think or two? Right?



John Bellone 36:52

There is. Yeah, there are a couple. Yeah, we'll try to link to some of the main ones in the show notes.



Joel Kamper 36:59

Perfect.



John Bellone 36:59

When should students consider taking this exam? So most people take it after they get their doctorate. I did a little bit of a loophole, which I don't know if you - so listeners might not know, Joel and I went to the same grad school. And, Joel, I think - so I took it as comps, actually in grad school, my EPPP. Did this start after you left?



Joel Kamper 37:23

Unfortunately, yes. [laughs]



John Bellone 37:24

Yeah. Right.



Joel Kamper 37:25

It would have been nice. [laughs]



John Bellone 37:26

Yeah. So yeah, talk us through what's typical? And then I can maybe talk a little bit more about what I did.

Joel Kamper 37:32

Sure, absolutely. So just to back up briefly, we're talking about the 500 to pass. I think that's true in every jurisdiction now except, I want to say, New York has some weird way they define it. But it essentially equates to being about 500 anyway. There are different versions of the test, some that are easier than others. So it's roughly 70%. But it might be that you get a hard test, and you don't do as well, but it's a hard test and so it's still about 500. The other thing to keep in mind is some jurisdictions - I know in Texas this is true - that there's different pass cuts, depending on if you're trying to get licensed at a master's level or a doctoral level.



So with those things in mind it's sort of like for those of us who are seeking or have gone through boards, that it's helpful to do it, to take the EPPP, as close to when you learn the knowledge as possible. So there are a number of programs. John and my program, Loma Linda is one, I think University of Houston is another, there's a couple others that have started using the EPPP in place of comps. And there's some benefits to that, namely getting it out of the way. But yeah, waiting until the last minute when you're trying to get licensed at the end of your postdoctoral hours, it's going to be tougher to pass just because that knowledge isn't as fresh. So I would encourage folks to take it as soon as they are able. And that, again, that's going to depend. I know in Florida, we're not actually allowed to take it until we apply for licensure. So the board grants you permission to take it. So students out of graduate programs in Florida might have trouble taking it early. That being said, if you came in having taken it from a grad program at another state that wouldn't be a problem at all, of course. But it's kind of nice that folks are now able to take it a little bit earlier in their training because it's going to be easier when that knowledge is fresh, for sure.

John Bellone 39:25



Definitely. Yeah. So again, this is something that you have to look at the state that you want to get licensed in, practice in, and see what the requirements are for taking the test. Because you have to apply for licensure, and that's part of the process. Right, Ryan, you just went through this. I did a little bit differently, so I'm not as familiar. So you had to apply for licensure or you just took the test without applying?



Ryan Van Patten 39:46

You had to apply for licensure in California.



Joel Kamper 39:48

You applied in California.



Ryan Van Patten 39:49

And like Joel said, then they granted you the ability to take EPPP.



John Bellone 39:53

Right. You didn't have to then follow through with licensure in California. You just take the test.



Ryan Van Patten 39:58

It's one of the steps that goes in your portfolio.

John Bellone 40:00

Yeah, exactly. So that's the key here - is that once you take the test and you pass it, it doesn't matter what state you took it in, or what the rules were in that state. As long as you pass it, you can transfer it to any other state for licensure. So if you take it at the masters level, and you actually pass it the doctoral level, then you can use it later, which is what I did. Anyways, we won't get into that, because it's so rare that grad schools do that. But typically, it's going to be in your postdoctoral years that you're going to take it.



Joel Kamper 40:29

It is rare, but it is becoming more common.



John Bellone 40:32

Which is great. I mean, I really loved that. Like you said, it was nice.

Joel Kamper 40:35

And when we move on to talking about more recent developments in the EPPP, ASPPB has mentioned that they know that students are taking the knowledge portion earlier. And there's some reasons for doing that. I know we've had even interns come in from some of these programs that have allowed their students to take it as comps. So when I'm teaching the class, the interns or residents are like, "Well, I've already passed it." And they're kind of embarrassed. It's like, wow, I mean that's huge. It saves you so much stress later on. For those programs that do that, it is nice.





John Bellone 41:07

It didn't save me too much stress because I was planning my wedding and finishing my dissertation. [laughs]



Joel Kamper 41:13

Wow. [laughs]



John Bellone 41:13

And studying for the EPPP at the same time, which was to the frustrations of my wife, but my now wife. Luckily she married me after all. [laughs]



Joel Kamper 41:22

That's only because you passed, though? Right?



Ryan Van Patten 41:24

Which she now regrets. Just kidding. [laughs]



John Bellone 41:28

[laughs]



Joel Kamper 41:28

No comment. [laughs]



John Bellone 41:30

Let's quickly talk about what happens if they don't pass, right? For the cases that someone doesn't pass, which it happens, and it's nothing to be ashamed about, they can just take it again, right? There's no set amount of times when they can take it. It's not like if they don't pass, you know, the third time, they're not a psychologist ever, right? So talk us through what happens if someone doesn't pass?



Joel Kamper 41:51

You're correct in that they can keep taking it. I don't know of any situation where the Duke of Psychology is going to come and ban you from ever being a psychologist. Thankfully.



Ryan Van Patten 42:00

[laughs]

Joel Kamper 42:00

I've heard stories of people taking it as many as four times to pass and sometimes it's a knowledge thing or an underprepared thing. Sure. But sometimes it's just severe test anxiety. There's lots of reasons folks don't pass. The most unfortunate part to not passing is having to pay that 600 bucks again to register. And I think there's a \$87 site fee. So I think it works out to be like \$687.50, or something like that, give or take a couple cents. So it's, John, like you said, it's certainly not cheap. If you had to do that multiple times, it would be quite expensive. But other than, maybe, I think there's a period of maybe a couple months that you have to wait before taking it again. But, other than that, I don't think there's really any penalties to taking it multiple times.



Ryan Van Patten 42:50

So a moment ago, you alluded to new developments in the EPPP, which are all very exciting.



Joel Kamper 42:56

Yes.



Ryan Van Patten 42:57

So a second exam, or Part 2 the skills, has been added to the EPPP. It's supposed to be more applied as opposed to theoretical. You mentioned Part 1 being the knowledge exam. What can you tell us about Part 2?



John Bellone 43:09

And you actually had some role in the development of this part? Right?



Joel Kamper 43:13

I did, yes.



John Bellone 43:14

Okay. So talk us through both of that.





Ryan Van Patten 43:15

So we can blame you if we are frustrated...



John Bellone 43:18

[laughs]



Joel Kamper 43:18

Yeah, that's what I'm opening myself up to. [laughs]



Ryan Van Patten 43:22

[laughs]

Joel Kamper 43:23

It's certainly not the best news to some folks. I know there are plenty of people who have strong opinions about it one way or another. So wanting to avoid wading into that mess, but do want to point out - so basically, the EPPP, what's now the EPPP 1, I think has been around since the 60s. When that exam was launched, we heard lots of complaints from people about, "Why do we need to get licensed?" "This is just a cash grab." "I know I'm good enough to practice, why do I have to take a test to prove it?" All these arguments that sound eerily familiar these days with the new test. And not to say there's nothing to those, certainly. It really boils down to competency. So EPPP classic, if you will, the EPPP Part 1, is designed to be a knowledge exam - to tap your knowledge of different areas of psychology. And Ryan, I think I felt a little bit of shame for my study strategies. But I think he put it quite eloquently when you talked about actually trying to glean some useful information going forward from studying - so learning about different areas and different theories you can use. That's all well and good, but none of that really measures someone's ability or competency to practice. I mentioned that word "competency" a bit ago, and that's just referring to that basal level of ability, skill, or knowledge depending on the setting that someone should have to practice in a certain area. So back in 2016, there was a fancy survey that went around - you guys, John, you may have seen it, I think it was distributed through licensing boards - basically asking psychologists who are practicing what they felt was important. And that information was taken into account when developing this new exam. It's meant to measure someone's competency to practice. So not knowledge, it's applied knowledge. It's, "Okay, I can name the benefit of exposure therapy for phobias. But if a patient walks through my door with a phobia, will I recognize it and know what to apply?" That's a very different thing. So the new exam, that's its aim.



It has a staged rollout. I don't remember the exact number of jurisdictions, you can read about it on ASPPB's website. But there's a limited number of jurisdictions that are taking it on at first. Some of that, I'm sure, is due to reticence about adopting the exam. But for a lot of jurisdictions, I know Florida being one of them, the EPPP 1 or the regular EPPP, is baked into the state law in such a way that it's going to be difficult to amend that. The states want to kind of see what the rollout looks like before they adopt it. Not every state, certainly, is like that or has their law written the same way. But a lot of jurisdictions that have adopted it are those that have things like oral exams that the state has developed on their own. So it's more defensible to have an objective test versus an oral exam. But yeah, the exam is really designed to measure competence. And, again, it's broad-based competence. Its minimum competence. It's not specialty competence. It's things that every practicing psychologist should know. Excuse me, not know, be competent in. See, there I go.



Ryan Van Patten 46:40

[laughs] Should be able to do.



Joel Kamper 46:43

Should be able to do. Yes, exactly.



Ryan Van Patten 46:44

So it may be less intuitive to people how they might study for this exam. Or if they should.



Joel Kamper 46:52

They definitely should, and I'm sure there'll be some study guides released. I know that there's quite a bit of official material on ASPPB's website, there's a whole EPPP 2 section. My guess is the third party vendors will start releasing study guides soon. Yeah, I mean, studying is a part of any test. I think some of the, like you've pointed to, the apprehension or the fear is because it's sort of an unknown what this is going to look like. I think some of that will diminish with time. But yeah, it's basic abilities and skills that every practicing psychologist should have. So diagnosis, treatment - there's actually a little blurb online about what percent of the exam is from each area. So diagnosis, treatment, assessment, intervention techniques are a huge part of it. Ethics is a big part. Supervision is actually a part of it now. So competency in supervision. And there's a whole host of other areas. But those are the main ones. Things that are important for being a competent practicing psychologist.



John Bellone 47:58

Do you want to tell us a little bit about your role in the development? Just so listeners know where to send hate mail to? [laughs]



Joel Kamper 48:04

Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's always a...



John Bellone 48:08

No, I'm kidding.

Joel Kamper 48:09

So I'm involved in one of the competency domains. I'm the lead person, I guess you call it. I'm the committee person who's responsible for developing content in one of those major competency domains. So there's a bunch of volunteers from all over the country, all walks of practice - clinicians who work with adults such as myself, there's child folks, there's IO folks, there's school folks, of all ranges of how long they've been in practice. And they're volunteers who write the questions. And then those are, of course, vetted. But the questions are in certain competency areas, and I head up one of those teams.



John Bellone 48:53

Gotcha.

Ryan Van Patten 48:54

To just reiterate what you said, Joel, and support it. Competency to practice is incredibly important. We are talking about clinical psychology as a focus of our podcast and clinical neuropsychology. And, certainly, theoretical knowledge is incredibly important to that. But there's another step that we need to be able to do when a patient walks through the door, which is to be able to think on our feet, to take a case history, to interview a person to get the information from them that we need, and come to conclusions and make decisions that are helpful for them. That is not the exact same thing as being a library of knowledge about theories. Theories are really important, foundations have to be there, but we also need to be able to apply them. So that's all to say that this Part 2, which tests that, is important. We need to be able to have those skills as well.



Joel Kamper 49:49



I know there's people who - I completely agree with you and thank you for saying that. There's people who will ask, "Why now? Why is this test...?" Most other healthcare professionals, I think up to and including social work, but certainly medicine and all the others, have had a competency or a skills based exam in place for quite a while in the case of many of those professions. I know psychologists, on the whole, don't make as much money as physicians. Their tests are much more expensive than ours, and there's additional hoops to jump through. But essentially, this is the way that healthcare is moving, just in general, and psychology is a part of that. And like you said, Ryan, a very important piece of that is to be competent to practice. For sure.



Ryan Van Patten 50:31

Yeah.



John Bellone 50:32

Just to clarify, this test only needs to be taken by people who have not yet become licensed. So everyone who has taken EPPP and passed before it rolls out in their state or region, they don't have to take it. Right?



Joel Kamper 50:44

That is an excellent point. Yes.



John Bellone 50:46

Okay, good.



Joel Kamper 50:46

And you can read - there's good FAQs, again, on ASPPB's website about all this. But I am not aware of any situation where if you were licensed and practicing that you would need to take it again. It just rolled out, I think this month, in the jurisdictions where it was going to start to be rolled out - the ones that adopted it first. So if folks haven't gotten licensed before January 1, 2020, they may have to take it, depending on the jurisdiction they're in. They can look, check with their jurisdiction to see or you can look online. It gets murkier if, let's say, you're wanting to get licensed in California, which has not adopted it at the moment quite yet. And then you move to a state that has, before you get licensed, but you passed everything else - you might have to take it. So there's going to be an adjustment period in some situations where someone may have to take it. But if you're a

licensed person practicing, you shouldn't. I'm not aware that that would be a thing. That would be a rude awakening to a lot of folks. Certainly. [laughs]



John Bellone 51:47

Definitely. Yeah. So let's move on from the EPPP. So if all this didn't seem like enough for listeners, some states require a jurisprudence exam, which is separate.



Joel Kamper 51:59

Yes, they do.



John Bellone 51:59

California is one of those, and it's one of the longer exams out there. So maybe we can just give a very quick overview of these types of exams.

Joel Kamper 52:09

Yeah, before we do, I briefly mentioned oral exams. Just a quick touch on those. There are some jurisdictions that, in the past, have had actual oral exams. Those are run and developed by the state. Those are not developed by ASPPB. They're not as formal. I think a lot of those jurisdictions are moving to adopt the new tests sooner rather than later, because, let's say I failed my oral exam by one point and then challenged that with the board. Let's say it's in Texas, for instance. How was that oral exam developed, and you could win that if the exam wasn't developed in a methodical evidence based way. Or if it's an oral exam, and it's a little bit - it's not quite as objective, there's some subjectivity to it. So I think having that new exam is a bit more defensible for those folks too, to have something established that they can point to.



But, John, to answer your question about jurisprudence very quickly. So it's the lovely world of legal matters as it applies to clinical practice. And the question is, "As a clinician, what do I have to know about the law and legal matters?" Some, not necessarily a ton, depending on your practice setting, of course, unless you're a forensic person. The jurisprudence exams are typically checking someone's knowledge of laws related to the practice of psychology. So I know for Florida, it's all about knowing how many CE's you need to accrue per reaccreditation requirements. For when do you need to display a copy of your license. All that stuff. So there is some usefulness there. Our test, like yours I think, is closed book. It's just at a testing center. Although, it's only 35 questions, so I think it's a little bit briefer than the one you guys take. There are some states, I want to say Colorado is one, that have an open book jurisprudence exam, which is nice. There are some

states that probably don't have it at all. So it is an annoying extra hoop to jump through.

I will confess that my study strategy of studying some at the last minute - I was so exhausted from EPPP studying that I didn't prepare adequately for our jurisprudence exam. And I did, I failed it by one point.



John Bellone 54:20

Oh no.



Joel Kamper 54:21

You need an 80% to pass, I got a 79. I got an automatic letter saying, "Congratulations, you passed", and then I got a follow up email right away saying "Oh, sorry. You didn't pass."



John Bellone 54:31

Oh, even worse.



Joel Kamper 54:34

It was only about 120 bucks, which is not nothing, but it's certainly not the \$687.50 of the EPPP. So it wasn't the end of the world. My pride was hurt more than anything. But I always tell my students that, yeah, I mean you can still end up at least marginally okay, like me, and have failed something like that. It certainly happens. I know others who have done it. So do take it seriously. Don't do what I did and study for, well, less than an hour the day of the test.



Ryan Van Patten 55:01

[laughs]



Joel Kamper 55:01

Just to see what happens. It's not a good idea.



John Bellone 55:05

[laughs]

Joel Kamper 55:05



But, also don't assume if they give you an official study guide that just because the section's highlighted that means that's all you should know. Apparently, that's not what the highlights mean. [laughs] So do take it seriously. It is certainly not as big of a bear as EPPP, but people, myself being one when I took it, kind of underestimate it, and think this is going to be no big deal. The EPPP was such a big deal, this is going to be fine. It is an annoying hoop to jump through, but one that you need to do to get licensed. So no two ways about it.

Ryan Van Patten 55:34



Right. So we're moving towards the end of our questions for you. I want to talk about the actual application for licensure.

Joel Kamper 55:41



Yeah.

Ryan Van Patten 55:42



Yeah. Where is all of this put together? What does it typically look like? And how much does it usually cost?

Joel Kamper 55:48



Good questions. So it depends on the jurisdiction [laughs]. I think in most jurisdictions, you apply, are granted to be found worthy based on your application to take the EPPP. And, at least here in Florida, after you take the EPPP, you can take the jurisprudence. Actually, you can do that in any order. But you can't take either exam until after you apply. I think - do you guys have your jurisprudence before your application? It's a little different, I know, in California.

John Bellone 56:18



This was years ago, I'm not, I don't remember.

Joel Kamper 56:20



But yeah. So, Ryan, to answer your question a bit more directly, the application typically isn't too long. Our application here in Florida was just a few pages. They are very particular about it. So a friend of mine put her middle initial - you have to write your name at the bottom of each page, she put her name on the bottom of each page and on one page she forgot to write her middle initial, and they actually rejected her application because of it. She had to resubmit. So do pay attention to

the details. Some of them can be done online. The issue is many of the state licensing boards don't meet more than once a month or so. So I would not wait until the last minute, like when you're trying to find a job, to apply for licensure and just think you can knock it all out. Depending on when you apply - I heard back in two weeks, but I've known people to wait six or seven weeks depending on when the application is received relative to when the board meets. So do get that done ahead of time. I would encourage people to apply for licensure as early as they can. You usually have five or seven years or something to complete the process, so there's no harm in getting that done early to make sure you're not waiting for the last minute. As far as cost, our state here in Florida is one of the more expensive ones. I want to say it's \$305 or something like that. I think all in it was just over \$1000, including the EPPP and taking the darn jurisprudence exam that second time. [laughs] Maybe \$1100 or so, and that was over the course of a couple years. So that's fairly typical, I think. Like I said, our state is one of the more expensive ones. But it'll probably be a couple hundred dollars plus or minus a thousand, or something like that. So it's certainly not nothing. I know it can be a burden for some. But yeah, it's something you need to do. And then most states - in fact, every jurisdiction, I think - requires reaccreditation every set number of years. So here in Florida, it's every even year in May, everyone has to, not reapply, but get reaccreditation. Continuing education hours are part of that. And then you have to pay a fee, of course, to keep your license active. So that's just a part of being a practicing professional.

Ryan Van Patten 58:34



Yep. So earlier you mentioned and clarified that, as neuropsychologists, we become licensed as psychologists, we don't become, "a licensed neuropsychologist". You know, this is a psychology licensure and then we can get board certified in neuropsychology and practice neuropsychology on top of it.



Joel Kamper 58:53

Correct.



Ryan Van Patten 58:53

But is there anything specific to the license or licensure process that a neuropsychologist should be aware of? Or should we think about it like any other psychologist would?

Joel Kamper 59:03



I would think about it more generally. In fact, some of the EPPP questions are going to be difficult if you - again, it's meant to be a general exam. So if you are overly savvy in neuropsychology, you may find some of the questions hard only because you think, "Well, it depends. It's not always this." You kind of have to throw away some of that knowledge and approach it like a general person - just like a child psychologist would for those questions.

Ryan Van Patten 59:32



That's a great piece of advice. You might think about it like a textbook of psychology. You know, step back more broadly, maybe this is literature from 10, 20 years ago. If you have a cutting edge study or you're familiar with the literature or paper that just came out that changes how we think about Parkinson's disease, that nuance has not made it onto the EPPP yet. So think like a psychologist. That's good.

Joel Kamper 1:00:00



Absolutely. Right. But as far as anything else, not really. Again, typically in most jurisdictions "licensed psychologist" is a legally protected term. There is no such thing as a licensed neuropsychologist because there's no specific license for a neuropsychologist. You would be a licensed psychologist who practices neuropsychology or, you know, a licensed psychologist and a board certified neuropsychologist. So "neuropsychologist" is not a protected term. There's no specific license for it. And that is a topic for another day, but one of the reasons why board certification is so vitally important, in my opinion, is to prove that you really have the chops to do this specialty work that you're doing.



John Bellone 1:00:42

Yep, I got a lot of thoughts about that.



Ryan Van Patten 1:00:44

Don't get John started.



John Bellone 1:00:45

[laughs] Yeah. I agree with you. I agree. Just before we wrap up licensure and get to the bonus questions, any other advice for students regarding the process?

Joel Kamper 1:00:59



Not really. Again, take a step back, breathe, you'll get through it. Even if you fail, it happens. You'll get through it. So everyone thinks that they're the one who's having the trouble and I think it's important to know, it's just like we tell a lot of our patients or clients that, "No, this is common, everyone goes through this, everyone feels the same way." We all think we're going to fail. You know, in my day, not only did we walk uphill both ways, but you had to wait a number of weeks to get your score. So you were sort of sitting in anxiety and fear until you got that mailer. Now you get a preliminary score right away. The official score still comes from the board, but you'll get a preliminary score at the testing center, which is nice.

John Bellone 1:01:43



Yeah, I have a flashbulb memory of the morning that I called the licensing board to ask if I had passed or what my score was. [laughs]

Joel Kamper 1:01:51



[laughs] My students will tell me when they get that piece of paper, they're so anxious that they'll see the number and say, "Great", and then ask themselves, "Wait, what number do I need to pass?"

Ryan Van Patten 1:02:00



[laughs]

Joel Kamper 1:02:00



Like, I just want a green pass instead of an 85. Or a red fail. Like, make it really easy.

Ryan Van Patten 1:02:06



Yeah.

Joel Kamper 1:02:07



But that's really just the main advice. Hone your study strategy to what works. Don't worry about it too much. Yes, you want to hit the middle of that Yerkes-Dodson curve - a sufficient amount of anxiety, but don't freak out about it if you can. You'll get through it.

John Bellone 1:02:21



Yeah.

Ryan Van Patten 1:02:21

Yeah, well said. Well, thank you for all this knowledge about licensure, Joel, we really appreciate it.



So, as John mentioned, before we wrap up, we do have the infamous bonus questions. These are about the field of neuropsychology broadly, not specific to licensure. So if there was one thing you could change about neuropsychology, what would it be?

Joel Kamper 1:02:42

You know, I wish that “neuropsychologist” was more of a protected term. I think some disciplines have done a little bit better than us in protecting their turf. I'm thinking of some of the therapies that have the evidence-based therapy certifications you need to get. So I wish it was a protected term. I know that's not really in the cards, but I'm sure, like all of you guys, it's frustrating to see even technicians sometimes who call themselves a neuropsychologist at a master's level. I mean, it's frustrating. So to have some more protections in there for the public. Board certification is the obvious antidote to that, but I think that would be something - that is something that frustrates me a little bit.



John Bellone 1:03:25

Yeah. Yeah. You said it's not in the cards, which I agree, right now it would be difficult at this current moment. I do think it's feasible, though, to enact some kind of change on this topic. So. For another day, like you mentioned, we'll have to discuss this further.



Bonus question #2, what is one bit of advice you wish someone had told you while you were training, or someone did tell you that really made a difference, just an actionable step that trainees can take?

Joel Kamper 1:03:52

I think it's important to, if you don't have a mentor in neuropsychology, to get one. I know that AACN, I guess, the Association for boarded folks has volunteer board certified neuropsychologists who will mentor even undergrads, I think. But certainly graduate students all the way up. If you don't have someone, particularly if you come from a program where neuropsychology isn't as established or isn't as big, getting a mentor, or someone who you can bounce ideas off of is supremely helpful. And just because you come from one of those programs certainly doesn't mean you



won't be successful in neuropsychology. But having someone to help guide you is important.

John Bellone 1:04:31



It's funny, I actually just got an email today from the Division 20 Early Career Taskforce asking for mentees and mentors to join this program. So it's, I think, more broad than AACN. I think there are a couple of different organizations that do it.

Joel Kamper 1:04:45



Oh, fantastic.

John Bellone 1:04:45



Yeah. We'll try to link to a few of them as well in our show notes.

Joel Kamper 1:04:48



Great.

John Bellone 1:04:49



And just before we wrap up, we've covered advice for trainees. We want to finish by asking for advice for early career professionals. So, specifically, you know, the healthcare landscape is changing. Neuropsychology, we want to remain relevant and useful for decades to come. Once we're established neuropsychologists, what steps can we take to ensure that we're providing these cutting edge services?

Joel Kamper 1:05:11



That's a great question. One of my mentors in postdoc Mike Schoenberg, drilled these sorts of things into my head, and it's very important. I do think board certification is a big one, the field is moving that direction. The older cohorts, especially once you're established, don't really need it. But for folks in our generation, I think if you don't get boarded, there's going to come a time where pretty much everybody is, at least for neuropsych. And it's going to be a little bit more difficult if you're not. So I would certainly pursue that.

I think, in general, as far as the cutting edge scientific and clinical services, so proving that our services are useful. So things like reliable change - being able to meaningfully discuss differences in test performance. I think just interfacing with other professionals, other disciplines. I know in some settings that means guarding our turf so other other health disciplines, non-physician disciplines, don't encroach,

but also just talking with our colleagues and other health service professionals about what we can do. Making sure that our voices are heard. And I think at the national level, getting involved in a bit more advocacy. So, when I read about dementia and there's a link from CNN or BBC or something, it's always a neurologist, a psychiatrist, even a primary care doc, sometimes who's quoted. Once in a while you see a neuropsychologist, but not as often as you'd think. And a lot of times I see information that's wrong, or isn't quite couched properly, and I want to write in but, you know, never do.

But just for neuropsychologists to seek more exposure and I think to make ourselves more available just to the public as a specialty area of practice. Most of my patients have never heard of us, don't know what we do, and that's to be expected to some degree. But I think getting more into the public consciousness, in addition to protecting the areas that we're practicing in already, trying to use psychometric things like reliable change and things like that, and also getting boarded - I think that would be a good recipe for being successful into the future.



John Bellone 1:07:15

Excellent. Well, Joel, thanks. Thanks so much. I'm really glad that we got to talk about licensure with the licensure sheriff. [laughs]



Joel Kamper 1:07:22

[laughs]



John Bellone 1:07:22

This was quite fitting.



Joel Kamper 1:07:23

[laughs] Yeah, yeah. Yeah, exactly. I know my residents are going to listen to this podcast. I can hear the laughter ringing down the halls.



John Bellone 1:07:32

[laughs] That's what you're going to start being known for.



Joel Kamper 1:07:35

The sheriff's badge is in my office. [laughs]



John Bellone 1:07:36
[laughs]



Ryan Van Patten 1:07:37
Well, thank you, Joel. We really appreciate the time.



John Bellone 1:07:39
Thanks again.



Joel Kamper 1:07:40
Thank you both. I appreciate it as well. All right, take care.



Transition Music 1:07:42



John Bellone 1:07:47
Well, that's all for our conversation about licensure. Like we mentioned in the episode, we have listed lots of resources and links in the show notes. You can go to www.navneuro.com/42 to access those. If you're a neuropsychology trainee and you enjoyed this episode, please consider sharing it with your psychologist colleagues who might not be aware of the podcast. And, as always, join us next time as we continue to navigate the brain and behavior.



Exit Music 1:08:17



John Bellone 1:08:40
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Ryan Van Patten 1:08:52
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