

To: Ms. Patricia Murdo
PMURDO@mt.gov

7 Oct 05

From: George W. Watson, Ph.D.
Psychologist, Bozeman

Re: SJR Work Group- Meeting scheduled for 12 Oct 05

Although I currently serve as Vice-Chair of the Montana Board of Psychologists, this e-mail is not an official transmission from the Board. It is from my experience as a Board member and as a practicing psychologist, however, that I draw my thoughts expressed below.

Psychologists work with people's emotions and develop a trust with their patients that allows them (the patients) to address very private and sensitive areas of their lives. The exploration needs to be done in an ethical and professional manner. That process depends upon the psychologist knowing what is going on with the patient emotionally and cognitively, and upon knowing, can proceed with the patient to address issues that the patient has been reluctant to address on their own. Successful progress through this venture requires that the patient trusts that the psychologist is both ethical and sufficiently professionally competent. If a psychologist is not of a nature to proceed properly, some grave psychological harm can come upon a often emotionally vulnerable patient. The patient can be emotionally damaged, at times with catastrophic consequences.

The Board of Psychologists helps to protect Montana's citizens from emotional and mental harm by precluding licensure to individuals who do not satisfy the Board in their written and oral examinations that they are ready to interact with the public in a safe and professional manner. The Board also assesses the professional expertise of the licensure applicant to assure that even though the applicant has gone through the steps of one of many possible academic and internship programs, the end result of the applicant's training matches what is needed for public safety.

Therefore, for sufficient public safety, it is my professional opinion necessary for the Board of Psychologists to continue functioning as it now does.

May I suggest also that the committees solicit from Boards their specific thoughts of the necessity of their existence as it relates to benefiting the citizens of Montana.

In closing I would like to request to be considered as a member of the sub-group dealing with creation and dissolution of Boards. Unfortunately I shall be out of the country this week in October and not able to attend the 12 October meeting but would be available to serve future times.

Thank you. George Watson, Licensed Psychologist # 305, Bozeman. (406-585-5646)
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cc: Board of Psychologists