

Clinician Qualifications

It is important for clinicians to include their qualifications when writing an affidavit for the forensic medical evaluation.

The qualifications section can include:

- Current position
- Education and Professional background and training
- Board Certifications
- Relevant conferences, presentations, teaching, publications, research
- Prior clinical experience with refugees, immigrants or survivors of torture and trauma
- Experience performing forensic medical evaluations, including number of prior cases
- Specialized training relating to FMEs and the assessment and/or treatment of trauma
- Attach your CV

Below are some examples:

Example #1

1. I am a Licensed Certified Social Worker (LCSW), licensed in the state of XX. I am board certified in Social Work by the Association of Social Work Boards and I receive weekly supervision from a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW). I graduated from the XX with a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. Prior to beginning my work with XX, I supported individuals and groups, including survivors of interpersonal violence and sexual violence. I facilitated groups focused on social-emotional skill development. In my MSW education, I was enrolled in a XX Program, in which I completed coursework (“International Social Work” and “Issues in Global Social Work Practice”) that equipped me to support immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the US. Through this specialized coursework, I developed an understanding of the dynamics in cross-cultural communication and assessment. I also was trained in the use of various trauma-informed modalities, including Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). My professional and educational experience has provided me with training in working with and treating Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

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2. My specialization in working specifically with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) survivors of violence began through my work at XX in 2020.
3. I am currently a Bilingual Counselor and Advocate at the XX Program at XX in XX. The XX provides counseling, support groups, advocacy, and referral services to LGBTQ+ victims of hate crimes, domestic violence, sexual assault, and police misconduct. At the XX, I provide individual and group therapy to LGBTQ+ victims of violence. More than a third of my clients are LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum in the U.S. because of persecution based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.
4. I have received specialized training on the process of conducting psychological evaluation for clients seeking asylum in the US. In September of 2018, I attended an 8-hour training by Physicians for Human Rights on this topic. I have been a member of their Asylum Network for 4 years.
5. I received specialized training in the use of the Intimate Partner Screening Tool at XX. The Intimate Partner Screening Tool is used by the XX to screen out perpetrators of domestic violence, given that our services are intended only for survivors.
6. Attached is my curriculum vitae.

Example #2

1. I am a psychiatrist, Board Certified in Child & Adolescent Psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. I am an Associate Professor in Clinical Psychiatry at XX. I directed the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Residency Training Program from 20XX to 20XX. I previously held academic appointments at XX and XX University.
2. I received a Master in Public Health (M.P.H.) from XX in 19XX. I received my Doctorate of Medicine (M.D.) from XX in XX, XX in 19XX, and completed a psychiatry internship at XX. I then completed two years of adult psychiatry training at XX, followed by two years of fellowship training in child and adolescent psychiatry at XX. I have served as a member of XX Medical Center's Trauma Team within the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and I have researched both medication and psychotherapy treatments for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.
3. I have published articles in peer-reviewed journals about diagnostic patterns and service delivery in developing nations. I have also published book chapters and articles in peer-reviewed journals about the mental health of refugees, appropriate treatments for refugees, the assessment of trauma among asylum seekers, the role of medical evaluations in the asylum process, and the prevalence of stress and burnout among United States immigration judges.
4. Over the past twenty years, I have been retained as an expert witness in numerous asylum-related matters, including the determination of mental illness as it pertains to late

filings of asylum applications, adjudicated by U.S. Department of Homeland Security Asylum Offices and U.S. Department of Justice Immigration Courts. I have also been involved with civil cases pertaining to asylum and other matters. As part of that work, I have conducted psychiatric assessments of dozens of individuals seeking asylum, with a focus on torture, trauma and associated psychiatric consequences. I have written reports and declarations based on these assessments. I have also provided training sessions to other clinical volunteers on behalf of both Physicians for Human Rights and HealthRight International (formerly called Doctors of the World), organizations that conduct evaluations of asylum seekers who have experienced trauma. In addition, I have provided formal training sessions on trauma to both immigration judges and asylum officers on several occasions. I have participated in authoring the Istanbul Protocol, a manual on the proper assessment of victims of torture and inhumane treatment. I serve as the Director of XX.

5. My evaluations are performed according to the standard guideline of the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (The Istanbul Protocol), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Geneva, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/policy-and-methodological-publications/istanbul-protocol-manual-effective-0>). This includes an assessment of psychological evidence, and is based on the above qualifications and experience, a review of the aforementioned documents obtained directly from the attorney, and the direct report of descriptions and explanations of events and conditions made by [applicant name]. It is on the basis of these qualifications and experience that I have knowledge of the matters stated in this declaration.
6. A copy of my curriculum vitae is attached hereto.

Example #3:

I am an American family physician licensed to practice medicine in Connecticut. I am board-certified and served at X clinic as Medical Director for the past 7 years. I care for patients at X primary care clinic, assessing and treating a wide range of medical and psychiatric issues for a diverse patient population.

I am a graduate of the X University and completed residency in Family Medicine at the X Residency Program. This internship and residency provided extensive experience in history taking and physical examinations in adults and children including psychosocial evaluations, evaluating and treating medical and psychiatric conditions as a routine course of care. I am board certified in Family Medicine, a specialty with recertification boards mandated every six years. In 2013, I recertified until 2023, and have been continuously certified since completing residency in 1992.

I was trained in forensic evaluation and performed asylum evaluations at the X Center for the Treatment of Survivors of Torture, in Connecticut. I completed specialized training in the evaluation and documentation of injuries in survivors of torture from the Doctors of the

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World/Healthright International (HRI) and from Physicians for Human Rights (PHR). I am now performing examinations in association with PHR and X organizations. I have been a member of PHR's volunteer Asylum Network since 2017.

I have worked in volunteer capacities in Guatemala and Mexico and Eritrea. In those settings, I examined child and adult victims of torture, physical and emotional abuse, sexual violence and female genital cutting.

In addition to my medical training and practice, my expertise is based on the UN Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment ("Istanbul Protocol"), and additional training in medical documentation of torture and ill treatment. I have never received reimbursement for asylum evaluation services.

Additional resources:

“Making the most of your expert qualifications” by Synergy for Justice:

https://synergy-for-justice.cdn.prismic.io/synergy-for-justice/f0e31ec8-db7d-46e3-a7ee-afcfa96c489b_Legal_Making+the+Most+of+Your+Expert+Qualifications.pdf

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