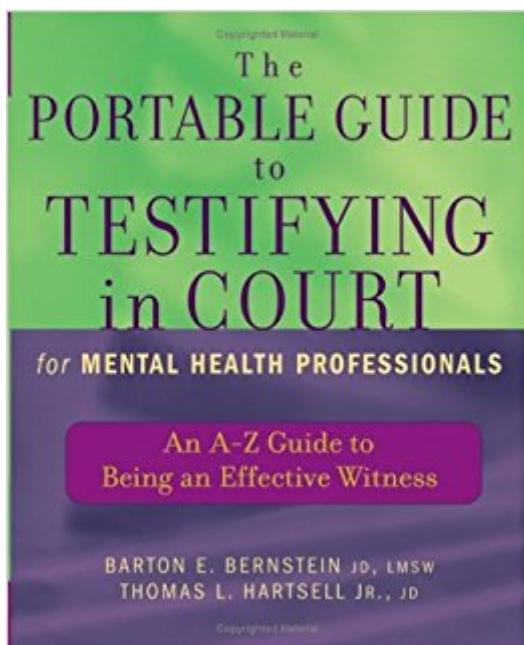


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# The Portable Guide To Testifying In Court For Mental Health Professionals: An A-Z Guide To Being An Effective Witness



## Synopsis

A one-stop guide to testifying in court for mental health professionals Even the most seasoned mental health professionals can find themselves unnerved by the prospect of appearing in court, especially when presented with it for the first time. Those in the mental health field usually have no formal preparation for testifying in court, even though they often play an important part in many types of cases. The Portable Guide to Testifying in Court for Mental Health Professionals provides a concise yet comprehensive guide for practitioners preparing to appear in court. The authors employ their combined decades of legal work in the mental health field to provide a clear, no-nonsense handbook of what to expect, how to prepare, and what to look out for when testifying in court. Along with a general introduction to courts and the legal system, the text details topics such as: \* Testifying both as an expert and involuntary witness \* Protecting clients when bringing therapy into testimony \* Preparing for testimony \* Tips to use and lawyers' tricks to look out for when testifying in court Throughout the book, Bernstein and Hartsell use detailed case studies to provide specific examples. In addition, "legal light bulbs" offer important tips and facts, and appendices list relevant Web resources and provide common legal forms. A one-of-a-kind resource, The Portable Guide to Testifying in Court for Mental Health Professionals gives a complete view of your role in courtroom proceedings, offering a vital tool for both legal and mental health practices.

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"Ã¢â€žÂµs a well-written guide to the legal system for beginning-level psychologists or for any

mental health professional.." (PsycCRITIQUES, 7/26/2006)

A one-stop guide to testifying in court for mental health professionals Even the most seasoned mental health professionals can find themselves unnerved by the prospect of appearing in court, especially when presented with it for the first time. Those in the mental health field usually have no formal preparation for testifying in court, even though they often play an important part in many types of cases. The Portable Guide to Testifying in Court for Mental Health Professionals provides a concise yet comprehensive guide for practitioners preparing to appear in court. The authors employ their combined decades of legal work in the mental health field to provide a clear, no-nonsense handbook of what to expect, how to prepare, and what to look out for when testifying in court. Along with a general introduction to courts and the legal system, the text details topics such as: Testifying both as an expert and involuntary witness Protecting clients when bringing therapy into testimony Preparing for testimony Tips to use and lawyers' tricks to look out for when testifying in court Throughout the book, Bernstein and Hartsell use detailed case studies to provide specific examples. In addition, "legal light bulbs" offer important tips and facts, and appendices list relevant Web resources and provide common legal forms. A one-of-a-kind resource, The Portable Guide to Testifying in Court for Mental Health Professionals gives a complete view of your role in courtroom proceedings, offering a vital tool for both legal and mental health practices.

Having been a practicing Licensed Clinical Social Worker for about 33 years now, I have, from time to time (thank goodness, rarely) found myself on the stand as either a 'simple' witness or, at times, as a certified expert witness. The experiences are amongst the most challenging and can be among the most awkward and unsettling of all of those a professional psychotherapist can have. How to answer questions and give helpful and relevant information without violating client confidentiality and without winding up being held in contempt for refusing to answer and chancing jail time for one's self is no situation for either amateurs, the inexperienced or the timid of heart. It is also no place for the uninformed. It is the last of these requisites that is nicely addressed in the book at hand.Understanding that the handling of giving legal testimony requires some deeper-than-rudimentary orientation to the legal/court system itself, the meaning of testimony and the specific consequences and expectations once one is presented as an 'expert' are taken into account as one can plainly see initially by scanning the Table of Contents. The basic organization of the volume speaks volumes, in-and-of itself about the understanding by the authors of the importance of these issues. The book is presented in eight parts, as follows:1. The Judicial

System2. Testimony Versus Therapy3. Preparing For Testimony4. In The Courtroom5. The Expert Witness's Tools6. Other Expert WitnessesThere is also an extensive set of Appendices that include sample forms, motions and other useful sources of relevant information - both in print and on line.Testifying in court, as an expert therapist, is not simply a matter of honestly answering any question asked to you by anyone. It is FAR more complex than that. This book, presented largely in the format of sample questions and answers, descriptive exemplary vignettes, summaries of seminal information and occasional highlighted "Legal Lightbulbs" that underscore certain seminal issues and areas of attention does a reasonable thorough job of addressing most of what you would need to be aware of.One issue that it, perhaps, does not dwell sufficiently on - from my point of view of course, is the ultimate subjective power of the judge. Yes, there are rules governing the behavior of the person in the black robe: however, judges, as a group, are not monitored seriously by either their peers or the governmental agencies of which they are a crucial part. They do what they want, when they want to - and each in his/her own way. The reality of this Wild Card in the courtroom is very difficult -perhaps even impossible to prepare for - except to be aware that it is one of the variables you may encounter once on the stand. Anyone who disagrees has not likely been on the stand in a real case - especially one where there are strong feelings and animosities involved - a situation more common than not in both Family and Criminal Court.The authors are both attorneys and one of them (Barton Bernstein) is a Licensed Social Worker as well. They seem particularly qualified to address this need - for an accessible, clearly presented set of examples, suggestions, review of systems and expectations governing appropriate testimony from a clinical expert witness.I have found it to be useful in my practice and I expect that most licensed mental health professionals will, too. Remember, your license and the nature of your work make winding up somewhere you would prefer not to be - on the witness stand in a court of law. When/if that happens, you want to be as prepared as possible. While the authors know nothing of YOU or YOUR CASES, they DO know what you need to know to do this correctly, well and ethically. I expect that this book, or ones like it, will ultimately be required reading for therapists in training. In the meantime, it isn't too late until it is too late. Take a look and you will see what I mean.It does not take the place of necessary knowledge of the laws and requirements of your own State and it's laws and requirements, but what it presents is generally on the mark for all of us - wherever we practice.To be forewarned and to be informed is to be better prepared.

It is very introductory but written at a low reading level. Informative but almost written at a level that is too low.

Satisfied with this product

VERY useful to the clinician who is facing a deposition or as expert witness in a case. A must-have for any who work in the mental health field.

This book is well written, outlined and has relevant and current research examples. I have found it to be a very useful tool for reference material for class writing assignments, as well as, threads of information to do independent research.

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