

BCIA Investigates Trademarking BCIA Certified - What's in a name?

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As you know from our recent survey, BCIA is planning to trademark specific terms that certificants may use to identify themselves. Trademarking can be a long process, and we are not assured of success. If we are successful, the BCIA board believes that trademarked terms for our certificants will add great value to your certification. This will mean that only BCIA certificants will be able to use the terms, just as only licensed physical therapists and licensed psychologists may legally call themselves PT's and psychologists. We hope that these trademarked terms will be helpful in branding the credential and increasing recognition for who we are and what we do.

In response to our survey, 82% of you approved of the terms "Certified Biofeedback Professional" and "Certified Neurofeedback Professional." There was a vigorous debate among BCIA board members about which terms are most appropriate and best represented all of our certificants.

The board also polled certificants at the AAPB conference in Daytona on preferred terms. A variety of terms were considered, including "practitioner, provider, therapist, specialist, and therapist." The board chose "professional" because it polled highest at AAPB and because it was deemed most applicable to all certificants (including licensed and unlicensed, practicing and not practicing). "Professional" seemed to be the most comprehensive and prestigious term when marketing to the public and other professionals outside our field.

We received useful feedback from certificants who did not like the term "professional" and/or preferred other terms. There are two things to consider. First, if we are successful in trademarking terms, you won't have to use them. Though the board believes that the use of common terms for BCIA certificants will add value to your certification, the use of these terms will be at your discretion. Second, the trademarking process does not have to stop with the term "professional." If we are successful, we will begin to incorporate terms, like "practitioner" and "therapist," into the trademark, so that a variety of terms may apply to your BCIA certification. Again, this is a long-term process.

Part of BCIA's mission is to protect the public. We ask that you accurately represent who you are and what you do in regards to your BCIA certification. Until the trademark name is finalized, please think about

how to refer to your certification. Consider using terms such as "BCIA certified" (BCIA-C, BCIA-EEG, BCIA-PMDB), "BCIA-certified biofeedback practitioner," or "BCIA-certified neurofeedback provider."

Be aware that some terms, such as "biofeedback therapist," may not be appropriate for some certificants. For example, it is not legal in some states to refer to yourself as a "therapist" unless you are licensed. We recommend that you not use terms such as "board certified in biofeedback." Nobody who is certified by BCIA is Board Certified in Biofeedback. Using that term in our country implies U.S. government recognition such as the Board of Medicine or Board of Psychology.

In addition to trademarking terms, we are also updating our BCIA logo and plan to trademark it as well. We will make the logo available to you very soon for use on your own letterhead, business cards, and marketing materials.

We will keep you informed as the trademarking process unfolds.

More than qualified - BCIA Certified!