

BC ASSOCIATION

of **CLINICAL
COUNSELLORS**



STANDARDS OF CLINICAL PRACTICE

STANDARD ONE: Client-Centered Care and Consent

Effective November 1, 2023



OVERVIEW: STANDARDS OF CLINICAL PRACTICE

STANDARD 1: CLIENT-CENTERED CARE AND CONSENT

The Clinical Counsellor ensures that every aspect of care is centered around the client's immediate and ongoing needs and goals.

STANDARD 2: COMPETENCE AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The Clinical Counsellor develops and maintains their competence, applies clinically indicated and/or evidence-informed methods, critical thinking and clinical and professional judgment, and engages in quality improvement to best serve clients and protect the public.

STANDARD 3: PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY AND COMMUNICATION

The Clinical Counsellor meets the ethical and legal requirements of professional practice and demonstrates responsible caring, honesty, integrity and respect for all persons and peoples. The Clinical Counsellor is truthful, accurate, and clear in all communications, respecting and supporting a client's, or potential client's, ability to make informed judgements and choices, and addresses misrepresentations appropriately.

STANDARD 4: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ANTI-RACISM

The Clinical Counsellor demonstrates cultural humility, which begins with a self-examination of values, assumptions, beliefs, and privileges embedded in their own knowledge and practice, and consideration of how this may impact therapeutic relationships with all clients. In collaboration with the client, the Clinical Counsellor facilitates safer health care experiences where clients' physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, and cultural needs can be met.

STANDARD 5: INDIGENOUS CULTURAL SAFETY, CULTURAL HUMILITY, AND ANTI-RACISM

The Clinical Counsellor strives to be well-versed in the unique issues caused by structural and systemic racism and the impact on Indigenous clients. The Clinical Counsellor works to ensure they address systemic issues within the practice environment while creating a culturally informed, collaborative, and safer clinical experience for clients. Clinical Counsellors ensure they practice with cultural humility and awareness of systemic racism ensuring Indigenous clients get access to relevant, culturally informed, anti-racist care.

STANDARD 6: CLINICAL AND COUNSELLING ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

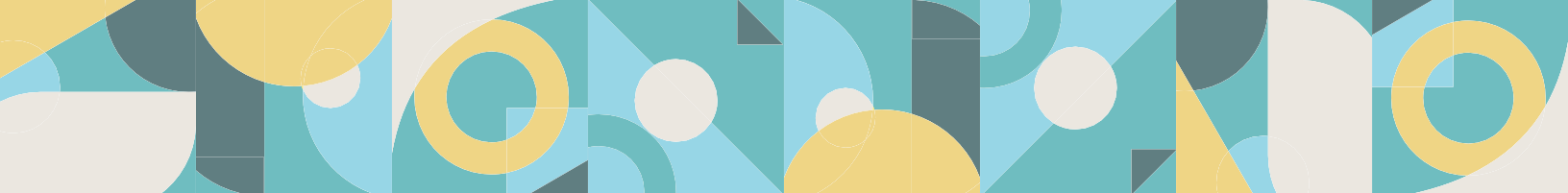
The Clinical Counsellor, within their individual range of competencies, training, and experience, conducts clinical or counselling assessments and prepares clear, concise, accurate, and timely reports appropriate to the needs of the client and the recipient.

STANDARD 7: VIRTUAL PRACTICE AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

The Clinical Counsellor integrates technology and provides services via remote (virtual) means in a manner that does not compromise quality or integrity of professional service and is in the client's best interests.

STANDARD 8: RELATIONSHIPS, BOUNDARIES AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Clinical Counsellor manages relationships intentionally, maintains appropriate professional boundaries, and recognizes, prevents, and takes action to resolve conflicts of interest—direct, potential, or perceived.



STANDARD 9: SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The Clinical Counsellor refrains from all activities that would create the potential for sexual misconduct, including activities that exploit the power imbalance and/or trust required of the therapeutic relationship.

STANDARD 10: PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The Clinical Counsellor respects clients' rights to the privacy and confidentiality of their personal information. All clinical content communicated through the course of care by both parties, including information contained in the clinical record is considered to be protected client information. Clinical Counsellors protect all communicated and stored client information and comply with relevant legislation, ethical guidelines and regulatory standards related to privacy and confidentiality at all times.

STANDARD 11: MARKETING, ADVERTISING AND FEES FOR SERVICE

The Clinical Counsellor is truthful, accurate, and clear in all communications, and considers approaches to advertising and marketing activities that are in the best interests of clients and potential clients, and that respect and support the ability to make informed judgements and choices.

STANDARD 12: DOCUMENTATION AND RECORD KEEPING

The Clinical Counsellor maintains and secures client and financial records with the highest integrity, adhering to BCACC bylaws and applicable legislative and regulatory requirements.

STANDARD 13: ETHICAL CONDUCT

The Clinical Counsellor adheres to the ethical principles contained within the BCACC Code of Ethical Conduct and demonstrates ethical behaviour in all professional activities, recognizing the variable nature of ethical concerns and engaging in self-reflective, respectful, and caring practices to protect the inherent worth and wellbeing of all their clients.



STANDARD 1: CLIENT-CENTERED PRACTICE AND CONSENT

The Clinical Counsellor ensures that every aspect of care is centered around the client's immediate and ongoing needs and goals.

Expected Outcome:

The client can expect a collaborative relationship in which their input is acknowledged, valued, and integrated into all aspects of care. They can expect their Clinical Counsellor to demonstrate professional integrity at all times.

Criteria

The Clinical Counsellor:

- 1.1 Respects the abilities of individuals, relationships, families and groups to make decisions on their own behalf and to care for themselves and each other.
- 1.2 Respects the client's fundamental right to self-determine the structure of receipt of care, be it individual, relationship, family or group psychotherapy and recognizing that all subtypes of client receive distinct informed consent.
- 1.3 Respects a client's clearly expressed wishes to involve others in the client's decision-making regarding informed consent and promotes the greatest degree of self-realization for the client, where the client is not capable of informed consent to treatment.
- 1.4 Obtains the client's free and informed consent for the engagement, initiation, change, continuation, and cessation of all clinical counselling services.
 - a. Ensures the client understands the scope of services provided or recommended—as well as the cost of those services—before asking for their consent.
 - b. Informs clients of their rights as consumers of clinical counselling services, including procedures for resolving differences and filing complaints.
- 1.5 Ensures full disclosure of funders, purpose, distribution of data, findings, and confidentiality in advance of obtaining informed consent for all research activities the Clinical Counsellor is undertaking.
- 1.6 Ensures supervisees obtain valid consent in circumstances that the Clinical Counsellor has assigned to them.
- 1.7 Is reasonably available to the client or takes steps to ensure continuity of care.
- 1.8 Ensures services and course of care recommended to the client are appropriate, respectful of client goals and are evidence-informed or clinically indicated and seeks to maximize benefits and growth while minimizing harm.
- 1.9 Considers the relative importance or urgency of client concerns when administering services, making recommendations, and/or referral, while recognizing the factors that influence timeliness or prioritization of services, including, but not limited to, barriers to access, processes, and best interests of the client.

1.10 Complies, without hesitation, with the removal of consent, when requested by the client.

Related BCACC Documents

- BCACC Code of Ethical Conduct
- Standard for Informed Consent to Clinical Counselling and the Collection, Use and Disclosure of Personal Information
- PIPA: A Counsellor's Guide for Developing Client Personal Information Protection Policies and Procedures
- Legal Commentary - Consent to Clinical Counselling Services

Related Standards of Clinical Practice

- Standard 2: Competence and Quality Improvement
- Standard 3: Professional Integrity and Communication
- Standard 4: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism
- Standard 5: Indigenous Cultural Safety, Cultural Humility, and Anti-Racism
- Standard 8: Relationships, Boundaries and Conflict of Interest
- Standard 9: Sexual Misconduct
- Standard 10: Privacy and Confidentiality
- Standard 11: Marketing, Advertising and Fees for Service
- Standard 12: Documentation and Record Keeping

Glossary Definitions

Continuity of care: Ongoing supported appropriate access and quality care over time for the client, provided by relevant professionals in the circle of care.

Evidence-informed: Using an established body of data and evidence to inform clinical determinations within the course of care.

Referral: Written (or verbal) orders/requests for care from other health care professionals and/or services.

Reasonable: That which any other Clinical Counsellor with similar education, experience and/or training would do in a similar situation.

Self-realization: Achievement or fulfilment of one's own potential or abilities.

Supervisee: Any person who performs a counselling service under the supervision of a registrant.

Course of care or treatment plan: A document created in collaboration with a client. It includes important details, like the client's history, presenting problems, a list of treatment or psychotherapeutic goals and objectives, and clinical approaches planned.

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