

BC ASSOCIATION

of **CLINICAL
COUNSELLORS**



**STANDARDS OF
CLINICAL PRACTICE**
**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion,
and Anti-Racism**

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

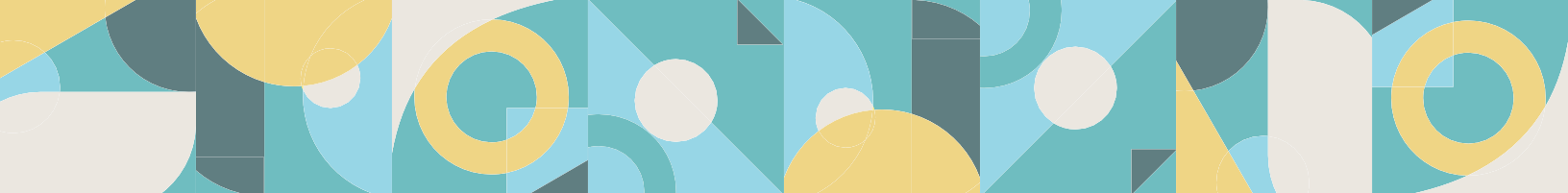
The Clinical Counsellor, within their individual range of competencies, training, and experience, conducts clinical or counselling assessments and prepares clear, concise, accurate, and timely reports appropriate to the needs of the client and the recipient.

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.



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Background

Concerns for equitable access and respecting the rights of individuals, groups and communities are guided by legal provisions against discrimination on the basis of gender, age, marital status, medical condition, sex, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability/ability, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. Other individuals, with other or less defined, visible or invisible, characteristics are also vulnerable and marginalized.

The BCACC does not tolerate racism and/or discrimination and encourages ethical behaviour at all times and with utmost respect for all persons and peoples without negative bias or treatment based on gender, race, religion, creed, colour, citizenship, national origin, age, marital status, family responsibilities and choices, pregnancy, sexual orientation, or disability.

Allegations of racism and/or discrimination are carefully investigated on a case-by-case basis, and action may be taken by the BCACC even if the Clinical Counsellor's behaviour was not intentional. Clinical Counsellors should be aware that violations of human rights and discriminatory practices may result in complaints to the BCACC and the BC Human Rights Tribunal.

Expected Outcome:

The client can expect to access clinical counselling care that is free from discrimination.

Criteria

The Clinical Counsellor:

- 4.1 Acts in accordance with the *British Columbia Human Rights Code*, the *Canadian Human Right Act* and respects the unique worth, dignity, and rights of all persons.
- 4.2 Respects the rights of others to hold values, attitudes, and opinions that differ from the Clinical Counsellor's in work-related activities and professional relationships.
- 4.3 Engages in ongoing self-reflection and education that addresses internal bias, beliefs, and behaviors that can be considered discriminatory toward persons or peoples and engages in the modification of their practice approaches and professional comportment appropriately.
- 4.4 Where possible, seeks to facilitate equity in the access to, and provision of, quality clinical counselling services available for all people.
- 4.5 Where clinically indicated, integrates into practice the complex nature of identity and self-definition as they manifest within individual clients and considers the interactions between identity characteristics and sociologic and environmental contexts.

- 4.6 Maintains client-centered communication approaches and methods that are oriented to the person's capacity and perspective including their sociologic context, individual capacity and cultural perspective.
- 4.7 Acknowledges and strives to understand, identify, and address personal bias through self-reflection and self-examination, applying clinical and professional judgement to modify approaches accordingly.
- 4.8 Identifies and mitigates barriers in physical and communication environments, where possible, including the opportunities and challenges presented by assistive technology and devices.
- 4.9 Refrains from engaging in acts of discrimination.
- 4.10 Refrains from participation in practices disrespectful of the rights of other persons and peoples.
- 4.11 Refrains from advising, training, or supplying information in situations where there is a reasonable expectation the knowledge or skills will be used to infringe on human rights in absence of due process.

Related BCACC Documents

- Code of Ethical Conduct
- Entry to Practice Competency Profile

Related Standards of Practice

This standard is foundational to all other standards. Clinical counsellors should incorporate knowledge, skills and professional competence for diversity, equity and inclusion into all aspects of their professional work and relationships.

Glossary Definitions

Assessment: Refers to the variety of evaluation methods and tools used for the purpose of determining a course of care.

Assistive technology: Any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

Communication environment: any space, inclusive of digital technologies, in which the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and expressions occurs.


Discrimination: The phenomenon of treating a person negatively or unfairly based on perceived group membership and/or an individual's possession of certain characteristics such as gender, age, class, race, religion, and sexuality.

Disrespectful: in relation to words, actions, sustained behaviours, or policies and procedures that:

- a) Degrade, demean or objectify
- b) Intimidate or threaten, both verbal and physical
- c) Are based on assumptions of individual characteristics (gender, race, culture, age, sex, socioeconomic status, ability, community affiliation, or other)
- d) Destroys or otherwise defaces or intentionally devalues private property
- e) Ignores or minimizes collective and/or lived experience.

Equity: Recognizes that each person has different circumstances, allocating the resources and opportunities needed to seek to reach equal outcomes.

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



Self-reflection: Reflection is a metacognitive process undertaken before, during and after situations with the purpose of developing greater understanding of both the self and the situation so that future encounters are informed/improved/changed from previous encounters.

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