

BC ASSOCIATION

of **CLINICAL
COUNSELLORS**



**STANDARDS OF
CLINICAL PRACTICE
Indigenous Cultural Safety,
Cultural Humility,
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

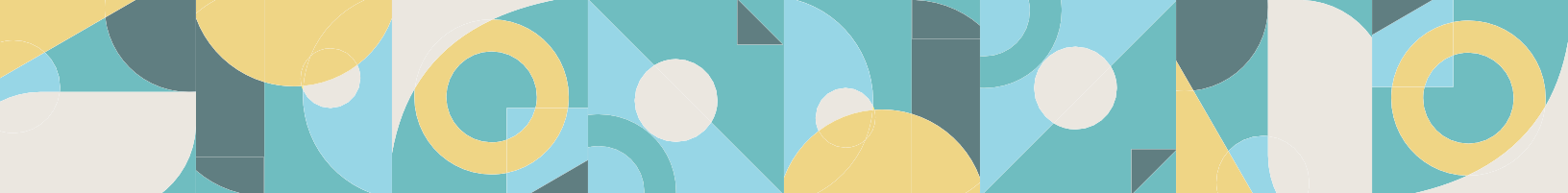
The Clinical Counsellor, within their individual range of competencies, training, and experience, conducts clinical or counselling assessments and prepares clear, concise, accurate, and timely reports appropriate to the needs of the client and the recipient.

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.



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

This Standard is adapted with permission from the British Columbia College of Nurses & Midwives (BCCNM) and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC (CPSBC), who collaboratively developed the Indigenous Cultural Safety, Cultural Humility and Anti-Racism Practice Standard (January 2022). We gratefully and humbly acknowledge the contributions from Indigenous people and guidance from Indigenous leaders during the consultation process which informed the development of the BCCNM and CPSBC Standard.

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Background

Indigenous-specific racism, systemic racism and discrimination negatively affects Indigenous clients' access to psychotherapeutic and mental health care and the positive benefits of the service.

The purpose of this practice standard is to set out clear expectations for how Clinical Counsellors are to provide culturally safer and anti-racist care for Indigenous clients. The BCACC also has practice standards titled Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism; Professional Integrity and Communication, and Client-Centered Care and Consent and a Code of Ethical Conduct, which speak to dignity and respect for all persons and peoples.

The BCACC does not tolerate racism and/or discrimination within its membership and encourages ethical behaviour at all times. The BCACC does not tolerate discriminatory behaviour based on race, religion, creed, colour, citizenship, national origin, gender, 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.

This practice standard is organized into six core concepts. Within these concepts are the principles to which Clinical Counsellors are held.

Expected Outcome:

The client can expect their Clinical Counsellor will demonstrate cultural humility and take active steps to identify, address, prevent, and eliminate Indigenous-specific racism in the practice environment.

Criteria

The Clinical Counsellor:

Building Knowledge Through Education

- 5.1 Engages in self-reflective education on Indigenous mental health care, bio-psycho-social determinants of health, cultural safety, cultural humility, and anti-racism.
- 5.2 Demonstrates understanding of the negative impact of Indigenous-specific racism on Indigenous clients accessing clinical counselling services, and its disproportionate impact on Indigenous communities.

- 5.3 Demonstrates understanding of the historical and current impacts of colonialism on Indigenous Peoples and how it may impact clinical counselling experiences.
- 5.4 Demonstrates understanding of local Indigenous communities, recognizing that languages, histories, heritage, cultural practices, and systems of knowledge may differ between Indigenous communities.

Self-Reflective Practice

- 5.5 Reflects on, identifies, and does not act on any stereotypes or assumptions the Clinical Counsellor may hold about Indigenous persons or peoples.
- 5.6 Reflects on and safeguards against any existing privileges, biases, values, belief structures, behaviours, and inherent power imbalances that may negatively impact the therapeutic relationship with Indigenous clients.
- 5.7 Seeks feedback from clients, colleagues, supervisors, and Indigenous consultants, as appropriate, on the Clinical Counsellor's personal beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours towards Indigenous persons or Peoples, applying professional judgement to modify approaches accordingly.

Anti-Racist Practice

- 5.8 Maintains ongoing and current awareness and understanding of the legislative and regulatory requirements regarding acts of racism and discrimination by health care professionals.
- 5.9 Takes appropriate action when observing others acting in a racist or discriminatory manner towards Indigenous Peoples by:
 - a. Helping colleagues to identify and eliminate racist attitudes, language, and behaviour.
 - b. Supporting clients, colleagues, and others who experience acts of racism and/or discrimination.

Creating Culturally Safe Health Care Experiences

- 5.10 Treats the client with respect and empathy by:
 - a. Acknowledging the client's self-expressed cultural identity.
 - b. Listening to and seeking to understand the client's lived experiences.
 - c. Extending compassionate care to the client directly, and to person and peoples in the context of client care.
 - d. Being open to learning from the client and others regarding systemic racism and Indigenous experiences, without placing expectation on the client to provide education.
- 5.11 Acknowledges, and incorporates into the plan of care, Indigenous cultural rights, values, and practices, when requested.
- 5.12 Facilitates the involvement of the client's family and others (e.g., community and Elders, Indigenous cultural navigators, and interpreters) as requested.

Client-Centered Care

- 5.13 Engages the client respectfully, to learn about the client's unique identity and reasons for seeking services.
- 5.14 Engages with the client's identified support when requested to augment their course of care.
- 5.15 Actively supports the client's right to have self-determination within their course of care.

- 5.16 Communicates effectively with the client by:
- Providing the client with the necessary time and space to share their needs and goals.
 - Providing clear information about the therapeutic options available, including information about what the client may experience during the course of care.
 - Ensuring information is communicated in a way the client can understand.

Embracing Sociologic Contexts in Biopsychosocial Care

- 5.17 Recognizes the sociologic context and impacts of the intergenerational experience of indigenous communities in Canada's history. Endeavours to remain educated and informed in this area.
- 5.18 Recognizes the potential for each client to have a lived experience that emanates from these sociologic contexts and events that may be pertinent and foundational to their course of care.
- 5.19 Recognizes that the effects of Canada's colonial history may affect how some clients view, access, and interact with the practice environment and where possible, applies clinical and professional judgement to modify approaches accordingly.

Related BCACC Documents

- Code of Ethical Conduct
- Entry to Practice Competency Profile

Related Standards of Clinical Practice

Clinical Counsellors should incorporate Indigenous cultural safety, cultural humility, and anti-racism not only into their client interactions, but into all aspects of their professional work with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis clients.

Glossary Definitions

Anti-racism: Actions that challenge social and historical inequalities and/or injustices based on race at the personal, cultural, and systemic levels in order to oppose, mitigate, eliminate and prevent racism.

Assessment: Refers to the variety of methods used for the purpose of collecting information relevant to drawing conclusions.

Colonialism: Policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.

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 age, gender, class, race, religion, and sexuality.

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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