

BC ASSOCIATION

of **CLINICAL
COUNSELLORS**



**STANDARDS OF
CLINICAL PRACTICE**
**Clinical and Counselling
Assessment and Reporting**

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

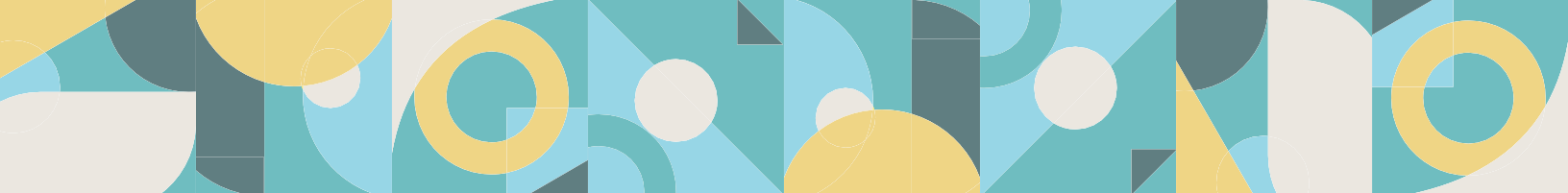
The Clinical Counsellor, within their individual range of competencies, training, and experience, conducts clinical or counselling assessments and prepares clear, concise, accurate, and timely reports appropriate to the needs of the client and the recipient.

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 6: CLINICAL AND COUNSELLING ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

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

Expected Outcome:

The client can expect the Clinical Counsellor to conduct a clinical assessment and produce a resulting report as requested by the client and/or an agreed-upon recipient.

Criteria

The Clinical Counsellor:

- 6.1 Acts in a professional fashion that adheres to the Clinical Counsellor's ethical and legal duties when undertaking an evaluation, assessment or preparing a report.
- 6.2 Develops and maintains legal and psychological knowledge, skills, and abilities that relate to the issues or problems requiring clinical evaluations or assessment.
- 6.3 Obtains written, and/or verbal, informed consent of adult(s), parent(s) of child, and/or mature minor(s) participating in the assessment process before commencing assessment.
- 6.4 Advises all parties to assessment(s) that personal information is collected, used, disclosed, and kept secure in accordance with relevant privacy legislation.
- 6.5 Makes every effort during an assessment to obtain or gather all relevant information from the best sources available and, if necessary, seeks as many sources as reasonable that support the evaluation process.
- 6.6 Obtains the requesting party and/or clients' consent when interviewing persons as collateral sources of information, including people who the requesting party may view as significant.
- 6.7 Conducts all interviews necessary for the assessment personally or supervises and/or assigns specific data gathering tasks in certain circumstances.
- 6.8 Documents clearly in any report, the roles and responsibilities of any supervisees, interns, students, consultants, or other professionals or parties who contributed to the report.
- 6.9 Adheres to ethical principles of respect, informed consent, competence, confidentiality, and integrity when preparing and writing clinical reports, including:
 - a. Taking a holistic, multi-factorial, carefully considered clinical perspective/approach.
 - b. Preserving the dignity and privacy of the clients.
 - c. Adding constructive comments and recommendations to the report.
 - d. Holding a clinically indicated and relevant theoretical orientation and assessment approach.
 - e. Avoiding irrelevancies and making absolute predictions.
- 6.10 Ensures timely communication of changes in scope of assessment needs after consulting with the client, requesting party and/or other professionals that may be involved.

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- 6.11 Incorporates a writing style that is required to properly convey clinical opinions, judgements, assessments and recommendations that are evidenced, supported, researched, educated and appropriately clinically informed. Maintains the highest standards of clinical and professional writing in keeping with the responsibilities of a profession that determines a course of care.
- 6.12 Provides clarity, reflection and consultation when requested on any clinical assessment or opinion given for the purposes of furthering the clients or requesting party's understanding.
- 6.13 Incorporates language and writing style that, were the client to access their own record, is free of derogatory, irrelevant, disparaging or prejudicial comments or characterizations that are not elemental to the clinical assessment and opinion itself.
- 6.14 Ensures that clinical language used is informed by the principles of cultural humility and respect for the dignity of persons and peoples.
- 6.15 Presents objective, clinically informed, and substantiated information in reports based on clinical observation and indicated or requested contribution from others, being careful to balance the perspectives of all opinions that are not generated from direct observation.
- 6.16 Avoids any assessment or reporting activities beyond the Clinical Counsellor's individual competence, training or expertise.
- 6.17 Withdraws from any assessment process when there may be a conflict of interest or other factor that compromises the Clinical Counsellor's ability to provide ethical assessment. Notifies any party including the client or requesting party that ethical assessment is not able to be completed and undertakes to provide referral elsewhere.
- 6.18 Ensures the information and records obtained during an assessment are well maintained and reflect the process of the assessment.
- 6.19 Makes clear, specific and practical recommendations that are supported by the Clinical Counsellor's experience, knowledge, education, training and clinical judgement including recommendations that are clinically indicated and/or evidence- informed in the support of the client.
- 6.20 Follows reporting requirements set out by the client or requesting party when preparing and distributing a report.
- 6.21 Consults with other professionals with specialized training and expertise in the subject area of the report when issues outside the Clinical Counsellor's scope of competence, education or expertise arise.
- 6.22 Consults legal advice when engaging in any communications or reporting that may require further requirements, responsibilities or procedures that the Clinical Counsellor is not aware of or familiar with.

Related BCACC Documents

- Standards for Clinical Counselling Reports

Related Standards of Clinical Practice

- Standard 1: Client-Centered Care and Consent
- Standard 2: Competence and Quality Improvement
- Standard 3: Professional Integrity and Communication
- Standard 10: Privacy and Confidentiality

- Standard 11: Marketing, Advertising, and Fees for Service
- Standard 12: Documentation and Record Keeping

Glossary Definitions

Adult: Person 19 years of age or older.

Assessment: Refers to the variety of evaluation methods used for the purpose of collecting information relevant to determining a course of care.

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

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

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