



Code of Ethics

2025

Seventh Edition

Code of Ethics Revision Committee 2025

Rory Boutilier, National Vice President

Jeremiah La Follette, National President

Eva Kelades, Executive Director

Russ Webb, Registrar

The Code of Ethics Revision Committee 2025 would like to recognize the previous work of countless others for providing suggestions, insight, and contributions to the Code of Ethics.

This document was adopted by the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association Board of Directors and members on May 31, 2025.

© Copyright 2025. Canadian Professional Counsellors Association

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
A Note on Designated Titles	5
A Note on Protected and/or Regulated Titles	5
Note for Ontario Members	5
Note for New Brunswick Members	5
Conflict Between this Standards of Practice and Provincial/Territorial Regulatory Bodies	6
Structure of the Code	6
Guiding Principles	6
Ethical Decision-Making Process	7
Overview of Our Ethical Principles	8
Section 1 - Respect and Responsibility for Rights, Welfare, and Protection of Clients	8
Section 2 - Ethical Caring and Practice	8
Section 3 - Professional Standards and Representation	8
Section 4 - Assessment Procedures	8
Section 5 - Responsibility to The Public and Other Professionals	8
Section 6 - Research, Published Media, and Social Media	8
Preamble	9
SECTION 1	10
1. Respect and Responsibility for the Rights, Welfare, and Protection of Our Clients	10
1.1. Human Rights	10
1.2. Individual Rights	10
1.3. Non-Discrimination	10
1.4. Fair and Impartial Treatment	10
1.5. Freedom of Consent	10
1.6. Informed Consent	10
1.7. Informed Consent for Minors and Persons with Diminished Capacity	10
1.8. Informed Consent for Emerging Modalities or Techniques	11
1.9. Protection of Vulnerable Persons	11
1.10. Confidentiality	11
SECTION 2	11
2. Ethical Caring and Professional Practice	11
2.2. Scope of Practice and Competence	12
2.3. Minimize Harm, Maximize Benefit	12
2.4. Dual and Multiple Relationships	12
2.5. Promote Positive Therapeutic Alliance	12
2.6. Supervision and Consultation	12

SECTION 3	13
3. Professional Standards and Representation	13
3.1. Professional Qualifications	13
3.2. Representation as a CPCA member	13
3.3. Remain Objective Regardless of Personal Circumstances	13
3.4. Duty to Warn, Duty to Protect	13
3.5. Avoid Sexual Misconduct	13
3.6. Using Client Information in Teaching, Research, or Case Examples	14
3.7. Using Technologies and Published Information	14
3.8. Protecting Client Information and Record Keeping	14
3.9. Storing Client Information	14
3.10. Professional Will for Client Files	14
3.11. Third Party Reporting and Referrals	15
3.12. Ethical Responsibilities in Other Roles	15
SECTION 4	15
4. Assessment Procedures	15
4.1. Intake Assessment	15
4.2. Appropriate Use of Assessment Tools	15
4.3. Basis for Assessment	15
4.4. Recipients of Assessment Results	15
4.5. Assessment Security and Privacy	15
4.6. Provisional Members Use of assessmenting Materials and Techniques	16
SECTION 5	16
5. Professional Responsibility to the Public and Other Professionals	16
5.1. Address Concerns Regarding Ethical Conduct of Other Professionals	16
5.2. Avoid Unwarranted Complaints	16
5.3. Cooperating with Complaints and Discipline Committees	16
5.4. Unfair Discrimination Against Complainants and Respondents	16
5.5. Fostering Positive Perceptions of Mental Health Services	16
SECTION 6	17
6. Research, Published Media, and Social Media	17
6.1. Social Media	17
References	18
Acknowledgements	18

Introduction

The Canadian Professional Counsellors Association regulates its four (4) professional designations;

- Registered Professional Therapeutic Coach [RPTC] - working with the Mental Health Coaching Scope of Practice
- Registered Professional Counsellor [RPC] - working within the Mental Health Counselling Scope of Practice
- Master Practitioner of Clinical Counselling [MPCC] - Working within the Clinical Counselling Scope of Practice
- Registered Qualified Supervisor [RQS] - Working in the Scope of Practice of the Supervisor's Designation

The RPTC, RPC, and MPCC designations each have a provisional status where members are fulfilling direct client contact hours, currency hours while supported in supervision:

- RPTC Provisional
- RPC Provisional
- MPCC Provisional
- RQS Provisional

The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to outline the values, principles, and ethical standards that all members of the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association should uphold. The Canadian Professional Counsellors Association is dedicated to the promotion of public confidence and trust in the mental health profession in Canada by adhering to our mission statement as stated in the Mission, Vision, and Values document.

All registrants of the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association are accountable to the By-Laws, and the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, which represent minimal behavioural statements. No single document could provide a comprehensive overview of ethics, ethical standards, or ethical decision making in practice. Likewise, no single document could provide a comprehensive overview of every ethical dilemma or conflict of interest, the most up-to-date information on empirical evidence, or a detailed review of clinical practices. Members should refer to the applicable section in the Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, or By-Laws for further interpretation and expansion of the applicable section. Additionally, members should continue their professional development by pursuing training in ethics and best practices to develop a thorough understanding and ability to navigate the mental health profession.

A Note on Designated Titles

The term “professional services” refer to the activities and scopes of practice of members of the CPCA, which include:

- student members,
- provisional members,
- Registered Professional Therapeutic Coach [RPTC],
- Registered Professional Counsellor [RPC],
- Master Practitioner of Clinical Counselling [MPCC],
- Registered Qualified Supervisor [RQS]

A member of the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association (CPCA) shall be in good standing with the CPCA. All registrants of the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association are accountable to the By-Laws, Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, and Scope of Practice (Clinical Counselling, Mental Health Counselling, and Mental Health Coaching).

A Note on Protected and/or Regulated Titles

Various protected/designated titles are used throughout Canada and may be subject to title protection and/or regulation, such as Clinical Therapist, Counselling Therapist (Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island) and Registered Psychotherapist (Ontario). Other titles may be regulated and/or protected in some provinces/territories and members must be aware of the various protections in their province/territory and hold themselves to the legislation in their province/territory. This Standards of Practice uses “professional services” in reference to the mental health services provided by CPCA members.

Note for Ontario Members

The title Registered Professional Counsellor (RPC) is used within the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association, and the RPC members may practice counselling activities as defined as being *outside the scope of the controlled act of psychotherapy* in the province of Ontario. Members are only entitled to practice the *controlled act of psychotherapy* if they are a member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario.

Note for New Brunswick Members

The title Registered Professional Counsellor (RPC) is used within the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association, and the RPC title is deemed to be substantially similar to the title used by The College of Licensed Counselling Therapists of New Brunswick. As such, members who operate in New Brunswick must refrain from using the RPC title unless they are a member of the College of Licensed Counselling Therapists of New Brunswick and are permitted to use the title by the college.

Conflict Between this Standards of Practice and Provincial/Territorial Regulatory Bodies

Should these Standards of Practice come into conflict with another code of ethics, standards of practice, or professional standards, or relevant legislation of any provincial or territorial regulatory body, the CPCA member must adhere to the applicable provincial or territorial regulations in their jurisdiction. It is the responsibility of the CPCA member to ensure they work within their scope of practice as determined set by their training, professional designation(s), regulatory college(s) (if applicable), and the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association, and refrain from working in a manner which may conflict with any provincial or territorial regulatory body.

Provincial or territorial regulatory bodies may include, but are not limited to:

- College, Board, or Association of Psychologists
- College, Board, or Association of Counselling Therapists
- College, Board, or Association of Psychotherapists
- College, Board, or Association of Social Workers
- College, Board, or Association of Physicians and Surgeons
- College, Board, or Association of Marriage and Family Therapists
- College, Board, or Association of Psychiatry
- College, Board, or Association of Nursing

Structure of the Code

The Code of Ethics is divided into distinct sections which represent the core values and guiding ethical principles of the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association and its members when they serve their clients and the general public.

Guiding Principles

Principle 1: Autonomy

Respect and promotion of the freedom of choice and self-determination of our clients.

Principle 2: Justice

Respect for the right to fairness and equal treatment for all clients.

Principle 3: Beneficence

Commitment to proactive promotion of the best welfare of our clients.

Principle 4: Nonmaleficence

Consideration and acknowledgement of potential for harm to clients, and avoidance of behavior(s) which may cause harm.

Principle 5: Fidelity

Commitment to full integrity and loyalty as a CPCA member, honoring commitments made to our clients.

Principle 6: Veracity

To be truthful in all matters with all clients and professionals alike.

Ethical Decision-Making Process

The ethical decision-making process is provided to offer direction to CPCA members when they must make an ethical decision or resolve an ethical dilemma. The following steps are a useful guide to consider when facing an ethical decision.

Step 1: Identify the key ethical issues in the situation(s).

What are the key issues in this situation?

Step 2: Identify the relevant ethical articles from the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association Code of Ethics.

What ethical articles from the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association Code of Ethics are relevant to this situation?

Step 3: What are the relevant policies, case law, statutes, regulations, bylaws, or other articles in the ethical situation? Are there policies, case law, statutes, regulations, bylaws or other related articles that are relevant to this situation?

Step 4: Identify which of the six Guiding Principles are of most importance to the situation.

Which of the above six ethical principles are of major importance in this situation?

Step 5: How can the relevant Guiding Principle(s) be applied to the situation? How might any conflict between Guiding Principles be resolved? What are the potential risks and benefits of this application and resolution?

Step 6: Seek supervision and/or peer consultation prior to making a decision. Consult with your Registered Qualified Supervisor or an experienced CPCA member.

Step 7: What do my feelings and intuitions tell me to do in this situation? Consider your feelings to these questions:

- a. How would I feel about my ethical decision being publicized for all to see?
- b. Would I make the same decision for every client? If all CPCA members made the decision I am making, would it be a good thing?
- c. Is everyone being treated fairly in my decision?

Step 8: Evaluate the applicable options to determine which course of action would be most appropriate to the situation. What is appropriate, adequate, effective, and meets the Guiding Principles? What action(s) provide the best outcome for the client(s), others involved, to society, and to myself?

Step 9: Document the ethical issue, including references to any relevant codes of ethics, important considerations, and the place of action.

Step 10: Identify any adjustments necessary to optimize the best positive outcome.

Please Note: Various references for the **Standards of Practice** will be found throughout the Code of Ethics. The references for Standards of Practice found throughout the Code of Ethics may change and be expanded upon for further ethical consideration as future revisions are made.

Overview of Our Ethical Principles

Section 1 - Respect and Responsibility for Rights, Welfare, and Protection of Clients

CPCA members respect the rights and welfare of the clients they serve. CPCA members are responsible to know and understand the rights of the individual as well as human rights, and practice in such a way in which these rights are not jeopardized.

Section 2 - Ethical Caring and Practice

CPCA members adhere to the Standards of Practice, standards of care, service delivery, and provision of mental health services by carrying out their professional activities in such a way which respects the rights, welfare, and protection of the clients they serve.

Section 3 - Professional Standards and Representation

CPCA members acknowledge they represent themselves as a practicing professional, as well as the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association both directly and indirectly. CPCA members refrain from activities and/or engagements which may damage their professional reputation or that of the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association and its members.

Section 4 - Assessment Procedures

CPCA members must adhere to proper standards when conducting assessments and using assessment materials such as questionnaires, assessment instruments, scales, and diagnostic forms. CPCA members are expected to work within their scope of practice when conducting assessments, regardless of diagnostic utility, and to use all assessment materials appropriately.

Section 5 - Responsibility to The Public and Other Professionals

CPCA members recognize, in addition to serving their clients, they also serve the public and other professionals. CPCA members refrain from causing harm to their professional reputation or the reputation of others, and from causing damage to the perception of mental health services to the public.

Section 6 - Research, Published Media, and Social Media

CPCA members recognize the integration of social and published media with society and are responsible for maintaining boundaries with their personal and professional social media and their clients.

Preamble

“Association” refers to the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association.

“Competency” refers to the ability to carry out professional activities successfully, accurately, and safely.

“Continuing education” refers to education or training taken after initial education to improve professional abilities, competencies, and suitability to practice.

“CPCA member” refers to any member in good standing with the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association

“Formal education” refers to academic training from a post-secondary institution recognized to deliver educational programs in counselling, mental health practice, psychology, or substantially similar program as determined by the Association.

“Good standing” refers to a CPCA member who is up-to-date on membership dues and professional liability insurance.

“Professional competency” see “Competency”

“Professional services” refers to clinical counselling, psychotherapy, counselling therapy, mental health counselling, mental health coaching, supervision, and/or any service recognized by the Association when provided by a CPCA member working within their respective scope of practice.

“Scope of practice” refers to the limits of a practitioner’s professional competency as determined by formal education, continuing education, supervision, and experience.

SECTION 1

1. Respect and Responsibility for the Rights, Welfare, and Protection of Our Clients

1.1. Human Rights

1.1.1. CPCA members respect and uphold human rights for all clients.

1.2. Individual Rights

1.2.1. CPCA members respect and uphold individual rights and the rights of the individual as they pertain to each CPCA member's scope of practice.

1.3. Non-Discrimination

1.3.1. CPCA members do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, colour, culture, nationality, ethnicity, race, creed, indigenous status, disability, religious beliefs, spirituality, employment status, or socioeconomic status.

1.4. Fair and Impartial Treatment

1.4.1. CPCA members provide equal quality of care to all clients regardless of their demographic.

1.5. Freedom of Consent

1.5.1. CPCA members acknowledge that consent is an informed and ongoing process, which can be withdrawn or changed at any time by the client without penalty.

1.6. Informed Consent

1.6.1. CPCA members acknowledge for informed consent to be truly informed, the client must understand, to the best of their ability, the nature of the scope of practice of the CPCA member and the various processes involved, such as intake, assessment tools, evaluations, goal setting, and case conceptualization.

1.6.2. CPCA members are open and upfront about the necessity of all information they collect to establish informed consent, including written and/or unwritten agreements (e.g., fees for service, professional and personal boundaries, limitations of confidentiality).

1.6.3. CPCA members, when they become aware of potential dual or multiple relationships, take adequate measures to resolve the situation in such a manner that protects the interest(s) of all parties involved and in an approach that is appropriate to Canadian Professional Counsellors Association ethical principles.

1.6.4. See Standards of Practice - Informed Consent

1.6.5. CPCA members shall not provide services to clients who arrive impaired by alcohol or drugs. See Standards of Practice - Intoxicated Clients.

1.7. Informed Consent for Minors and Persons with Diminished Capacity

1.7.1. If professional services are to be provided to a mature minor, the CPCA member must determine and comply with the provincial laws governing where the client resides with regard to the age of consent for mental health services as a minor.

1.7.2. When professional services are to be provided to an individual who has diminished capacity, the CPCA member must obtain informed consent from the client to the extent of their ability to do so. Additional informed consent may be obtained from the parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s).

1.7.3. See Standards of Practice - Minors and Persons with Diminished Capacity

1.8. Informed Consent for Emerging Modalities or Techniques

1.8.1. CPCA members only offer emerging modalities or techniques that are based on relevant outcome-based theory and evidence combined with relevant practice guidelines (See Standards of Practice - Informed Consent for Evidence-Based Emerging Modalities).

1.8.2. CPCA members only offer an emerging modality to and for the client; upon which the client may or may not consent for the CPCA member to provide the emerging modality.

1.8.3. See Standards of Practice - Informed Consent With Emerging Modalities.

1.9. Protection of Vulnerable Persons

1.9.1. CPCA members must be aware of individuals who are considered vulnerable persons, and adhere to reporting standards set out at the federal, provincial, and/or municipal level.

1.10. Confidentiality

1.10.1. CPCA members inform clients of confidentiality and the limits of confidentiality prior to beginning a session, as well as throughout the therapeutic relationship. Informed consent includes the nature of the professional relationship, purposes, goals, techniques, potential risks and benefits, and other relevant information.

1.10.2. CPCA members respect the confidentiality of their clients and the sensitive nature of professional services. All CPCA members have an ethical responsibility to safeguard their clients' right to confidentiality and prevent undue disclosure. This duty includes disclosing the presence or absence of a therapeutic relationship with a client.

1.10.3. CPCA members respect their clients' right to privacy.

1.10.4. The requirement to keep all information confidential is not without exception, and all CPCA members may be required to break confidentiality in one or more of the following situations, not limited to:

1.10.4.1. There is known, immediate, and/or life-threatening danger to the client or to a known individual;

1.10.4.2. When there is reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child, elderly person, or vulnerable person;

1.10.4.3. When a CPCA member is subpoenaed by a court of law or judge.

1.10.5. When CPCA members provide group counselling, they must inform clients/participants of the reliance on individual respect for the privacy and confidentiality of the other members of the group in group sessions.

1.10.6. CPCA members respect the limitations of confidentiality in their responsibility to protect and maintain safety for their clients and the public.

1.10.7. Respect for confidentiality extends from the time a therapeutic relationship begins to an indefinite amount of time, including after the client's death.

SECTION 2

2. Ethical Caring and Professional Practice

2.1. General Care

- 2.1.1. CPCA members maintain high standards of professionalism, competence, and ethical decision-making within a CPCA member's scope of practice.
- 2.1.2. CPCA members provide high-quality, relevant, and appropriate care to all clients whom they serve.

2.2. Scope of Practice and Competence

- 2.2.1. CPCA members take care to possess the knowledge and professional competence to serve their clients, and appropriately limit their practice to clients who are within their scope of practice and professional competence.
- 2.2.2. CPCA members acknowledge the necessity and purpose of regular continuing education and professional development training to improve their therapeutic skills and competence to better serve their clients.
- 2.2.3. CPCA members seek supervision and/or make a referral when the client's needs are outside their scope of practice or beyond their level of competence.

2.3. Minimize Harm, Maximize Benefit

- 2.3.1. CPCA members adhere to the philosophy of "First, do no harm" (Hippocrates).
- 2.3.2. CPCA members maximize benefit to the clients they serve. It is not enough to minimize harm; CPCA members must also maximize benefit for the client.
 - 2.3.2.1. If a CPCA member cannot be of benefit to the client, they discuss this with the client and make a referral or provide alternatives at the client's request.
- 2.3.3. Prior to beginning a professional relationship with a client a CPCA member will discuss the potential risks and benefits of taking part in receiving professional services from the CPCA member.

2.4. Dual and Multiple Relationships

- 2.4.1. CPCA members make every effort to avoid dual relationships, which could impair their professional judgment and increase the risk of harm to their client(s). When a dual relationship cannot be avoided, CPCA members must take the appropriate action(s) to ensure their professional judgment is not impaired and the client is not exploited.
- 2.4.2. See Standards of Practice - Dual Relationships for additional explanation.

2.5. Promote Positive Therapeutic Alliance

- 2.5.1. CPCA members work to provide a positive, therapeutic, working relationship with their clients, where together they work towards goals which promote the clients' health and well-being.
- 2.5.2. CPCA members take steps to reduce potential harm and correct any unintended harm they may have caused a client during the course of providing professional services.

2.6. Supervision and Consultation

- 2.6.1. CPCA members regularly seek supervision throughout their career to enhance reflective practice, and counselling theory integration.

- 2.6.2. Supervision is particularly relevant when the CPCA member encounters ethical dilemmas and when they are expanding their skill set within their scope of practice.
- 2.6.3. CPCA members are responsible to maintain confidentiality and privacy during supervision and consultation with another professional.

SECTION 3

3. Professional Standards and Representation

3.1. Professional Qualifications

- 3.1.1. CPCA members do not make false or incomplete claims regarding their training, professional qualifications, academic achievements, professional conduct, regulatory body, or scope of practice.
- 3.1.2. CPCA members provide accurate and honest representation of their professional qualifications, designations, and academic achievements.
- 3.1.3. CPCA members provide a clear distinction between academic achievements and degrees/diplomas earned, and professional qualifications which have been obtained and/or earned.

3.2. Representation as a CPCA member

- 3.2.1. CPCA members acknowledge their role as a representative of a profession and as a member of the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association.
- 3.2.2. CPCA members conduct their behavior in such a way which protects their professional reputation, the reputation of the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association, and the science associated with the provision of mental health care..
- 3.2.3. CPCA members who have more than one profession (e.g. nursing, yoga, doula, reiki, financier, etc.) ensure boundaries of practice are maintained between their counselling profession and additional profession(s).

3.3. Remain Objective Regardless of Personal Circumstances

- 3.3.1. CPCA members acknowledge the impact of their personal experiences, values, and circumstances on their professional activities and take action to mitigate these circumstances.
- 3.3.2. CPCA members communicate information accurately, objectively, and without bias or personal values which may influence their communication.

3.4. Duty to Warn, Duty to Protect

- 3.4.1. When CPCA members have informed concern of an individual's intent or potential to cause clear and imminent life-threatening danger, they take reasonable steps to alert the affected individual(s) of the potential danger(s).
- 3.4.2. CPCA members may take the necessary steps to inform authorities (e.g., contacting law enforcement and request intervention) to take action when there is reasonable suspicion of intent or potential to cause harm to themselves or to other(s).

3.5. Avoid Sexual Misconduct

- 3.5.1. CPCA members do not engage in sexual relationships with current or former clients, regardless of the duration of the therapeutic helping relationship or time elapsed since the

termination of the therapeutic helping relationship.

3.5.2. A CPCA member shall not enter into any form of romantic relationship with a client regardless of the number or duration of sessions. A CPCA member shall not have any sexual contact with a client including sexual language with the intention to have intercourse, sexual intercourse or contact, or engage in the exchanging of pictures or videos.

3.5.3. CPCA members do not engage in sexual harassment, solicitation, advances, or verbal and/or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, with clients or co-workers.

3.6. Using Client Information in Teaching, Research, or Case Examples

3.6.1. When a CPCA member uses a client's experience in teaching, research, or as a case example, the CPCA member must sufficiently disguise specific information from the scenario to prevent the client from being identified.

3.6.2. In situations where multiple client experiences are combined into a case scenario/case vignette, where the clients involved can no longer be identified due to the combination of case examples, consent is not required from the clients.

3.6.3. When using a client's experience or information in teaching, research, or as a case example (e.g., life experiences, assessment results, forensic testimony), the CPCA member must obtain consent from the client to use their information, and take appropriate action(s) to anonymize the client's information to not reveal the client's identity to the audience.

3.7. Using Technologies and Published Information

3.7.1. CPCA members do not exploit their clients through testimonials, even if the client volunteers it.

3.7.2. CPCA members do not use clients' testimonials for their own benefit.

3.8. Protecting Client Information and Record Keeping

3.8.1. CPCA members keep appropriate client records, including contact information for the client(s), all session notes, and records of all communication with the client.

3.8.2. CPCA members must consult record-keeping laws in their province or territory for the length of time records must be kept.

3.8.3. CPCA members are required to keep all documents related to client care, including physical and digital notes, in their original format for the period of time as required in their province or territory.

3.9. Storing Client Information

3.9.1. CPCA members are required to store and maintain client records in compliance with the relevant federal and provincial and/or territorial health record legislation (e.g., PIPEDA, PHIA, PHIPA, etc.). This includes physical and electronic records.

3.9.2. See Standards of Practice - Confidentiality of Records

3.10. Professional Will for Client Files

3.10.1. CPCA members are responsible to arrange an agreement with a qualified practitioner to serve as executor who will be solely responsible to fulfill any ethical obligations (including management of client records) in the event of the CPCA member's death or incapacitation.

3.11. Third Party Reporting and Referrals

- 3.11.1. CPCA members respect the limits and expectations of privacy and confidentiality when working with third parties and/or agencies. CPCA members are responsible to maintain confidentiality and discuss any release of information with the client(s) prior to release.

3.12. Ethical Responsibilities in Other Roles

- 3.12.1. It is the CPCA member's responsibility to follow all guidelines stated in the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association Code of Ethics when in various roles such as an educator or public speaker. See standards of Practice for further details.

SECTION 4

4. Assessment Procedures

4.1. Intake Assessment

- 4.1.1. CPCA members make every effort when appropriate (e.g., except when the client is in crisis) to complete an intake assessment at the beginning of the professional therapeutic relationship.

4.2. Appropriate Use of Assessment Tools

- 4.2.1. CPCA members must only use assessments in the manner for which they are intended and are within their scope of practice and competence.
- 4.2.2. CPCA members only use assessments for which they have received adequate training.
- 4.2.3. CPCA members must be aware and knowledgeable of legislation related to providing diagnoses in their province/territory. Diagnosing mental health disorders is a protected activity in most provinces/territories.

4.3. Basis for Assessment

- 4.3.1. CPCA members must provide clear rationale and explanation to clients and obtain informed consent prior to conducting any assessment.
- 4.3.2. Informed consent for assessments must include: overview of the assessment process, basis for completing the assessment, the nature of the assessment, purpose(s) of the assessment, and specific use(s) of the assessment results.

4.4. Recipients of Assessment Results

- 4.4.1. CPCA members must not release raw assessment scores.
- 4.4.2. CPCA members must not release assessment results to any person who is unqualified to adequately interpret assessment results. If a client requests assessment results, the CPCA member should provide an interpretation of the assessment results prior to release, if qualified to do so.
- 4.4.3. CPCA members must ensure that accurate and appropriate interpretations accompany any release of assessments and assessment information.

4.5. Assessment Security and Privacy

- 4.5.1. CPCA members must protect the integrity and security of all assessment materials by keeping them in a secure location.
- 4.5.2. CPCA members must not provide assessment materials to clients.

- 4.5.3. CPCA members must not share assessment materials with unqualified individuals or the general public, including photocopies or sharing on the internet.
- 4.5.4. CPCA members must review and follow the copyright and permissions of each assessment material they use.
 - 4.5.4.1. Assessment materials found online may not have been shared appropriately. CPCA members are recommended to seek the publisher's permissions and limits of use for any assessment materials.

4.6. Provisional Members Use of Assessing Materials and Techniques

- 4.6.1. CPCA members must not permit the use of assessment materials and/or techniques by unqualified persons under their Supervision or to individuals who do not work within the same scope practice

SECTION 5

5. Professional Responsibility to the Public and Other Professionals

5.1. Address Concerns Regarding Ethical Conduct of Other Professionals

- 5.1.1. When CPCA members believe there may have been an ethical violation by another CPCA member, they bring it to the attention of that individual and discuss the issue with the person before turning to a more formal resolution.
- 5.1.2. When it is not appropriate to address the concern(s) with the individual for legal, ethical, or safety reasons, or their attempt has not been successful, the CPCA member reports their concern(s) of the unresolved matter to the appropriate regulatory/professional body.

5.2. Avoid Unwarranted Complaints

- 5.2.1. CPCA members avoid making false and/or unsubstantiated claims against another professional with the intent of damaging the professional's practice, career, and/or reputation.

5.3. Cooperating with Complaints and Discipline Committees

- 5.3.1. CPCA members who have an investigation opened against them must cooperate with the relevant committee(s) of the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association.

5.4. Unfair Discrimination Against Complainants and Respondents

- 5.4.1. CPCA members do not discriminate against people who are being investigated nor jeopardize their employment. However, they take the necessary steps following the conclusion of the ethical investigation according to the requirements of the verdict.

5.5. Fostering Positive Perceptions of Mental Health Services

- 5.5.1. CPCA members aid in improving the perception of terminology such as counselling, psychotherapy, counselling therapy, coaching, and/or clinical counselling, and similar terms, by providing accurate, objective information about the service and working to the extent to correct misconceptions about coaching, counselling and psychotherapy to clients and the general public.

SECTION 6

6. Research, Published Media, and Social Media

6.1. Social Media

- 6.1.1. CPCA members shall not add a client to any personal form(s) of social media. (See Standards of Practice - Research, Published Media, and Social Media)
- 6.1.2. If a CPCA member finds a client on social media through public forums, community spaces, or similar cyberspace, the CPCA member shall not interact with the client.
 - 6.1.2.1. The CPCA members shall inform the client of their social media usage and any information the CPCA members observed (see Standards of Practice - Privacy and Confidentiality)
- 6.1.3. When a CPCA member learns information about a client from a source other than the client themselves, the CPCA members must inform the client of the nature of the information and the source (e.g., if a CPCA member sees a client's entry on social media. See Standards of Practice - Social Media).

References

- American Psychological Association. (2003). *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*.
<https://www.apa.org/ethics/code/ethics-code-2017.pdf>
- Canadian Psychological Association. (2014). *Code of Ethics for Psychologists*, (Third Edition).
https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Ethics/cpa_code_2000_eng_ip_jan2014.pdf
- Canadian Psychological Association. (2014). *Code of Ethics for Psychologists*, (Fourth Edition).
https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Ethics/CPA_Code_2017_4thEdFR.pdf
- Canadian Psychological Association. (2017). *Guidelines for Non-Discriminatory Practice*.
https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Ethics/CoEGuidelines_NonDiscPract2017_Final.pdf
- Smith, J. (2019). *How to store client records in a Canadian private practice*. Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association.
<https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/how-to-store-client-records-in-a-canadian-private-practice/>

Acknowledgements

The Canadian Professional Counsellors Association would like to acknowledge the work of other organizations for the inspiration and guidance in creation of this Code of Ethics.

Reference for this Code of Ethics

Canadian Professional Counsellors Association. (2025). *Code of Ethics, 7th ed.*