Voluntary Self-Regulation of Counsellors Registered with the CPCA

Regulation is imperative in the arena of mental health services. These directives involve instituting standards and rules for training, practice, and registration, as well as the implementation of processes to manage complaints and administer disciplinary procedures responsibly. It is imperative that voluntary self-regulation is firmly entrenched in counselling associations to secure safety for the public and ensure best practice by their registrants. For this purpose, the CPCA maintains an established regulatory framework for its clinical counsellors that is built on the foundations of competency and compliance in both registration and discipline.

The following are essential components of this framework:

1. Verified academic and experiential requirements to enter the profession
2. Qualifying examination on counselling core competencies, code of ethics and standards of practice required to practice in the profession
3. Confirmed completion and submission of mandatory annual requirements in continuing education and clinical supervision for maintaining and developing competence in the practice of their profession
4. Maintenance of current liability insurance and clear criminal record and vulnerable sector checks required to remain in the profession
5. Voluntary compliance to comprehensive complaints and discipline processes for the practice of their profession
6. Advanced training specific to providing supervision supporting best practice in the profession

As the language representing competency is shifting some will use the term “master’s equivalency” and others will use the term “master’s level”. These terms are synonymous but can be misunderstood and thought to represent a stand-alone “Master’s Degree”. Those who espouse to the competency model of registration understand the term to represent master’s level training.

The requirements of the CPCA founding Registered Professional Counsellor (RPC) designation meet the standard criterion of most graduate degrees while the requirements of the Master Practitioner in Clinical Counselling (MPCC) designation meet or exceed most graduate degrees in Canada. Often CPCA registrants completing their supervised candidacy with the RPC-C designation have also met the same criterion.

Definition of Counselling/Psychotherapy: Counselling is a relational process based upon the ethical use of specific professional competencies to facilitate human change. Counselling addresses wellness, relationships, personal growth, career development, mental health, and psychological illness or distress. (CCPA website)

Due to the laws that govern title-protection, CPCA registered clinical counsellors are unable to reference themselves as Registered Clinical Counsellors. Just as the CPCA registered designations for clinical counsellors (RPC-C, RPC, MPCC, MPCC-S) have protection, so does the BCACC and the CCPA have title protection for their clinical counsellor designations (RCC and CCC). The above definition defines the work of professional and clinical counsellors registered with each of the above-mentioned associations.

The mandate of the CPCA is to foster public protection by regulating its members’ professional practice through a comprehensive Code of Ethics, competency-based assessment, ongoing evaluation, and clear expectation of compliance with professional Standards of Practice.

The CPCA serves the public from coast to coast to coast.