

BC ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL COUNSELLORS STANDARD FOR THE CONTENT OF CLINICAL RECORDS

INTRODUCTION

This standard focuses on the content of an RCC's clinical records and identifies the sort of information that counsellors are expected to record and maintain in their clinical records.

Separate standards have been developed to help counsellors in private practice comply with their obligations concerning the collection, use and disclosure of a client's personal information, as set out under the *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)*, as well as the requirements in relation to informed consent. Therefore, the Standard for the Content of Clinical Records should be read and applied in conjunction with the following:

- *Personal Information Protection Act: A Counsellor's Guide for Developing Client Personal Information Protection Policies and Procedures* (approved by the Board on October 16, 2004).
- *Consent to Clinical Counselling and Use of Personal Information* (approved by the Board on October 16, 2010).

All standards are interpreted and applied with reference to the BCACC *Code of Ethical Conduct*. RCCs should familiarize themselves with the *Code*, and may wish to consult in particular paragraphs 17 and 22 under Respect for the Dignity of All Persons and Peoples, paragraph 13 under Responsible Caring, paragraphs 6 and 7 of Integrity in Relationships, and paragraph 6 under Responsibility to Society.

DEFINITIONS

In this Standard:

"clinical record" means any method used to record a client's personal information and includes all files, materials and information regarding contacts with or about a client

"personal information" has the meaning prescribed under the PIPA (i.e. "information about an identifiable individual and includes employee personal information but does not include (a) contact information, or (b) work product information")

CONTENT OF CLINICAL RECORDS

A counsellor must ensure that clinical records contain:

- Client identifying information, such as: name, birth date, address and phone numbers, next of kin, doctor and medications.
- Information about how and when the client was referred to the counsellor, if applicable.
- Information concerning the client's presenting problem and assessment data.
- Documentation of written or verbal service contract with client(s); i.e. payment, goals, objectives, treatment modalities and evaluative criteria of contract.
- Documentation of the client's informed consent.
- Information about the client's ability to make a voluntary choice.

- A standardized case contact record of all contact with the client. The minimum contents of a case contact record are the date(s) of contact, duration, form and content of contact.
- Reports, tests or other evaluative results, and formal consultations concerning the client.
- Documentation of the client's agreement to release personal information to a third party, except where the counsellor is allowed to make such disclosures under PIPA.
- Documentation of any release of information to a third party, including a copy of any written correspondence.
- Documentation of a client's request for access to the clinical records and the outcome of such a request.
- Information on the ending of the clinical relationship (i.e. "termination").
- Documentation that the client has been informed of the ability to make a complaint to the BCACC.
- Documentation of the progress and outcome of a complaint that has been initiated against the RCC by or in relation to the client.

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

Client requests for changes to the clinical records must be recorded along with a note as to whether the request was acted upon and why or why not. All additions and corrections to the clinical records must be dated and initialled.

REFERENCES

- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, Code of Ethics (July 1, 2001).
- Beamish, S., Melanson, M. and Oladimeji, M. (1998). Client Rights in Psychotherapy and Counselling.
- Canadian Counselling Association. Standards of Practice for Counsellors. (2001).
- Canadian Psychological Association. Companion Manual to the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists. (3rd ed.). (2001).
- McEvoy, M. and Reir, G. (1999). Balancing Conflicting Interests: A Counsellor's Guide to the Legal Process. (Updated). New Westminster, BC: Justice Institute of British Columbia.
- Truscott, D. and Crook, K. (2004). Ethics for the Practice of Psychology in Canada. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press.
- Turner, D. and Uhleman, M.R. (2006). A Legal Handbook for the Helping Professional. (3rd ed). Victoria, BC: Sedgewick Society for Consumer and Public Education.

Standard For The Content Of Clinical Records
Approved Board of Directors
October 16, 2010