BC ASSOCIATION of CLINICAL COUNSELLORS

STANDARDS OF CLINICAL PRACTICE Documentation and Record Keeping

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 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 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. 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.

Expected Outcome:

The client can expect their records are stored securely, their care is appropriately documented, accessible for referral, or other use, upon request, and kept private and confidential.

Criteria

The Clinical Counsellor:

Record Keeping and Retention

12.1 Maintains confidentiality and protection of privacy in the creation, copying, handling, maintenance, transfer, and access of client records.

12.2 Creates and maintains accurate client records that are of professional quality in an accepted official language (regardless of language of service) in accordance with BCACC guidelines.

12.3 Creates and maintains accurate, appropriate financial records of payments for professional services, in accordance with BCACC guidelines.

12.4 Ensures documentation of information in records is timely, accurate, clear, concise, and legible and can be understood by the Clinical Counsellor, BCACC, and other health care professionals.

12.5 Dates and signs all amendments to client records, such that originals are still accessible and visible.

12.6 Protects all personal information within the client record(s) in conformance with applicable laws, Bylaws, Standards, and the BCACC Code of Ethical Conduct.

12.7 Maintains client records in a manner that enables timely access, as required, by the client or authorized requesting party.

12.8 Provides the client with access to the information maintained about them in their client record, upon the client's request in a secured form at no cost to the client.

12.9 Facilitates the timely transfer of information in the clinical record to another regulated health care professional, upon client request, in accordance with relevant legislation.

12.10 Maintains best practice in securing client records at all times, whether in physical or electronic storage facilities, including those of a third party contracted for such a purpose.

12.11 Retains all records in accordance with applicable laws, Bylaws, Standards, and the BCACC Code of Ethical Conduct.

12.12 Reports privacy breaches to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia (OIPC) to ensure management and mitigation of risk

12.13 Notes that, without a written agreement to the contrary signed by both parties, client records remain with the practice where the record was created.

12.14 Destroys records containing clients' personal or health information in a secure manner.

Related BCACC Documents

- Code of Ethical Conduct
- Bylaws
- Entry to Practice Competency Profile
- PIPA: A Counsellor's Guide for Developing Client Personal Information Protection Policies and Procedures
- Standard for the Content of Clinical Records

Related Standards of Clinical Practice

- Standard 1: Client-Centered Care and Consent
- Standard 3: Professional Integrity and Communication
- Standard 4: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism
- Standard 5: Indigenous Cultural Safety, Cultural Humility, and Anti-Racism
- Standard 6: Clinical and Counselling Assessment and Reporting
- Standard 11: Marketing, Advertising, and Fees for Service
- Standard 12: Documentation and Record Keeping

Definitions

Health care professional: Member of a regulated health care profession or occupation.

Personal information: Information about an identifiable individual but does not include contact information, such as title or business telephone, address, email, or fax number.

Referral: Written (or verbal) orders/requests for care from other health care professionals and/or services.

Copyright © BCACC/June 2023
Effective date: November 1, 2023
109-1034 Johnson St
Victoria, BC V8V 3N7
Canada

www.bcacc.ca