BC ASSOCIATION of CLINICAL COUNSELLORS

STANDARDS OF CLINICAL PRACTICE
Sexual Misconduct

Effective November 30, 2026

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 14: SUPERVISION

The Clinical Supervisor ensures that clinical supervision is centered around the supervisees professional development, and is intended to facilitate growth, competent practice, and promote safe and effective client care.

STANDARD 15: PREPARATION OF FAMILY LAW REPORTS

The Clinical Counsellor conducts family law assessments and prepares clear, accurate, impartial, and evidence-informed reports focused on the best interests of the child. The Clinical Counsellor works within their competence and the scope of their appointment, meets applicable legal and ethical requirements, and maintains fairness and transparency in assessments, reports, and testimony.



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, interpersonal nature, and/or trust required of the therapeutic relationship.

Expected Outcome:

The client can expect their Clinical Counsellor to provide a safe counselling and therapeutic environment based on trust, respect for individual dignity, and a principal focus on the client's best interest.

Criteria

The Clinical Counsellor:

9.1 Recognizes the therapeutic relationship is built on a relationship of trust and has an inherent power imbalance and assumes responsibility to safeguard against misuse or abuse.

9.2 Must not provide professional services to persons with whom a current or previous sexual relationship exists. This includes Clinical Counselling, direct or indirect mentoring, teaching, supervision or form of evaluative role.

9.3 Must not commit acts of sexual misconduct and engage in sexual behaviour or sexual relationship of any nature with a client or with a past client regardless of how much time has passed since the professional relationship occurred.

9.4 Must not commit acts of sexual misconduct and engage in sexual behaviour or sexual relationships of any nature with those with whom a power imbalance exists or for whom the Clinical Counsellor is directly or indirectly responsible for mentoring, teaching, supervising, or evaluating.

9.5 Must not commit acts of sexual misconduct that cause harm to the client even if not expressly described or prohibited within laws, Bylaws, Standards of Clinical Practice, and Code of Ethical Conduct of the clinical counselling profession.

9.6 Avoids consensual sexual behaviour or sexual relationships with those for whom prior direct or indirect mentoring, teaching, supervising, or evaluative relationship exists.

9.7 The Clinical Counsellor is responsible for safeguarding against and appropriately addressing any past or remaining power imbalances and seeks guidance from the BCACC or other appropriate regulatory body, professional colleagues, clinical supervisors, or legal counsel as required.

Related BCACC Documents

- Code of Ethical Conduct

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 10: Privacy and Confidentiality

Glossary Definitions

Consensual: undertaken with the willing agreement (informed consent) of all parties.

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

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

Sexual misconduct: Engaging in sexual intercourse or physical act of a sexual nature, touching the client or person, directly or indirectly, if the touching is of a sexual nature, attempts the aforementioned or manipulates or exploits for sexual purposes, including offering or accepting services in exchange for acts of a sexual nature, whether or not the services are health services; harasses, if the harassment is of a sexual nature; engages in communication of a sexual nature including requesting communication or sharing media containing sexual content; if the person engaged is a client or person other than a spouse or if the person is other than a client and has not consented .

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

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