

# TASK GROUP ON COUNSELLOR REGULATION

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON CORE COMPETENCIES REQUIRED FOR CERTIFIED COUNSELLORS

### **Preamble**

In drafting these core competencies the *Task Group on Counsellor Regulation* conceptualized the *entry level Certified Counsellor (C.C.)* as a "generalist" counsellor. Therefore, an applicant to the new College of Counsellors and Psychotherapists would need to have a broad base of knowledge, ability, and skills, that would be appropriate for both agency/institution and private practice. The challenge presented was to be as inclusive as possible without compromising a meaningful entry level that adequately addresses the critical issue of harm to the public that can arise during and after the counselling or psychotherapy process.

It is recommended that the College establish a registry of specialists for those Certified Counsellors who can present evidence that they hold advanced levels of knowledge, ability and skills. Suggested specialty areas include Marriage and Family Therapy, Psychotherapy, Career Counselling, Pastoral Counselling, Art and Music Therapy, and Addictions, to name a few.

The *Task Group* blocked the core competencies for the *entry level Certified Counsellor* into six fundamental, interrelated domains: Human Development, Theoretical Foundations, Clinical Practice, Professional Issues and Ethics, Research, and **Actual Practice/Experience**.

### **Domains and Core Competencies**

#### **Human Development**

Normal, Abnormal, Psychosocial, Life Span Development  
Genetic Factors in Development  
Learning Theory  
Motivation  
Intelligence and its Measurement  
Motor and Cognitive Development  
Personality Development  
Emotions, Thinking and Feeling  
Language: Verbal and Non-verbal  
Perception  
Culture, gender and sexuality  
Psychopathology

#### **Theoretical Foundations**

Human Values in Psychotherapy  
Integrated Model Development  
Gender and Multicultural Issues  
Theoretical Issues  
Theories of Counselling and Psychotherapy  
Interviewing Techniques  
Testing and Measurement

Group Dynamics Principles and Processes  
Counselling and Psychotherapy with Couples and Families  
Psychodynamic Theory  
Cognitive Theory  
Personality Theory  
Somatic and Expressive Therapies  
Psychopathology  
Stress and Mood Management Procedures  
Psychopharmacology  
Addictions Theory  
Risk Management: suicide, threats to others and family violence

### **Clinical Practice**

The Counselling Relationship  
The Interactive Process  
Counselling Techniques  
Transference/Countertransference/Resistance  
Clinical Assessment Interview  
Psychodiagnostics based on DSM  
Loss and Grief Counselling  
Communication and Conflict Resolution Techniques  
Psychometrics  
Couple and Family Interview and Therapy  
Group Counselling and Therapy

### **Professional Issues and Ethics**

Counsellor's Legal Responsibilities and Liabilities  
Professional Socialization  
The Role of the Professional Association  
Certification Legislation  
Scopes of Practice of Health Care Professions  
Self-Awareness and Professional Development  
Ethical Standards Models  
Models for Ethical Decision Making  
Practice Standards  
Codes of Conduct

### **Research**

Use the Vocabulary of Statistics  
Interpret the Coefficients of Correlation, Regression and Determination  
Describe and Use the Concept of Validity  
Understand the Design and Limitations of Descriptive Studies  
Understand the Design Limitations of Experimental Studies  
Evaluate the Statistical Methods Found in Professional Journal Articles  
Evaluate Treatment Outcome Measures

**Actual Practice/Experience**

File Maintenance

Professional Relationships and Client Referral

Case Management: Initial client contact, fee assessment determining and maintaining length of counselling, evaluation of progress and closure

Emergency Measures

Agency Policies and Procedures

Making Referrals

Assimilation and Synthesization of Client Information

Professional and Ethical Consultation with Colleagues

The Therapeutic "Team"

*Task Group on Counsellor Regulation March 1999*

*Legislation/Core Competencies*

*JB/ma*

**CORE COMPETENCIES FOR CERTIFIED COUNSELORS**  
**National Board of Certified Counselors**

The *National Counselor Examination* tests candidates over eight domains that represent core competencies required for counsellor certification:

**Human Growth and Development**

Life Span Development  
Abnormal Psychology  
Learning Theory

**The Helping Process**

Clinical Processes

**Social and Cultural Foundations**

Social and Cultural Considerations  
Substance Abuse  
Family Violence

**Groups**

Group Counselling and Dynamics

**Research and Evaluation**

Management and Administration  
Research Design

**Lifestyle and Career Development**

Psychological Assessment  
Lifestyle and Career Development

**Professional Orientation**

Ethical, Legal and Professional Issues for Certified Counsellors

**PROCESS**

Establish competency indicators for each domain. Each candidate will bring forward information that must satisfy the Board of Examiners that they meet the minimum competency in each domain. This process can involve one, or many methods: evaluate the academic and training background presented by the candidate; evaluate the experiential background of the candidate; establish a face-to-face oral examination of the candidate; evaluate professional referees comments; evaluate practicum, internship, and supervised experience information, including video tapes where available. This is referred to as the intake or "gate keeping" phase.

In the second phase adopt the *National Counselor Examination*.

Extensive preparatory material is available through the Association for Advanced Training in the

Behavioral Sciences (California). This is a 200 item, multiple choice examination. The examinations tests for *knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, and synthesis*.

The Task Group can recommend *indicators* for each of the core competencies. Indicators are the templates against which the qualifications of the candidate are assessed. For example let's look at the *Professional Orientation*. Indicators would include *knowledge* of ethical standards, and practice standards, statute and constitutional law; *comprehension* of models for ethical decision making, confidentiality, privilege, etc., human rights issues (e.g., Charter Rights); *application, analysis, and synthesis* indicators are evaluated through the presentation and discussion of *ethical dilemmas*.

### **Entry Requirements**

Candidates will satisfy the Board of Examiners that they meet the indicators requirements through any combination of training and experience. This represents a pretty varied “menu” of possibilities. In instances where it is not clear that the candidate meets the requirements, the Board of Examiners will "interview" the candidate (in effect hold an oral examination).

Candidate will undergo the standard Criminal Record check.

Candidates will produce letters of reference from three professional practitioners in the health field.

Candidates will pay the prescribed fee.

Candidates who hold current professional registration/certification in the counselling field, that is equal to or greater than the entry level requirements, above, will be accepted into the College upon payment of the prescribed fee.

*Addendum to Task Group on Counsellor Regulation  
Recommendation Core Competencies Required for Certified Counsellors  
March 1999*