

# B.C. ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL COUNSELLORS

## STANDARD FOR PROMOTING AND ADVERTISING SERVICES

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this Standard is to ensure that Registered Clinical Counsellors (RCCs) accurately and completely represent themselves to potential clients.

### THE CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

The following sections of the BCACC *Code of Ethical Conduct* are particularly relevant to this Standard:

Respect for the Dignity of All Persons and Peoples, paragraphs 1, 2, 5, 11, 23 and 25

Responsible Caring, paragraphs 1, 3 and 12

Integrity in Relationships, 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 14, 16 and 18-21

Responsibility to Society, paragraphs 9 and 12

### INTENT

Services should be promoted and advertised in such a way as to fully respect and support a prospective client's ability to make informed judgments and choices.

### MODALITIES

This Standard applies across all modalities.

It includes, but is not limited to, promotional statements made during presentations, in print or other media advertising, on websites, faxes or email, or on personal web pages, social networking web sites, text messages or pre-recorded telephone messages.

### REQUIREMENTS

#### **An RCC should never:**

1. Make public statements concerning their clinical practice or other work activities, or about those persons or organizations with which they are affiliated, that are false, deceptive, misleading or fraudulent. This might be because of what they state, convey, or suggest or because of what they omit.
2. Solicit testimonials, expressly or by implication, from clients or other persons who may be vulnerable to undue influence.
3. Use their place of employment or ongoing institutional affiliation to actively recruit or gain clients, supervisees, or consultees for their private practices.
4. Use their professional or employment positions on Boards, Councils, Committees, or Agencies to solicit clients, or to seek unjustified personal gains, unfair advantage or unearned goods or services.

#### **An RCC should:**

1. Limit the personal information they provide to that which a client might need in order to give informed consent to therapy with the RCC. This would include information such as:
  - The RCC's name
  - Relevant degrees conferred

- Provincial registration/certification, including number
  - Other relevant certifications and training
  - Address
  - Telephone number
  - Office hours
  - Types of issues with which the RCC has competency
  - A clear explanation of types of services offered
  - An accessible explanation of their therapeutic orientation or orientations
  - Cost of services
2. Consider carefully the use of testimonials in advertising or promoting their practices. It is preferable that testimonials used in advertising be unsolicited unless it is *entirely clear* that there is no possibility of undue influence or the appearance of such influence.
  3. Seek clear and explicit permission from those requesting or arranging the RCC's appearance at a presentation or public event prior to distributing materials promoting the RCC's practice or any favoured causes.
  4. Make reasonable efforts to correct inaccurate statements made by others about themselves or the profession of counselling.
  5. Make reasonable provision to ensure that their Certificate of Registration may be viewed by clients, prospective clients, and other professionals.  
This may be done by prominently displaying the Certificate in their office or therapy room. It may also be done by having the Certificate in their office or therapy room in such a manner that it is not on display but readily accessible, or by placing a readily accessible copy online and letting clients, prospective clients, and other interested professionals know how the certificate may be viewed.

### **Acknowledgements**

American Counseling Association (2005). *Code of Ethics*.

American Mental Health Counselors Association. (2010) *Code of Ethics*.

American Psychological Association (2010). *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*.

*Standard for Promoting and Advertising Services*

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