

# BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

for Canada's Substance  
Use Workforce v. 2

**CULTURALLY SAFE** and  
**ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE**



Canadian Centre  
on Substance Use  
and Addiction

Evidence. Engagement. Impact.



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on Substance Use  
and Addiction

All behavioural indicators across proficiency levels are examples only and can be adapted or tailored to meet individual organizational needs and mandates.

For CCSA's competencies, substance use is inclusive of situations where professionals are working with individuals who use or have used substances, are diagnosed with a medically recognized substance use disorder or are experiencing harms as a result of using substances. For more information, please refer to the criteria for substance use disorders in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (DSM-5).

For more information on sex- and gender-based analysis (SGBA+), please visit [www.ccsa.ca/sex-and-gender-based-analysis](http://www.ccsa.ca/sex-and-gender-based-analysis)

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## CULTURALLY SAFE AND ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE

Provide inclusive, anti-oppressive, sex- and gender-sensitive, equitable and timely services to diverse populations and cultures,\* including but not limited to, age, sex, gender, language, ethnicity, socio-economic status, legal status, health, ability, sexual orientation, type and mode of substance use, continued substance use, concurrent conditions, etc. Challenge oppressive structures, unequal power relations, affirm and value the worth of all individuals, families, groups and communities, and protect the dignity of all with cultural awareness, competence, sensitivity, humility and cultural safety. (\*Refers to the distinct cultures that exist around Indigeneity, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, substance use, etc.)

|                 | 1 = Foundational   | 2 = Developing   | 3 = Proficient   | 4 = Advanced   |
|-----------------|--|--|--|--|
| <b>EXAMPLES</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies social inequities and barriers and actively engages in efforts to equalize power differentials through intentional listening, dialogue and collaborative, solution-focused problem solving</li> <li>Understands the concept of intersecting identities and how these shape people's opportunities and life experiences, including diverse experiences of stigma</li> <li>Understands the macro or systemic nature of oppression, as well as meso and micro levels of oppression</li> <li>Understands the principles of anti-oppressive practice and implements them in all interactions with individuals, families, groups and communities</li> <li>Understands the concepts of sex and gender, and applies them in all work initiatives</li> <li>Self-assesses and monitors own attitudes, biases and behaviours with respect to culture and diverse identities</li> <li>Uses person-first language in all communications, including documentation practices</li> <li>Understands the challenges faced by vulnerable and marginalized groups and how related power differentials impact access to services; tailors actions for individualized needs accordingly</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognizes any power imbalances in the practitioner-service user relationship and actively seeks ways to minimize or eradicate this imbalance</li> <li>Actively seeks to create non-oppressive relations rooted in equality using anti-oppressive principles and practices</li> <li>In dialogue with individuals, accurately evaluates psychosocial impacts of oppression</li> <li>Supports people in exploring and identifying gender- and culturally relevant solutions to their care and well-being goals, including referring people for external services that better meet their needs</li> <li>Engages in activities that support the development of other world views and perspectives</li> <li>Seeks out opportunities to incorporate and promote programs and treatment modalities that are gender-sensitive and culturally relevant to the individuals, families, groups and communities served</li> <li>Demonstrates commitment to identify and address inappropriate behaviour or discriminatory practices in the workplace</li> <li>Identifies and seeks resources in the community to understand peoples' needs and community needs in the context of their cultures and experiences</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks opportunities to advance a workplace climate that supports and respects diversity in the delivery of services</li> <li>Applies an understanding of the influences of sex, gender, culture and diversity factors on health, beliefs and behaviours to improve services</li> <li>Possesses knowledge and understanding of varied historical, cultural, spiritual, political and socioeconomic issues that affect diverse populations and develops effective, inclusive and respectful working relationships with these people and groups</li> <li>Supports diverse groups in developing and implementing strength-based solutions to problems such as equity and access to care</li> <li>Identifies and promptly addresses inappropriate behaviour or discriminatory practices in the workplace</li> <li>Challenges own assumptions and behaviour, exploring different world views, values, traditions and ways of knowing</li> <li>Encourages people to recognize their core beliefs and supports person-directed goal development and pursuit based on the individual's core beliefs and experiences</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leads organizational change to adopt and implement anti-oppressive, trauma- and violence-informed, sex- and gender-based analysis (SGBA+) policies, principles and practices</li> <li>Takes a leadership role in shaping an organizational vision, mission and service delivery system that reflects and supports diversity, builds gender- and culturally relevant and appropriate services, and actively reduces stigma and inequities</li> <li>Develops and implements strategic action plans, policies and procedures that support equity and diversity within the organization</li> <li>Develops and implements strategies to identify and remove gendered, cultural and diversity barriers to accessing services and supports for staff, individuals, families, groups and communities</li> <li>Consults or works in partnership with representatives from diverse communities to inform organizational planning</li> <li>Develops and implements strategies to address barriers to recruitment, hiring, promotion and retention of women and people from diverse cultural groups</li> <li>Engages in community building in partnership with service users</li> </ol> |

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| <b>EXAMPLES</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Seeks to increase personal awareness and understanding of diverse groups by educating self; practices cultural humility</li> <li>10. Respects the choices of people and remains open to learning from individuals, families, groups and communities served</li> <li>11. Willing to learn from own discomfort</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Advocates for the elimination of oppressive social processes and conditions</li> <li>10. Continually assesses self and engages critically with personal unconscious biases</li> </ul> |                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Develops opportunities for community-based participatory research activities that build capacity and strengthen the diverse individuals, families, groups and communities served</li> <li>9. Leads, promotes or engages in social justice activities that result in gender-transformative change at the individual, family, group, community and societal levels</li> <li>10. Leads in collaborating with people receiving services to create meaningful opportunities for change at all levels of systems and services</li> </ul> |