TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES

for Canada's Substance Use Workforce v. 3

COUNSELLING

Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction

Evidence. Engagement. Impact.

Canadian Centre
**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*, 5th edition (DSM-5).

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

Applying a comprehensive range of evidence-informed counselling styles, techniques and methodologies aimed at improving the overall well-being of people affected by substance use.

EXAMPLES

1 = Foundational	2 = Developing	3 = Proficient	4 = Advanced
1. Establishes and maintains therapeutic relationships characterized by courtesy, warmth, genuineness, empathy, trust and concreteness 2. Explains: a. Evidence-informed individual and group counselling approaches and techniques b. The importance of building trust and rapport when working with people c. Recurrence, risk and protective factors d. The importance of collaborative treatment, support and services e. Life skills conducive to well-being, like managing personal finances f. The range of approaches that can enhance counselling (e.g., mutual help, self-help, psychotherapy, etc.) 3. Describes the fundamentals of trauma- and violence-informed practice and interacts with people to facilitate their well-being and avoid re-traumatization 4. Uses plain language in all communication with people receiving services 5. Participates in creating a gender-sensitive and culturally safe environment, including screening for immediate safety concerns 6. Provides virtual counselling services, when required 7. Adheres to all legislation, guidelines, procedures and protocols about confidentiality and professional ethics	1. Collaborates with people to: a. Understand the impact that the family as a system can have on the individual's substance use b. Establish rapport and trust by effectively applying skills such as understanding barriers to engagement, being empathetic and supporting self-efficacy c. Develop coping strategies and building on strengths to deal with challenging circumstances 2. Matches people's unique needs and life challenges to appropriate treatment and support options (e.g., harm-reduction services, outpatient or aftercare programs, abstinence-based approaches, etc.) 3. Delivers brief interventions for people, when and if required 4. Integrates evidence-informed counselling approaches based on each individual's comprehensive assessment and treatment plans, when working with individuals and with groups 5. Adapts counselling approaches to meet peoples' specific needs (e.g., family counselling, vocational counselling, mother-child attachment counselling) 6. Collaborates with people to develop and implement evidence-informed recurrence prevention plans 7. Monitors and identifies, symptoms of recurrence and takes proactive steps during counselling to prevent recurrence for all people, especially those with a higher recurrence risk	1. Applies a broad range of gender- and culturally appropriate, evidence-informed counselling approaches (e.g., land-based or Indigenous ways of healing) tailored to the needs of individuals, groups, couples and families 2. Responds constructively and effectively to significant counselling challenges like aggression, suicidal ideation and substance-induced psychosis 3. Employs a neuroscientific understanding of substance use to accurately assess an individual's developmental and cognitive strengths 4. Engages people in discovering the connection between their substance use and their experiences and circumstances 5. Collaborates with people to identify and address behaviours that are inconsistent with well-being 6. Selects and adjusts approaches to counselling based on the severity of substance use 7. Prioritizes peoples' access to services and supports based on signs and symptoms of recurrence	1. Engages with people who present with complex backgrounds and needs (e.g., traumatic brain injury) 2. Applies mastery of substance use counselling theory and skills when working with people 3. Innovates counselling approaches based on theory, research, trends, promising practices and new knowledge 4. Advocates for and integrates the use of technology to provide counselling services, especially to people living in rural and remote locations 5. Collaborates with professionals in other fields of study to gather insight on alternative approaches to counselling 6. Supervises or coaches colleagues to promote evidence- and gender-informed practices in all aspects of counselling and awareness of the needs of specialized populations (e.g., through the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action) 7. Leads research to advance knowledge in the field and stays current with emerging science and research findings 8. Recognizes the value of a range of lived and living expertise and seeks opportunities to incorporate this expertise into research and practice

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	8. Collaborates with people to facilitate the development of strengths and life skills associated with well-being 9. Collaborates with other practitioners to provide integrated care for people 10. Engages in self-analysis with clinical supervisor and critical self-reflection to recognize personal or professional limitations and biases that can impede ability to work constructively with people and works to mediate and resolve those limitations and biases	8. Collaborates with people to identify when existing services are no longer needed; demonstrates awareness and compassion during transitions and, in collaboration with people, develops plans that include long-term sustainable supports and wrap around, follow-up services as needed (e.g., harm reduction services, injectable opioid agonist therapy, abstinence-based approaches, housing, mental health services, etc.)	

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