

Council Approves Modification to the Definition of Counselling Psychology

The practice area of Counselling Psychology was recognized by the College in 1994, along with the other eight practice areas, when *The Psychology Act, 1991* came into force. The current definitions have been in place since March 2004.

The original definition of Counselling Psychology, approved in 1998, stated that Counselling Psychology “might not entail the use of the controlled act of communicating a diagnosis”. This was amended in March 2004 at which time “the ability to formulate and communicate a diagnosis” was added recognizing the need for Counselling Psychology members to perform this controlled act.

More recently, a member of the College raised questions with respect to the College’s current definition of Counselling Psychology. The member expressed the concern that the College’s definition was very limiting as it stated that counselling psychologists/psychological associates provide services to “reasonably well adjusted people”. The member argued that Counselling Psychology has evolved since the definition was originally approved and goes beyond providing services to “reasonably well adjusted people”. The member recommended that the College consider the Canadian Psychological Association’s definition of Counselling Psychology (2009) as a more fitting definition

(<http://cpa.ca/aboutcpa/cpasections/counselingpsychology>).

The Registration Committee undertook a review of the definition of Counselling Psychology, taking particular note of the Canadian Psychological Association’s 2009 definition of

Counselling Psychology. This review led to the recommendation that the College’s definition of Counselling Psychology be modified. Following discussion by the College Executive Committee and Council, the modified definition was approved at the April 2016 meeting of Council.

New Definition:

Counselling Psychology is the fostering and improving of human functioning by helping individuals experiencing distress and difficulties associated with life events and transitions, decision-making, work/career/education, family and social relationships, and mental health and physical health concerns.

Effective April 1, 2016, this replaces:

Old Definition:

Counselling Psychology is the fostering and improving of normal human functioning by helping people solve problems, make decisions and cope with stresses of everyday life. The work of Counselling Psychology is generally with reasonably well adjusted people.
