

June 23, 2024

Honourable Adrian Dix
Minister of Health
B.C. Ministry of Health
EMAIL: PROREGADMIN@gov.bc.ca

Re: Regulating Counselling and Psychotherapy in B.C.

Dear Minister Dix,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide my feedback on this issue. First, I want you to know that I am in favour of regulating psychotherapy in BC so that we can minimize the risk of harm to the public that can occur when anyone can call themselves a counsellor. However, I want counselling to be **competency-based** not just academic-based for the following reasons:

- In BC, we currently have a shortage of counsellors and psychotherapists, and this need continues to grow. Limiting the number of people who can become psychotherapists by mandating a master's degree will vastly limit the option for many mature students to join the industry.
- Most master's degrees require a bachelor's degree as an admissions requirement. Most range in cost from \$30,000 to \$80,000 and if a bachelor's degree is added to this cost would range from \$50,000 to \$100,000. This makes it unreachable for mature students with life experience, who are balancing family and personal cost and time commitments.
- I do not believe that a master's degree delivers competency just because it is a master's degree. The most important thing is that education must deliver specific course content that will prepare counselling professionals for competent practice, and there must be sufficiently developed supervised practice.
- Diploma programs that as in-depth as master's degrees and taught by experienced counsellors/psychotherapists can deliver the same level of competency as master's degrees, without creating obstacles for mature students, including marginalized students, to enter the practice.

Minister Dix, I urge you to consider regulation for psychotherapy that is encompassing, affordable and realistic for adult and marginalized populations in BC. Regulation needs to create entry-to-practice models that doesn't preclude talented, empathetic, individuals with valuable life and professional experience like I have. **I had over ten years of professional experience before I started my studies in the field. I am currently a Registered Professional Counsellor with the Canadian Professional Counsellors Association (or a Registered Therapeutic Counsellor with the Association of Cooperative Counselling Therapists of Canada), and since I entered this profession, I have helped over 300 clients with their life challenges.** I received supervision for more than a year following the 1,780-hour Professional Counsellor Diploma program that I took with Rhodes Wellness College, and I credit the practice-based, intensive learning model that Rhodes utilizes, that led me to feel competent, prepared, and ready to help the clients I have.

I can see that my skillset and training has prepared me in every way to practice at the same level of some of the best master's degree educated graduates who are the industry. I don't believe I should be precluded from gaining the same level of designation merely because my education was termed a diploma and not a master's. I believe that the comparison should be made based more on the material that I learned and the competency I gained in my program. Minister Dix, I have combined my experience, education, and supervision, all in a practitioner-based learning environment, to become competent, and I believe worthy to be able to practice. I sincerely hope that you will give me the opportunity to continue to help the hundreds of individuals per year that I can assist.

Sincerely,

Name and title (add address, email and phone if you prefer)