

Rhodes Wellness College’s Position on potential Psychotherapy regulation in B.C.

INTRODUCTION

FACT BC began its first work over 27 years ago with the goal to improve the standard of care for those that practice therapeutic counselling in B.C. That focus eventually led to a stated desire that its [11 member organizations](#) (including CPCA and ACCT) all want—regulation in B.C. for therapeutic counsellors. When anyone in B.C., regardless of whether they have any training or not, can call themselves a counsellor and provide mental, emotional, physical, or spiritual health counselling to others without any oversight whatsoever, there is significant risk that harm can occur. FACT BC, and numerous counselling colleges and universities, including Rhodes Wellness College, Stenberg College, and others, have long wanted the government to create legislation and regulation to prevent this, and we are happy that the provincial government is now moving in this direction.

What type of regulation are we wanting?

Rhodes Wellness College, and all members of FACT BC, want counselling to be competency-based and not just academic-based. In 2007, members of FACT BC helped formulate a competency to practice framework, and in that [FRAMEWORK](#) it states that in a competency-based model entry to practice, worthiness should be determined through the following means and evidence:

- 1) **ACADEMIC:** proficiency must be determined through objective assessment of the candidate in a written or oral examination.
- 2) **SIMULATED:** proficiency must be determined through objective assessment of the candidate participating in an activity (such as a role play) that simulates professional practice.
- 3) **CLINICAL PRACTICE:** proficiency must be determined through objective assessment of the candidate working directly with a client in clinical practice (this could occur through supervision, videotape review, etc.).

We believe that this is a superior assessment model that can prove that an individual is competent to provide counselling services to the public in a way that is responsible, skilled, and safe.

We want to advocate so that government does not mandate education-only based competency.

Some organizations in B.C. are lobbying to have entry-to-practice in the counselling and psychotherapy industries based more on academic standards with a minimum educational status of a master’s degree. This is the current position of both the BC Association of

Clinical Counsellors (BCACC) and the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) – not to be confused with CPCA, which we belong to. Both BCACC and CCPA are large membership-based association and wield influence due to their size and resources. Their designations (BCACC counsellors are designated as Registered Clinical Counsellors and CCPA counsellors are designated as Canadian Clinical Counsellors) require a master’s degree to obtain. We believe the requirement of a master’s degree as a condition to become a counsellor in B.C. would create a significant and unnecessary obstacle to many capable professionals for the following reasons:

1. Requiring a master’s degree can be a financial and time-based obstacle for many. While perhaps necessary for individuals without life or professional experience, such as new university students, more mature students benefit from a focused counselling education. These students, who can utilize their life experience with an advanced counselling education, are well prepared to serve as counsellors without a requirement to complete a bachelor’s degree prior.
 - Master’s degrees normally require a bachelor’s degree as an admissions requirement, regardless of how much life or professional experience an individual has. If an adult must complete a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree regardless of their life experience to practice counselling or psychotherapy in B.C., this will require a commitment of 6-7 years before reaching any capability to move into the profession. Such a time commitment is not realistic for many older adults. Family and life commitments makes this time commitment unrealistic and creates a barrier for adults who are well suited for the counselling profession in every way other than possessing a bachelor’s degree as a pre-requisite to studying.
 - Many master’s degrees in counselling in B.C. range in cost from \$30,000 to \$80,000, and if a bachelor’s degree is added to this cost, costs would range from \$50,000 to over \$100,000 for individuals to enter practice. This again is a substantial obstacle for older adults, and particularly for many marginalized individuals in the province that do not possess wealth. For adults that have a natural disposition for counselling, and applicable life experience, what would the purpose of a general bachelor’s degree be? If the purpose it to prove academic competence, there are other ways that can be more consistently applied to prove academic competence. For example, an industry entrance exam, such as is required for massage therapists to become B.C. designated Registered Massage Therapists (RMT’s), would be one way to satisfy mastery or ethics, theory, and methodologies. Diploma

programs that are deemed to be suitable to prepare RMT's for their Registration Exam in B.C. are often two years in length and are very thorough in preparing potential RMT's for practice. Requiring a master's degree for an individual to become an RMT would not guarantee competence just because it is a master's degree. This same logic can easily be argued for psychotherapy and counselling.

- One of the goals of bachelor's degrees is to help learners become critical thinkers, and to help candidates acquire broad-based knowledge in several disciplines; thus, courses at lower levels in many bachelor's programs are diverse and include numerous general education courses. Given that individuals attracted to counselling careers are often people with years of life and work experience, we believe that these types of courses are not necessary for individuals, who through experience, have gained critical thinking skills and broad-based knowledge. The average age of our students at Rhodes Wellness College is 36 years old and 97% of our students range in age from 25 to 60.
 - We believe and have observed that a focused program, like our own 1,725 hours focused Professional Counsellor Diploma program, can deliver high levels of counselling competency equivalent to many master's programs.
2. Master's degrees often focus on research and theory, which are important, but do not necessarily improve a counsellor's abilities in a one-on-one setting with clients.
- The obtaining of a master's degree does not necessarily mean that an individual has received more education in counselling than non-master's programs. For example, our Professional Counsellors Diploma program is 1,725 hours, with over 1,600 hours being in-class instruction. One notable public university program only contains 625 hours of in-class instruction and a well-known private university program offered in B.C. contains only 700 hours of in-class instruction. Another program is primarily self-paced and self-taught. Albeit, a master's program, we believe that such an approach is inadequate to ensure competency in counselling.
 - We fundamentally do not believe that a master's degree delivers competency just because it is a master's degree. Education must deliver specific course content that will prepare counseling professionals for practice, whether it is within a master's or a diploma program.

- *Due to the breadth and application based-learning our program applies, industry partners have lauded Rhodes' Professional Counsellor Diploma program as actually being more effective than theoretical-focused programs.*
3. Rhodes' practitioner-based experiential model is more effective than many programs at preparing individuals to become empathetic, responsible, ethical, and skilled counsellors.
- Most counselling programs utilize case studies to hypothesize potential counselling scenarios. We believe this does not help counsellors understand what to do in real-life scenarios. If a potential counsellor has relied on case studies to learn application of theory, there is no understanding of how being in that same situation will “feel” for them, nor can case studies mimic the countless number of variations to situations that occur in real-life situations. This effectively means that when students start facing real-life situations and have not been able to process their own emotions that will arise while hearing the painful and difficult stories of others, they can and do quickly become flooded with emotion that can lead to dysregulation and biased thinking and actions that can create an obstacle to helping clients in the most optimal way.
 - Our approach requires students to apply proven counselling theory and techniques to their personal lives and to help classmates do the same; this helps students more effectively understand what they are learning because they have context that they relate to (as it is their own contexts), which helps them understand how the theory and techniques can be applied in a wide variety of situations. They also witness their classmates doing the same and assist with this process. Therefore, they see the efficacies of the techniques and theories they are applying right before their eyes in real-time. This cements their learning and helps them retain it, readying them to confidently apply what they learned in real-life situations competently and safely.
 - Rhodes students studying in the Professional Counsellor Diploma program also take oral and written exams, provide presentations on what they are learning, and submit extensive written assignments proving their abilities to grasp and effectively apply what they are learning.
 - After an intensive first year of over 1,000 hours of class time, and many more hours of fulfilling assignments, students transition to developing their

professional skills, both logistically and clinically, during their second year within the Professional Counsellor Diploma program. Students in second year work through professional supervision and the Rhodes Wellness College's Student Counselling clinic, learning how to maintain records responsibly and ethically through Jane App (a client management application that is widely used in the counselling and psychotherapy industries).

- Students begin working with the public and receive referrals from the [Student Counselling Centre](#). All counselling must be documented, stay within the student's scope of practice, and be supervised. Students must turn in both written records and video records of counselling sessions and Rhodes Wellness College manages the intake process for each client, to ensure client safety.
 - Last year alone the Student Counselling Centre provided over 1,800 hours of complimentary counselling to the public, a tremendous service that helps students learn how to interact with the public and provide counselling services in an ethical, safe way.
- Following graduation from Rhodes Wellness College, our students are supported by our college to receive supervision with either the [Canadian Professional Counsellors Association](#) (CPCA) following the successful completion of their entrance exam, or with the [Association of Cooperative Counselling Therapists in Canada](#) (ACCT). Both organizations require hundreds of hours of Direct Client Hours, as well as Group Supervision. They also require their members to abide by a strict code of conduct and standards of practice, as well as participate in continuing education. Graduates who join these organizations are supported through the well-established structure and oversight of these two organizations to practice as competent, skilled, empathetic, ethical practitioners.

4. Our graduates are ready to step into industry and help individuals with many mental and emotional health needs.

- When our graduates of our Professional Counsellor Diploma program complete their studies, they have:
 - Completed 1,725 hours of focused learning completely dedicated to counselling and counselling-related subjects, methodologies, and techniques.

- Gained hundreds of hours of experience providing coaching and counselling to classmates (throughout their studies) and the public (in their second year) of studies, all under supervision through Rhodes' Counselling Clinic.
 - Have conducted over 100 hours of Direct Client Contact hours of counselling (which is the same number those individuals seeking a Registered Clinical Counsellor designation with the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors requires).
 - Have become skilled at self-regulating while helping others with painful and difficult past and current experiences, due to undergoing and completing our experiential model of learning in class.
- There are organizations such as the Vancouver Women's Health Collective, who used to work with various educational institutions (including master's granting institutions) who now only accept Rhodes Wellness College students for practicums. The clients of the Vancouver Women's Health Collective are high-need and often marginalized across a number of intersections. According to the Vancouver Women's Health Collective: "Rhodes Wellness College students are more prepared than any other institution we have worked with to help our clients safely and effectively. We are happy to work with their graduating students and have found them to be essential to the success of the care we give our clients." Our experiential model and the broad-based learning model we teach works very well in preparing our graduates to step in and assist clients who have suffered or are suffering with emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual health needs including challenges with:
- depression,
 - anxiety,
 - difficulties in relationships,
 - self-confidence,
 - addictions
 - trauma
 - diversity
 - prejudice and racism
 - sexual, physical, or emotional abuse
 - crisis intervention including suicide prevention
 - stress

- anger
 - attachment
 - expectations
 - family or other relationship planning
 - life changes
 - grief and loss
 - fear
 - guilt
 - various life goals
 - fulfillment
 - personal values
 - life purpose and meaning
 - bullying
 - power
 - acceptance
 - ...and many more challenges that British Columbians face every day
- Students of Rhodes learn the same material that master's program students learn and apply an integrated approach that prioritizes the diverse emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental health needs of individuals, taking a holistic consideration of all needs.
 - **Subjects Rhodes Wellness College teaches are in-depth, expansive, and include:**
 - Ethics
 - Human Development
 - Multicultural and Diversity Competencies
 - Mental Health
 - Suicide Prevention
 - Trauma-informed practices
 - Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
 - Didactic Behavioural Therapy
 - Narrative Therapy
 - Somatic Therapy
 - Addictions Counselling
 - Relationship Counselling
 - Youth Counselling
 - Trauma Counselling

- Professional Practice
- Grief and Loss Counselling
- Mental, Emotional, Physical, and Spiritual Wellness
- Supervision
- Clinical Counselling Practice and Professionalism
- Introduction to more specialized therapeutic models including:
 - Existential and Gestalt Theory
 - Adlerian Theory
 - Family Systems Therapy
 - Psychoanalytical Therapy
 - Person-Centred Therapy
 - Integrated Therapeutic strategies to assist clients
- *After all coursework is done, students complete a 120-hour supervised practicum that further provides them opportunity to apply their skills with the public, prior to embarking on their own practice or working for organizations in the field of mental and emotional health.*

Summary

1. The regulation of psychotherapy is good for the residents of British Columbia and can protect them from harm that can be caused by incompetent practitioners.
2. Regulation needs to create entry-to-practice models that do not preclude talented, empathetic, individuals with valuable life and professional experience, from becoming practitioners in the counselling/psychotherapy industries only due to the title of the education they receive (i.e. a diploma instead of a master's degree). Instead, entry-to-practice requirements should be content-based and skill-based to ensure suitable knowledge and competency can be adequately learned by new practitioners.
3. Rhodes Wellness College graduates have undergone a robust educational experience that has prepared them in every way to be competent psychotherapy/counselling professionals and the college's graduates are currently doing incredible work throughout the province and throughout Canada proving their capabilities to their clients, industry, and government.
4. Due to the quality of programming that Rhodes Wellness College offers, the Government of the Northwest Territories has partnered with the college to sponsor Indigenous individuals to take the college's Professional Counsellor Diploma program, to provide much-needed counselling therapists for the north that are well

versed and skilled in helping Indigenous individuals with complex issues and challenges, including suffering from intergenerational trauma from residential schools.

News about the Northern Indigenous Counselling Program:

- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nwt-based-indigenous-counselling-program-erasmus-rhodes-1.6313752>
- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/northern-indigenous-counselling-program-round-2-1.6747563>
- <https://www.nnsi.com/news/for-northern-indigenous-counselling-students-the-past-18-months-have-been-a-highly-personal-journey-7271803>

CONCLUSION

Rhodes Wellness College was created over 27 years ago by Bea Rhodes, with a dream to make a positive impact on as many individuals as possible. Bea's phrase that "hurt people, hurt people" has driven the college to become a college that cares about the well being of its students and the communities they live in. We are fastidious in our approach to ensure students receive as in-depth and expansive training possible within two years, and the experience is a transformational one for students. Staff, instructors, and students all care intensely and do everything they can to help each other become skilled counselling professionals.

When you create a community that is structured, facilitated, and founded on the 8 values that Rhodes Wellness College aspires to, immeasurable possibilities to help the lives of countless British Columbians with emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual wellness becomes possible.

Graduates of Rhodes Wellness College have shown over nearly three decades that this is exactly what is happening: the positive ripple effect of assistance provided by competent, dedicated emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical health counsellors continues to impact the province for the better every year, every month, every week as its graduates provide counselling assistance to thousands.

This becomes quite apparent, when an objective review of Rhodes Wellness College graduates takes place. Following is a list of just a few graduates (along with some details - click their names for info) on what they are doing:

- [Crystal Graff, RPC, MPCC](#)
- [Chelsea Lee, RPC](#)
- [Nat Perry, M.Ed., C.C.C., LCT-C](#)
- [Jean Erasmus, RPC and Roy Erasmus, RPCC, LLB, MBA](#)
- [Bobbie-Raechelle Ross, RTC](#)
- [Denise Stroude, RPC, MPCC](#)
- [Jennifer Irwin, CRSP, RPC](#)
- [Lyn Firth, RPC, MPCC-S](#)
- [Nadia Yang, RTC](#)
- [Tamar Chanté, RPC](#)
- [Denisse Ginocchio, RPC, CCPCP](#)
- [Veronica Chase, RPC, CCPCP](#)
- [Kira Lynne, RPC, MPCC, RHN](#)
- [Deb Little, RPC, PCC](#)
- [Natasha Tsakiris, RPC, ACC](#)
- [Jazmin Feschuk, RTC](#)
- [Tina Gutheridge, RPC, MPCC](#)
- [Emmett Martyniuk, RPC](#)
- [Amelia Barbaric, RTC](#)
- [Daniela Abedrabbo, RPC, MPCC](#)
- [Corrina Kileen, RTC](#)
- [Joel Myers, RTC](#)
- [Jill Cherewyk, RPC, PCC](#)
- [Stacey Huget, RPC, PCC](#)
- [Leanne Clarkson, RPC, MPCC](#)
- [Lexxus Anderson, RTC](#)
- [Lindsay Robertson, MPCC-S, RPC, PCC](#)
- [Amanda Moule, RTC](#)
- [Leen Hamdi, RPC, RTC](#)
- [Lisa Brown, RPC, MPCC, PT](#)
- [Mike Kling, RPC](#)
- [Kelly Williams, RPC](#)
- [Christopher Testa, RTC, ACC](#)
- [George Durocher, MPCC, RPC](#)
- [Parris Winsor, MPCC, RPC](#)

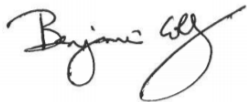
These graduates are only a small sample of many hundreds of Rhodes' graduates that are making a tremendous positive difference in the lives of British Columbians today.

Desired Outcome

We believe that if we rally together and make our voices heard, that the great work that our community does regularly will likely become more noticed and considered, which we hope will lead to an inclusive approach to regulation in the province that will create plans and pathways for mature and experienced adults to assist with the endless wellness needs of the province's residents. We also believe that our graduates are of such calibre that they can be leaders in the counselling and psychotherapy industries to assist the province with its goals to make life the best it can be for British Columbians.

Let us all work together towards this goal.

Sincerely,



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[FACT B.C. PURPOSE AND EXPLANATION](#)

[B.C. GOVERNMENT'S CONSULTATION ON PSYCHOTHERAPY](#)

[PSYCHOTHERAPY EXPLANATORY NOTE FROM THE PROVINCE OF B.C.](#)