

# BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

for Canada's Substance  
Use Workforce v. 2

**ETHICAL CONDUCT**  
and **PROFESSIONALISM**



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*, 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)

© Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, 2021

For additional copies, contact  
CCSA, 75 Albert St., Suite 500  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7  
Tel.: 613-235-4048  
Email: [competencies@ccsa.ca](mailto:competencies@ccsa.ca)

ISBN 978-1-77178-743-7

## ETHICAL CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONALISM

Provide professional services according to the principles and values of integrity, competence, accountability, respect and trust to safeguard both self and others. Includes the development of professionalism and ethical behaviour in self and others (individuals, groups, organizations, communities).

	1 = Foundational	2 = Developing	3 = Proficient	4 = Advanced
<b>EXAMPLES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adheres to principles and a code of conduct established by one's professional body or employer and reports ethical violations to supervisors, as appropriate</li> <li>Maintains knowledge of and abides by relevant legislation for region and area of professional practice (e.g., age considerations in obtaining informed consent)</li> <li>Participates in continuous learning activities to remain current with professional knowledge and maintain certification or professional association requirements</li> <li>Incorporates evidence-informed practice into work whenever possible (e.g., sex- and gender-based analysis (SGBA+), trauma and violence informed practice, culturally safe and anti-oppressive practice, practices oriented toward well-being)</li> <li>Restricts practice to own area of training and expertise, and only makes claim to earned and actual professional credentialing and experience</li> <li>Makes appropriate referrals and recommendations where lack of expertise or organizational mandate dictates</li> <li>Avoids dual relationships at all times (e.g., familial, sexual, social, financial, business) and honestly accounts for relationships when asked to do so</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articulates and practices a model of ethical decision making to inform practice and provide reasonable alternatives and solutions to ethical dilemmas and issues</li> <li>Participates in and advocates for appropriate supervision</li> <li>Identifies and addresses instances of transference and counter-transference in the individual-therapist relationship and refers individuals when objectivity is compromised</li> <li>Sets personal and professional boundaries and limits to prevent or mitigate job-related fatigue and burnout</li> <li>Refrains from exploiting people for any personal or professional gain, understanding their vulnerability and susceptibility to dual relationships, and their gratitude for services rendered</li> <li>Consistently acts in an honest, trusting and respectful manner with others at all times, contributing to the integrity associated with ethical conduct</li> <li>Routinely reflects on own biases to eliminate stigmatizing attitudes and behaviours</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitates discussion of situations related to ethics with colleagues to explore considerations and potential solutions for ethical dilemmas</li> <li>Provides guidance to others to ensure they understand the implications of unethical behaviour and how to practice in an ethical manner</li> <li>Models ethical behaviour consistently and across varied situations, including appropriate use of non-stigmatizing, person-first language and inclusive behaviours</li> <li>Demonstrates ability to reflect on own values and beliefs and consider the need to re-evaluate and reassess work role and responsibilities when they no longer reflect current professional practice or accepted knowledge</li> <li>Maintains professional and ethically sound relationships with all colleagues and direct reports</li> <li>Uses understanding of authority relationships and gendered-power to avoid and identify undue influence over others including sexual harassment</li> <li>Uses understanding of power differentials in health service delivery to identify and raise awareness about inequities in access and service</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognizes others' ethical practice and decision making in order to promote ethical behaviour and communicate the expectations of the organization</li> <li>Ensures appropriate policies are in place and acted upon regarding ethical conduct (e.g., acceptable dollar or cultural value of token gifts), and consequences of misconduct</li> <li>Provides training and courses on ethical decision making for others in the field</li> <li>Documents and reports all instances of serious ethical violations or conduct by colleagues and professional associates, and takes appropriate actions to resolve situations</li> <li>Conducts appropriate supervisory sessions with others</li> <li>Ensures compliance of organizational and legislated policies to the highest ethical, legal and professional standards</li> <li>Implements organizational education initiatives and service changes to address gender and other inequities in service access and delivery as resources allow</li> </ol>

## ETHICAL CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONALISM

Provide professional services according to the principles and values of integrity, competence, accountability, respect and trust to safeguard both self and others. Includes the development of professionalism and ethical behaviour in self and others (individuals, groups, organizations, communities).

1 = Foundational	2 = Developing	3 = Proficient	4 = Advanced
<p><b>EXAMPLES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Informs people fully of informed consent, confidentiality, service user rights and responsibilities, and professional responsibilities about legal and ethical conduct in a clear respectful manner understandable to the individual</li> <li>9. Ensures that the privacy and confidentiality of individual information and relationships are maintained except where disclosure is required under law or to protect the individual or others from clear and imminent danger</li> <li>10. Seeks out information or support when unclear about the appropriate action to take</li> <li>11. Addresses false credentialing in colleagues and other professional associates and groups</li> <li>12. Identifies and addresses dual relationships and other ethical violations regarding colleagues and other professional associates and organizations</li> <li>13. Graciously declines gifts or similar indications of appreciation from people, except token gifts where culturally appropriate</li> </ul>			