

# BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

for Canada's Substance  
Use Workforce v. 2

**PERSON-DIRECTED CARE**



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)

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## PERSON-DIRECTED CARE

Support people to exercise choice in the services and supports they are seeking, and to practice self-determination in all aspects of their unique goal of well-being. Also described as service engagement led by people seeking services. For those who work with people seeking substance use services, this means supporting and empowering them to achieve their well-being goals through collaboration. The service provider acts as a bridge and navigator to supports, knowledge, information and services.

EXAMPLES	1 = Foundational	2 = Developing	3 = Proficient	4 = Advanced
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands the fundamentals of the neuroscience of substance use, and recognizes that recurrence of substance use is due to the impacts of substance use on the brain (or external stressors, such as loss of housing) and not due to lack of motivation</li> <li>Understands evidence-informed practices for varying severities of substance use</li> <li>Demonstrates knowledge specifically of principles and practices that are strengths-based, trauma- and violence-informed, gender-informed and oriented toward well-being</li> <li>Understands the impacts of social determinants of health, including the role of families and other supports (including protective factors) in building resilience and achieving well-being</li> <li>Demonstrates the ability to establish trusted rapport and meet people where they are at; and respects the strength that is required to seek help</li> <li>Uses non-judgmental and non-confrontational negotiation skills, person-first language, active listening skills, empathy and a genuine interest to facilitate dialogue with people as they explore their present situation and identify their concerns, needs and goals</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies evidence-informed practices, grounded in a fundamental understanding of the neuroscience of substance use (including an understanding of sex-related factors, neuroplasticity and its implications for well-being)</li> <li>Implements a safe, equitable, non-judgmental, trauma-, violence-, sex- and gender-informed supportive context to explore individual experiences openly and ensures the individual's dignity is maintained throughout the process</li> <li>Fosters and maintains energy for and belief in positive outcomes (i.e., fosters and maintains hope)</li> <li>Collaborates with people in choosing and making informed decisions about available services that will help them achieve their well-being goals, recognizing that not all services are readily available and may require wait times; provides support during wait times, as needed</li> <li>Works actively, consciously and diligently not to impose own personal biases and issues on people seeking help and support</li> <li>Consistently provides encouragement for individual self-directed care, including identifying mutually agreed upon opportunities and supports (i.e., family, friends, community) that build resilience and capacity to self-manage and monitor well-being goals</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coaches and mentors others in evidence-informed and sustainable approaches to well-being</li> <li>Seeks opportunities to receive knowledge, input, guidance and support to improve services from people with lived and living experience of substance use and their families and friends</li> <li>Implements programs and services that reflect the value of family members, caregivers, peers and support systems towards achieving well-being goals, and works with people to identify and develop the support systems they need to build resilience and achieve their goals independent of service providers</li> <li>Reviews and uses sex- and gender-related, evidence-informed practices to inform comprehensive interventions; these include medical, social, and psychosocial interventions at all levels required to achieve well-being, such as harm reduction and abstinence-based services, peer supports, referrals, housing, etc., and uses an approach aimed at facilitating individual empowerment</li> <li>Works actively to create an environment of cultural safety and gender sensitivity in service delivery and to reduce stigma through education, peer engagement and collaboration with a diverse range of individuals and their families and friends</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducts research to advance knowledge in the field including staying current with emerging research and best practices on neuroscience of substance use, concurrent disorders, person-directed care, etc., and ensures knowledge and best practices are understood and adopted organization-wide</li> <li>Strategically and systematically evaluates emerging and long-term opportunities for and threats to meeting people's needs, integrating results from emerging research and evidence</li> <li>Acts as an organizational advocate and change agent for progressive person-directed, well-being-oriented practices and interventions, and works with external service providers to mitigate barriers to accessing treatment and services</li> <li>In consultation with people who use services, assesses, enhances evaluates and renews the person-directed care model and service delivery standards and processes, as needed</li> <li>Demonstrates leadership within the organization and with partners to cultivate a culture of safety and to prevent or address stigma towards people with diverse backgrounds by developing and implementing policies to address all forms of stigma in the workplace</li> </ol>

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<b>EXAMPLES</b>	<p>7. In collaboration with the individual, accurately conducts needs and strengths assessments and regularly updates these assessments, recognizing that needs change over time</p> <p>8. Demonstrates knowledge of relevant, gender sensitive, community-based resources, services and programs; understands how to navigate services and, in collaboration with individuals, identifies services appropriate to their needs</p> <p>9. Demonstrates openness to individual's service or treatment choices (e.g., harm reduction or abstinence) and strives to obtain those services or treatments for them</p> <p>10. Works with people to identify appropriate support networks to facilitate and manage their own well-being (networks may include family, friends, peer support groups and community supports)</p> <p>11. Demonstrates understanding and the value of involving people with lived and living experience, family, friends and caregivers in decision making where possible and appropriate</p> <p>12. Understands the unique challenges and systemic barriers that can be experienced by diverse groups seeking well-being, such as, racism, sexism, colonialism, homophobia, social isolation, poverty, homelessness, etc.</p>	<p>7. Formulates mutually agreed-upon methods of evaluating progress towards achieving well-being goals and outcomes</p> <p>8. Provides service within professionally established and regulated practice boundaries</p> <p>9. Ensures service is provided to people during critical periods; keeps people up to date when there are changes to services; advises people of their options so they can make informed decisions about services</p> <p>10. Consults other professionals and experts in the field, including people with lived and living experience, and their families, caregivers and friends</p> <p>11. Refers people to appropriate gender- and culturally sensitive resources, using warm transitions, when the person may be better served by another organization or expert</p> <p>12. Looks for ways to add value, tailor and enhance service delivery systems and processes to overcome barriers to equity of access, navigation and quality of care</p> <p>13. Identifies and recommends solutions to biases or barriers in service in response to diversity in people</p>	<p>6. Consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to the organization and profession through advocacy, excellence of person-directed care and alignment of services with diverse people's needs</p> <p>7. Educates people, staff, service providers, peer support workers and the public about substance use, the range of evidence-informed approaches (e.g., harm reduction or abstinence-based services), and stigma and its impacts</p> <p>8. Facilitates and advises, as needed, providing independent expert input on complex issues and initiatives</p> <p>9. Encourages and empowers people to consider difficult and critical issues that affect their lives</p> <p>10. Proactively addresses preventable individual adverse effects; observes and evaluates person-directed care impacts and outcomes; works to improve programs based on lessons learned and evidence-informed approaches (e.g., harm reduction or abstinence-based approaches)</p> <p>11. Builds networks to support person-directed care and advocates on behalf of people to gain necessary resources</p> <p>12. Collaborates with people to identify when existing services are no longer needed and develops plans for transitions that incorporate long-term sustainable supports and wrap-around service delivery</p>	<p>6. Advocates for policies that prioritize the interests and needs of people with lived and living experience of substance use and their families, caregivers, friends and peers</p> <p>7. Develops and supports opportunities for participatory research and capacity building among people with lived and living experience and their families, caregivers, friends and peers</p> <p>8. Seeks opportunities to incorporate the expertise of diverse people with lived and living experience, family, friends and caregivers into the organization (e.g., hiring peer counsellors, introducing peer-based services and support programs)</p> <p>9. Provides training opportunities for all staff on grief and loss experienced by the community of people who use substances, their families and friends, and the people who support and work with this community</p> <p>10. Promotes organizational cultures that value and support high-quality service delivery for a diverse range of people</p> <p>11. Promotes training opportunities for all staff on sex- and gender-based analysis (SGBA+) and development of critical thinking</p>

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<b>EXAMPLES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Demonstrates awareness and understanding of the different forms of adverse effects of stigma on the equitable treatment of people who use substances, their families and friends, and understands the complexities of stigma (i.e., multi-layered stigma due to gender, sexual orientation, being racialized, poverty, etc.)</li> <li>14. Demonstrates awareness of and a willingness to address personal assumptions and biases towards a diversity of people, which may be unintentional (e.g., around substance use and concurrent conditions, race, gender, culture, location, etc.)</li> <li>15. Informs people of their confidentiality rights and service program procedures and regulations, while understanding limits of confidentiality and duty to report processes</li> <li>16. Looks for creative ways to connect with people, such as outreach, telephone call, video conference, meeting during evening and weekend hours</li> <li>17. Follows up with people during and after delivery of services to ensure their needs have been met and to ensure continuity of service; follows up with co-workers and family members</li> <li>18. Regularly connects with people receiving services and builds relationships to obtain feedback; supports ongoing learning</li> <li>19. Identifies safety guidelines for staff and service users</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Understands and adheres to the principles of adult learning</li> </ul>	