

BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

for Canada's Substance
Use Workforce v. 2

Historical Development



Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction

Evidence. Engagement. Impact.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

CCSA Competencies for Canada's Substance Use Workforce

The *Technical and Behavioural Competencies for Canada's Substance Use Workforce* were developed with the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders. Input was obtained through focus groups, informant interviews and reviews of drafts by various committees and advisory groups, the members of which included professionals and people with lived and living experience of substance use and their families and friends. Extensive consultation was undertaken to ensure the revised Competencies were informed by evidence from research and from experts in the field, as well as grounded in the realities of -direct service providers and people with lived and living experience of substance use.

A culture shift in the substance use field is occurring due to the recognition of the neurobiological underpinnings of substance use disorders and the harmful impact of stigma around substance use. CCSA responded to this shift by updating the Competencies (version 2) to reflect changes in best practices, knowledge, skills and language, and to apply a perspective oriented to well-being.

An overview of the development of the Competencies is provided below.

Overview of the Development of the CCSA Competencies

PHASE 1: Workforce Competencies for the Substance Use Field Emerge as a Canadian Priority

2004 CCSA conducted the first survey of Canadian substance use treatment agencies and services

Purpose:

To identify priority issues related to substance use workforce development in Canada

Result:

- Priority issue identified: Develop national competencies for those working in the substance use field

2005 Consultation of the substance use field as part of the *National Framework for Action to Reduce the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs*

Purpose:

To identify national priorities across the substance use field

Result:

- Need for national competencies for the substance use field one of 13 priorities for action identified



2005–2006 CCSA partnered with provincial and national organizations and government departments

Result:

- Created National Advisory Group on Workforce Development (NAGWD)
- NAGWD role included overseeing development of competencies for the substance use workforce

PHASE 2: Production of the Competencies

2007 Technical Competencies, version 1

Development:

- Informed by literature and experts
- Revised and validated with input from a range of stakeholders, including provincial and territorial government departments, key national organizations, and subject-matter experts
- Final review by NAGWD and field experts

Version 1:

- 17 Technical Competencies each with four proficiency levels
- Behaviour indicators for each competency and proficiency level

2010 Behavioural Competencies, version 1

Development:

- Informed by literature and experts
- Revised, validated and updated language with input from 100 people in 11 focus groups of frontline professionals representing the job clusters
- The competency profiles were developed through research and consultation with subject-matter experts
- Approximately 120 substance use professionals from across Canada identified Behavioural Competencies and proficiency levels for the seven job clusters and suggested appropriate language and terminology
- Approximately 20 people from relevant organizations, provincial and territorial government departments, and NAGWD provided final review of the content of the tools and created behaviour-based interview questions and suitable performance management objectives

Version 1:

- 18 Behavioural Competencies with four proficiency levels
- Behaviour indicators for each competency and proficiency level
- Seven job clusters common to the field
- Competency profiles for common job clusters
- Behavioural competency-based interview guide and tools
- Behavioural competency-based performance management guide and tools



PHASE 3: Updating the Competencies

2014 Technical Competencies, version 2

Rationale:

Update needed to respond to new or reinforcing evidence for effective substance use treatment, a shift in culture to strengths-based approaches and language, and a recognition of concurrent disorders

Development:

- Input from 110 people in 12 focus groups of direct service delivery staff across Canada to ensure consistent terminology, increase clarity and reflect treatment of concurrent disorders
- Focus groups of mental health service providers and nurses for perspective on concurrent disorders
- Focus groups with probation officers and people with lived and living experience
- 20 people from a range of relevant organizations, provincial and territorial government departments, and NAGWD provided final review

Version 2:

- Three new Technical Competencies: Trauma-specific Care, Client Referral, and Record Keeping and Documentation
- Foundational competencies: Understanding Concurrent Disorders (previously Mental Health) and Understanding Substance Use
- Increased number of behaviour indicators
- Three Technical Competencies re-categorized as Behavioural Competencies: Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness, Ethics and Professionalism, and Teamwork
- Focus on new competency of Trauma-specific Care and this perspective reflected in behaviour indicators (treatment involves discussion of causes of trauma and assistance to cope with effects of trauma to improve quality of life)



**2019–
2021** Behavioural Competencies, version 2

Rationale:

Update needed to reflect the current landscape and practices in the substance use field, reduce stigma about substance use, and promote cultural safety and inclusiveness

Development:

- In 2018, CCSA conducted an evaluation and stakeholder engagement exercise to understand how the competency tools and resources were being used and their impact in the past 10 years
- Results indicated wide adoption of the tools and resources in the workforce, as well as an identified need to update the content to reflect new developments in the field and to make the content more accessible
- In 2019–2020, CCSA conducted a series of surveys, interviews, consultations and focus groups across Canada with 20 subject-matter experts, an advisory group of 13 members, and 22 people with lived and living experience to update the Behavioural Competencies
- A sub-committee of six people with lived and living experience and families and friends (LLEAFF) was established to provide more detailed input into developing two specific competencies on Person-direct Care and Culturally Safe and Anti-oppressive Practice
- In 2020, changes were reviewed and validated by CCSA's Workforce Competencies Project Advisory Group and Network of Champions

Version 2:

- Updated Behavioural Competencies and behaviour indicators
- Updated language, tone and perspective oriented toward well-being
- Updated through a cultural diversity lens



2020– Technical Competencies, version 3 – In progress

2021

In 2019–2020, CCSA conducted an environmental scan to develop an inventory of adapted, adopted or tailored versions of the CCSA Technical Competencies and to identify gaps and areas for improvement

In 2020, CCSA conducted a series of focus groups, consultations and key informant interviews across Canada with subject-matter experts, and people with lived and living experience and families and friends to update the Technical Competencies

- Eight subject-matter experts from across Canada and a wide range of occupations and leadership levels across the field of substance use and addictions reviewed the content
- Four focus groups consisting of three small-group discussions and one plenary with all participants were conducted to ensure content was accurate, up to date and evidence informed
- The LLEAFF sub-committee provided input into the update of two specific competencies, one on Trauma- and Violence-informed Care and one on Family and Social Support
- CCSA also worked with the Mental Health Commission of Canada to review the Understanding Concurrent Disorders competency

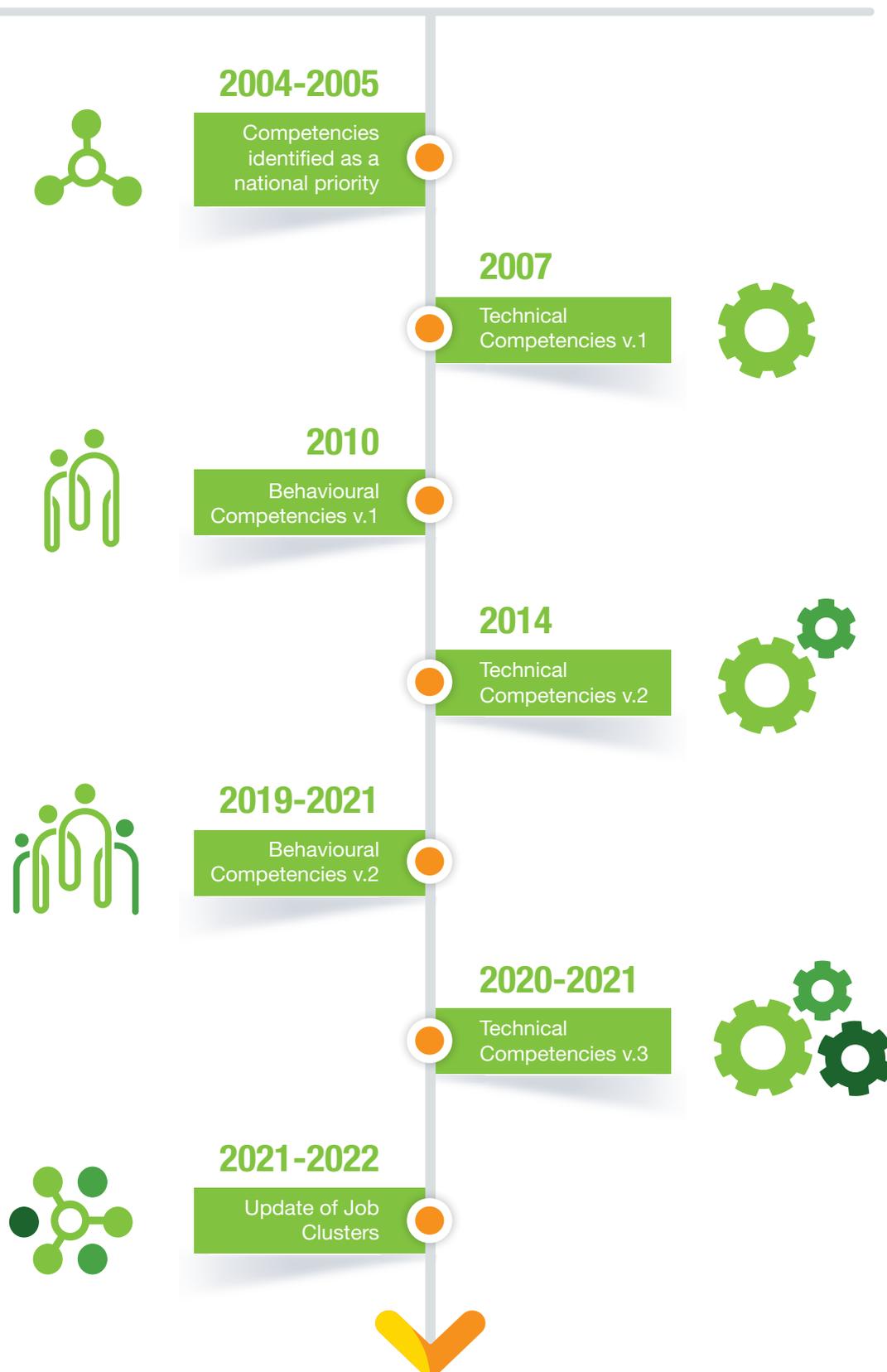
In 2021, changes were reviewed and validated by CCSA's Workforce Competencies Project Advisory Group and Network of Champions

2021– Update of Job Clusters

2022

In 2018–2019, CCSA consulted with substance use workforce representatives and determined that additional job clusters might be needed for unique and emerging roles in the field, including allied health professionals, educators, system navigators and case managers. CCSA will explore expanding the job clusters in 2022.

Historical Development of CCSA's Competencies for the Substance Use Workforce



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