



# TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES

for Canada's Substance  
Use Workforce v. 3

**SCREENING**  
and **ASSESSMENT**



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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## SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

Selecting, administering and interpreting the results of evidence-informed tools and methods to measure substance use and related concerns and inform the care and treatment plan.

### EXAMPLES

1 = Foundational	2 = Developing	3 = Proficient	4 = Advanced
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explains in general terms that:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Screening begins the process of identifying and addressing people's concerns and could lead to further investigation or not</li> <li>Information gathered during screening is a "snapshot" rather than a complete portrait of the individual</li> <li>Assessment is an ongoing process that evaluates individual progress and provides a rationale for changing the treatment plan, as necessary</li> <li>The relationship of screening and assessment to one another and to the range of other processes and services provided to the individual</li> <li>Readiness to disclose concerns will be respected, and additional information can be added as trust and readiness increase</li> </ol> </li> <li>Identifies cognitive and physical signs and symptoms of substance use (e.g., intoxication or withdrawal) and potential life-threatening situations, and intervenes appropriately</li> <li>Adheres to all legislation, guidelines, procedures, protocols and professional ethics about privacy, confidentiality and human rights</li> <li>Provides administrative or other support to intake workers or clinical staff conducting assessments</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides people with an environment that feels safe in light of needs, background, gender and culture</li> <li>Conducts culturally responsive screening and assessment using strengths-based, gender- and evidence-informed tools and approaches shown to lead to the best outcomes and validated for the population being served</li> <li>Conducts screening and assessment interviews exploring the individual's underlying thoughts and emotions using:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A trauma-informed approach</li> <li>A range of questioning techniques</li> <li>Non-judgmental, open-ended questions</li> <li>Inconsistencies (e.g., between verbal and non-verbal communication) to elicit accurate information</li> <li>Language appropriate to the individual's level of understanding</li> </ol> </li> <li>Delivers gender- and culturally sensitive brief interventions for people during screening or assessment services</li> <li>Engages with people to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify relevant cultural and historical influences (e.g., colonization, residential schools, being racialized, etc.)</li> <li>Identify relevant sex- and gender-related issues</li> <li>Identify their strengths</li> <li>Increase access to relevant programs and services</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employs evidence-informed and sex- and gender-sensitive health screening and assessment tools to identify health concerns that might influence the individual's treatment plan</li> <li>Integrates gender-, trauma- and evidence-informed research on screening and assessment tools and techniques into practice</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assesses the adequacy of existing tools and practices, and innovates enhancements, as appropriate</li> <li>Supervises or coaches others to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the quality and integrity of screening and assessment tools and practices</li> <li>Enrich their knowledge and refer them to resources about the impact of different cultures</li> <li>Enhance their knowledge of sex- and gender-related factors affecting screening and assessment</li> <li>Enhance their skills in trauma-informed screening approaches</li> <li>Enhance interviewing and other clinical skills</li> </ol> </li> <li>Initiates, collaborates on or conducts research on various aspects of screening and assessment to inform the development of a care or treatment plan</li> </ol>

## SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

Selecting, administering and interpreting the results of evidence-informed tools and methods to measure substance use and related concerns and inform the care and treatment plan.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Acquires basic individual information, adhering to all relevant templates or guides to ensure completeness and accuracy</li> <li>6. Supports people to identify their goals for well-being</li> <li>7. Reflects an awareness of own personal and professional attitudes and cultural biases, and the impact they might have on the ability to interact with people in a non-judgmental way, and seeks assistance and support, when required</li> <li>8. Responds to people's needs and builds rapport</li> <li>9. Approaches screening and assessment as the beginning of the therapeutic relationship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Selects and applies screening and assessment tools and interprets data they yield to prioritize the individual's needs and inform the development of tailored treatment plans, supports or services that are culturally responsive (e.g., land-based healing, companion animals, etc.)</li> <li>7. Assesses barriers to engagement on an on-going basis, noting any changes that occur and adapting the treatment plan accordingly</li> <li>8. Identifies signs of crisis or trauma responses during screening and assessment and quickly intervenes to ensure safety</li> <li>9. Identifies people who might be at risk of suicide, self-harm or of harming others, and notifies more experienced professionals or, if appropriate, calls for emergency services</li> <li>10. Consults and collaborates with other professionals to clarify or enhance information collection process</li> <li>11. Refers people who will not be involved further with the professional's organization to other culturally and gender-appropriate community resources that could be helpful</li> <li>12. Monitors current trends and information about research related to screening and assessment</li> </ul>		