



TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES

for Canada's Substance
Use Workforce v. 3

**UNDERSTANDING
CONCURRENT SUBSTANCE USE
and MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS**



Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction

Evidence. Engagement. Impact.



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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*, 5th edition (DSM-5).

For more information on sex- and gender-based analysis (SGBA+), please visit www.ccsa.ca/sex-and-gender-based-analysis

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UNDERSTANDING CONCURRENT SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

Knowledge and skills required to inform specific aspects of a professional's work with people with concurrent substance use and mental health concerns. For more information please refer to the criteria for concurrent disorders in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th ed.

EXAMPLES

1 = Foundational	2 = Developing	3 = Proficient	4 = Advanced
<p>1. Explains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is meant by concurrent conditions (co-occurring substance use and mental health concerns) and the importance of treating both together b. The impact that concurrent conditions have on other co-occurring issues (e.g., behavioural or process addictions) c. Factors that contribute to concurrent conditions in general and in specific populations and cultures (e.g., Indigenous or racialized groups) d. The stigma associated with concurrent conditions, and how it may vary in racialized populations and marginalized cultures (e.g., multi-layered stigma) e. The relationship between mental health and substance use and the prevalence of concurrent substance use and mental health conditions f. The prevalence of trauma and violence in the lives of people who use substances or have concurrent conditions, and the impact it can have on their substance use and treatment g. Risks associated with concurrent substance use and mental health conditions, including suicidality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explains the major categories, signs and symptoms of mental health concerns and mental health diagnoses that can be concurrent with substance use concerns 2. Explains frequent causes of and treatments for the categories cited 3. In transparent dialogue with people, provides objective descriptions of signs and symptoms of suspected concurrent substance use and mental health concerns when referring them to or consulting with specialist practitioners 4. Collaborates with people to integrate results of consultations or referrals in their treatment plans 5. Integrates trauma and violence-informed approaches into treatment strategies, supports and services 6. Integrates practical, level-appropriate knowledge of medications into treatment strategies, supports and services 7. Collaborates with people to understand the impact of stigma and identifies evidence-informed strategies to address different levels of stigma including, self, social, organizational and structural stigma 8. Collaborates with people to identify personal and systemic factors (e.g., experiences of trauma and violence, and social determinants of health) that contribute to or protect against developing concurrent substance use and mental health conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explains the impact of and relationship between intersectional factors and multiple layers of stigma (e.g., culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, being racialized, etc.) on people with concurrent conditions and collaborates with them to address these issues 2. Develops and implements evidence-informed strategies that appropriately address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The relative severity of both the person's substance use and mental health concerns b. The specific needs related to the person's cultural context c. The full range of the person's socioeconomic challenges d. The need to collaborate with others 3. Collaborates with colleagues in integrating knowledge with practice 4. Collaborates with other agencies and service providers to address challenges like employment, housing and other social determinants of health that intersect with concurrent substance use and mental health conditions 5. Demonstrates initiative in cross-training opportunities with other professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supervises or coaches other professionals working with people with concurrent substance use and mental health conditions 2. Collaborates and takes a leadership role in developing and implementing a seamless, evidence-informed approach to the delivery of services to people with concurrent conditions across all sectors and disciplines 3. Collaborates and takes a leadership role initiating or facilitating cross-training opportunities with specialist practitioners in mental health and substance use 4. Advocates for, facilitates and contributes to collaborations among the full range of professionals involved in diagnosing and treating people with concurrent conditions 5. Advocates for, initiates, facilitates or participates in research focused on the appropriate integration of treatment for concurrent substance use and mental health concerns

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<p>2. Explains that substance use professionals need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Learn about concurrent conditions b. Know the most important evidence-based references and resources that should inform their learning, including the <i>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders</i>, the Mental Health Act, and mental health examinations and assessments c. Understand the interplay between substance use and mental health conditions (specifically masking and mimicking) d. Understand that family, caregiver and social support and a host of other broad determinants of health can contribute to or protect against developing concurrent conditions e. Practice within the confines of their knowledge and scope of practice and consult and collaborate with others, as required <p>3. Engages with all individuals, their families, caregivers and social supports courteously, responsively and non-judgmentally</p> <p>4. Demonstrates the ability to support or assist more senior professionals working with people with concurrent conditions of varying levels of severity</p>	<p>9. Monitors evidence-informed knowledge about the best approaches to treating concurrent substance use and mental health conditions and working with people living with these conditions</p>		