



**CASC / ACSS**  
Canadian Association / Association canadienne  
for Spiritual Care / de soins spirituels

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## SCOPE OF PRACTICE

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The Canadian Association for Spiritual Care / Association canadienne de soins spirituels (CASC/ACSS) advances the professionalism of spiritual care and psycho-spiritual therapy in Canada.



CASC/ACSS

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# CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR SPIRITUAL CARE/ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE SOINS SPIRITUELS

## SCOPE OF PRACTICE

### A. INTRODUCTION

1. The Canadian Association for Spiritual Care/Association canadienne de soins spirituels (“CASC/ACSS,” “Association”) Members’ scope of practice encompasses the activities its practitioners are educated and authorized to perform. The actual scope of practice of each individual is influenced by:
  - 1.1. The standards of practice, guidelines and principles established by CASC/ACSS, including this broader scope of practice, the competencies for professional practice and the CASC/ACSS Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (CASC/ACSS Policy and Procedure Manual: Chapter 5);
  - 1.2. Federal and provincial legislation; and
  - 1.3. Institutional or practice-based policies and procedures.
2. This scope of practice statement can function as the basis for governing bodies’ preparation of standards of practice, educational institutions’ preparation of curricula, and employers’ definition of position descriptions for other professionals. It is grounded in the professional competencies adopted by CASC/ACSS, which can be found in the CASC/ACSS Policy and Procedure Manual: Chapter 3, Section II, Subsection B, or at [spiritualcare.ca](http://spiritualcare.ca) (Members>Professional Practice Links>Competencies).
3. CASC/ACSS identifies two types of Certified Professional: Spiritual Care Practitioner and Psycho-Spiritual Therapist. CASC/ACSS Certified Professionals demonstrate competence in the four key domains of Professional Identity, Knowledge, Professional Ethical Conduct and Professional Skills, and are able to demonstrate initiative and adaptability inclusive of leadership initiatives in complex systems. CASC/ACSS Certified Professionals are educated and trained to perform activities with:
  - 3.1. advanced integration of self-awareness, knowledge, attitudes and skills; and
  - 3.2. maturity, autonomy, and with confidence and naturalness in role functioning.
4. CASC/ACSS Members working towards Certification grow in these areas of competence through their CASC/ACSS training and education. Once Certified, CASC/ACSS Certified Professionals participate in a Peer Review process whereby they demonstrate personal growth, continuing education and professional development. The CASC/ACSS Certified Professional’s unique and primary focus is to integrate one’s connection to the spiritual and the sacred with one’s professional identity, knowledge, ethical conduct and skills.
5. This scope of practice provides guidance to CASC/ACSS Members who are trained as Psycho-Spiritual Therapists and/or Spiritual Care Practitioners. Category of Practice 3 – Certified/Full (Subsection E, below) represents the norm for persons in both



disciplines given that Members are credentialed and accountable to their peers and their professional association.

## B. WHAT WE DO

### 1. CERTIFIED SPIRITUAL CARE PRACTITIONER

Certified Spiritual Care Practitioners seek to improve the quality of life for individuals and groups experiencing spiritual, moral and existential distress related to changes in health, maturation, ability and life circumstances. They utilize a holistic, relational approach to assess the nature and extent of the concerns; collaboratively develop a plan of care; provide therapeutic interventions to promote, maintain, and restore health and/or palliate illness and injury; and evaluate the implementation of the plan of care to ensure its efficacy. They use interventions informed by religion, spirituality and the social sciences (psychology, sociology, theology, anthropology) as well as, counselling and psychotherapeutic theories, ethical standards, human diversity, and the range of human traditions. Such interventions can include, but are not limited to, psychotherapy. They provide care in a variety of institutional settings including health care, military, corrections, education and other multi-faith, religious and secular communities.

### 2. CERTIFIED PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL THERAPIST

Certified Psycho-Spiritual Therapists, engage in a collaborative process with individuals, families, communities, organizations and other institutions for the purpose of the assessment, treatment and meaning-making of cognitive, emotional, spiritual, relational, behavioral, identity, educational, moral or developmental disturbances and challenges across all stages of the human life cycle. They integrate spirituality into their psychotherapeutic work in the context of a therapeutic relationship. They integrate psycho-education, mental health, wellness, spirituality, religion, pathology, and human development principles. They use interventions informed by religion, spirituality and the social sciences (psychology, sociology, theology, anthropology) as well as counselling and psychotherapeutic theories, ethical standards, human diversity and the range of human traditions.

3. Both professions respect the rich diversity of life and understandings of religion and spirituality. They initiate and engage in consultations and referrals with other professional colleagues, groups or organizations. They also engage in ongoing professional development, self-assessment, critical analysis and research. Category 3 - Certified/Full Members are required to participate in a minimum of 50 hours of professional development annually. How this time is used is considered during the Peer Review process, which occurs every five years. All Members are expected to be aware of best practices within their disciplines and to integrate them into their work.

## C. WHO WE ARE

Certified Spiritual Care Practitioners and the Certified Psycho-Spiritual Therapists are CASC/ACSS Certified Professionals who practice with integrity and accountability according to the CASC/ACSS Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (CASC/ACSS Policy and Procedure Manual: Chapter 5), and the CASC/ACSS Standards of Practice. Their practice is informed by a holistic understanding of human life as spiritual, biological, psychological, social and cultural.



## D. WHAT WE KNOW

1. Certified Spiritual Care Practitioners and Certified Psycho-Spiritual Therapists are educated at masters and doctoral levels and have a minimum of 2,000 hours in post-graduate clinical training that integrates clinical skills with knowledge of self and knowledge of religious, spiritual, philosophical, psychological and cultural frameworks.
2. By employing a CASC/ACSS Certified Professional one confirms a baseline of technical and academic training, spiritual formation, and integration of the core competencies as the foundation for a safe and effective practice.
3. The work of both professions involves the application of principles, methods, techniques and procedures informed by established theories and the ethical and legal standards of the profession. Members are familiar with current research in their field and apply this in their daily practice.

## E. CATEGORIES OF PRACTICE

1. To ensure public safety, it is essential that Spiritual Care Practitioners and Psycho-Spiritual Therapists have the appropriate degree of oversight and that they do not work beyond the limits of their competence. The level of proficiency in any particular area of competency will vary depending on the education, training, skill level and experience of the individual. To ensure safe and ethical practice, individuals should not provide care without the requisite competence unless they are under appropriate supervision.
2. CASC/ACSS recognizes three categories of practice, which coincide with the levels of formation of Basic, Advanced and Certified.

### 2.1. Category 1 – Basic/Limited

- 2.1.1. Members in this Category: An institution may employ such persons, or they may be employed/appointed by an external group/agency such as a religious denomination. This category also includes persons in a Basic Supervised Pastoral Education (SPE) unit.
- 2.1.2. Demonstrated Competency of a Person in this Category: As indicated in the chart below.
- 2.1.3. Education/Professional Qualifications: As determined by the institution or educational program.
- 2.1.4. Accountability/Supervision: Requires direct supervision of their practice of spiritual care and/or counselling by a person with Certified competency for all roles/tasks. What this looks like in a specific setting will be determined by the employer.

### 2.2. Category 2 – Advanced/Specific

- 2.2.1. Members in this Category: An institution may employ such persons, or they may be employed/appointed by an external group/agency such as a religious denomination. This category also includes persons in an Advanced SPE unit.



- 2.2.2. Demonstrated Competency of a Person in this Category: As indicated in the chart below.
  - 2.2.3. Education/Professional Qualification: At least one year of graduate studies (Master's level) in religious, spiritual or theological studies, and at least one unit of SPE at an Advanced level.
  - 2.2.4. Accountability/Supervision: Requires direct supervision of their practice of spiritual care and/or counselling by a person with Certified competency for all roles/tasks. What this looks like in a specific setting will be determined by the employer.
- 2.3. Category 3 – Certified/Full
- 2.3.1. Members in this Category: Anyone who is Certified.
  - 2.3.2. Demonstrated Competency of a Person in this Category: As indicated in the chart below. May provide supervision to persons operating at the Basic or Advanced level of competence.
  - 2.3.3. Education/Professional Qualification: A graduate degree in religious, spiritual or theological studies, including at least one course in Professional Ethics. At least two units of SPE at an Advanced level. Has met the requirement of additional clinical experience hours while receiving mentorship from a Spiritual Care Practitioner or a Psycho-Spiritual Therapist certified by a professional body such as CASC/ACSS, l'Association des intervenantes et intervenants en soins spirituels du Québec (l'AISSQ), the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC), the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education Ireland (ACPE Ireland), the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC), the American Association of Pastoral Counsellors (AAPC), or the Neshama: Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC).
  - 2.3.4. Accountability/Supervision: Does not require direct supervision but remains accountable to peers by virtue of the CASC/ACSS Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (CASC/ACSS Policy and Procedure Manual: Chapter 5), and the CASC/ACSS Standards of Practice, as well as through a regular review process that is informed by these guidelines.



## F. COMPETENCY PROFICIENCY CHART

RATING	DESCRIPTION	DEFINITION
1	No demonstrated achievement	Competency not practiced.
2	Beginning	Starting to engage opportunities to develop competency.
3	Developing	Frequently demonstrates this competency in selected situations.
4	Consistent	Continually demonstrates this competency within defined role. Fully meets expectations.
5	Proficient	Models this competency for others to learn. Performs at a high level in this competency and models at an advanced level. Demonstrates this competency in a variety of contexts and demonstrates a significant level of maturity in this competency.

  

AREA OF COMPETENCY	CATEGORY 1 BASIC	CATEGORY 2 ADVANCED	CATEGORY 3 CERTIFIED
1. Professional Identity	1-3	3-5	4-5
2. Knowledge			
2.1. Spiritual / Religious / Cultural	1-3	3-5	4-5
2.2. Psychological Theories	1-3	3-5	4-5
2.3. Research	1-3	3-5	4-5
3. Professional Ethical Conduct	1-3	3-5	4-5
4. Professional Skills			
4.1. Therapeutic Relationship	1-3	3-5	4-5
4.2. Assessment	1-3	3-5	4-5
4.3. Intervention	1-3	3-5	4-5
4.4. Documentation	1-3	3-5	4-5
4.5. Leadership	1-3	3-5	4-5

