COMPETENCIES OF
CASC/ACSS CERTIFIED PROFESSIONALS

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CASC/ACSS is committed to education, certification and research in support of spiritual care professionals in their practice of spiritual care, psycho-spiritual therapy and education.

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INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Association for Spiritual Care / Association canadienne de soins spirituels (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:

- advanced integration of self-awareness, knowledge, attitudes and skills; and
- maturity, autonomy, and with confidence and naturalness in role functioning.

CASC/ACSS Members working towards Certification grow in these areas of competence through their CASC/ACSS training and education. Once Certified, CASC/ACSS Members 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.

1. PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

A Certified Member is rooted in one's spiritual / religious / cultural tradition that connects with self, other and the sacred for a holistic and spiritually-oriented approach to care and therapy. From this foundation, a CASC/ACSS Certified Professional reflectively integrates the wisdom of spiritual / religious / cultural traditions with psychotherapeutic modalities as a way of being with and for others during times of crisis, challenge and change.

1.1. Embodies a holistic and spiritually-oriented approach to care and therapy.

1.2. Engages in regular personal and communal spiritual practices to nurture awareness of and connection with the spiritual and the sacred in all relationships.

1.3. Engages in regular reflective practice that informs professional functioning.

1.4. Demonstrates safe and effective use of self in personal and professional practice.

1.5. Attends to the dynamics of one's own social location[1], beliefs, power, vulnerability and boundaries as these impact relationships with individuals and groups.

1.6. Engages in personal growth and professional continuing education, such as on-going supervision.

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[1] **Social Location**: "The groups people belong to because of their place or position in history and society. All people have a social location that is defined by their gender, race, social class, age, ability, religion, sexual orientation, and geographic location. Each group membership confers a certain set of social roles and rules, power, and privilege (or lack of), which heavily influence our identity and how we see the world." https://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/courses/csafety/mod2/glossary.htm

2. KNOWLEDGE

A Certified Member integrates psychological and spiritual / religious / cultural frameworks and engages in evidence-informed professional practice supported by current research.

2.1. SPIRITUAL / RELIGIOUS / CULTURAL

2.1.1. Identifies one's own beliefs and spiritual / religious / cultural traditions and their influence on personhood and practice.

2.1.2. Acquires knowledge of world religions, spiritualities and cultural traditions through experiential and conceptual learning.

2.1.3. Develops cultural humility and competency through learning about the diversity of social location, cultural safety and human rights.

2.1.4. Develops cultural humility and competency through learning about Indigenous peoples' experience of colonization in Canada, and the findings and recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

2.2. PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES

2.2.1. Demonstrates an understanding of a broad spectrum of psychological and personality theories and is proficient in at least one psychotherapeutic modality.

2.2.2. Articulates theoretical and philosophical frameworks out of which one practices, recognizing the benefits, limitations and contraindications of differing frameworks.

2.2.3. Understands and engages group dynamics and organizational systems.

2.2.4. Engages in experiential learning using adult education principles and an action-reflection model.

2.2.5. Integrates knowledge of human and spiritual development and utilizes theories of change to facilitate wellness.

2.2.6. Utilizes a trauma-informed approach with individuals and groups attentive to the potential for decline or growth in human functioning.

2.2.7. Demonstrates familiarity with the major psychological diagnostic categories in current use.

2.2.8. Demonstrates familiarity with major classes of psychoactive drugs, the drugs used in one's area of practice, and their effects on health.

2.2.9. Integrates knowledge of psychological theories with spiritual / religious / cultural frameworks.

2.3. RESEARCH

    2.3.1.   Engages evidence-informed practice as integral to professional functioning.

    2.3.2.   Demonstrates knowledge of research methods, including theoretical, quantitative and qualitative methodologies, Quality Assurance and Program Evaluation.

    2.3.3.   Demonstrates ability to conduct a literature search, critically assess the value and quality of both seminal and current research, integrate findings and share through written and oral communication.

    2.3.4.   Implements relevant research findings into practice context and engages in ongoing evaluation of new practices.

    2.3.5.   Participates in research led by other primary investigators and, when possible, conducts research as the primary investigator in projects applicable to one's practice context.

3. PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL CONDUCT

A Certified Member practices and advocates for excellent and equitable care congruent with the CASC/ACSS Scope of Practice and Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. A Certified Member demonstrates accountability to clients, the public, spiritual / religious / cultural communities, employers and relevant regulatory and professional organizations in all professional relationships.

    3.1.   Works within one's scope of practice knowing when it is appropriate to make a referral or initiate a consultation.

    3.2.   Articulates and maintains clear and appropriate therapeutic and professional boundaries.

    3.3.   Demonstrates awareness of and sensitivity to the diversity of an individual's social location and life experiences.

    3.4.   Demonstrates and promotes inclusive behaviour and advocates for diverse spiritual / religious / cultural needs and practices.

    3.5.   Articulates and demonstrates the importance and limits of confidentiality.

    3.6.   Keeps records in a manner appropriate to the professional setting.

    3.7.   Engages ethical issues encountered in one's practice, teaching and research.

    3.8.   Demonstrates awareness of occupational hazards and takes preventative measures.

    3.9.   Demonstrates clear and concise professional communication, including written, oral, electronic, third party reporting and consultation.

4. PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

A Certified Member utilizes a comprehensive skill set for the purpose of engaging in therapeutic relationships with individuals, groups, communities and organizations. CASC/ACSS Certified Professionals are attentive to the spiritual and the sacred in each encounter.

4.1. THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

Develops a spiritually-integrated therapeutic relationship of trust to engage clients and communities in their healing processes.

4.1.1. Practices safe and effective use of self.

4.1.2. Demonstrates a non-anxious presence and neutral stance in the provision of care.

4.1.3. Engages clients and clients' narratives on their own terms.

4.1.4. Works collaboratively with clients, care team and relevant stakeholders.

4.1.5. Listens actively and responds effectively using both verbal and non-verbal communication.

4.1.6. Communicates role and function, confidentiality and consent in a manner appropriate to the recipient.

4.1.7. Explains theoretical and spiritual concepts in everyday language.

4.1.8. Recognizes conflict, whether overt or covert, verbal or non-verbal and uses a conflict resolution approach appropriate to the situation.

4.2. ASSESSMENT

Collaboratively gathers and evaluates information as it pertains to clients' presenting issues and is relevant to their life-giving and life-limiting beliefs, thoughts, emotions, behaviours and social needs.

4.2.1. Demonstrates an awareness of how social location operates consciously and unconsciously at personal, interpersonal and systemic levels.

4.2.2. Implicitly assesses by means of listening to the life narrative of the client.

4.2.3. Explicitly assesses by utilizing spiritual assessment tools that are appropriate to context.

4.2.4. Explores with clients what is life-limiting and life-giving in their beliefs and values, ways of coping and resources.

4.2.5. Assesses spiritual distress, spiritual pain, suffering, grief and loss.

4.2.6. Explores sources of strength, hope, resilience and opportunities for transformation.

4.2.7. Identifies intra- and interpersonal dynamics related to family history.

4.2.8. Identifies intra- and interpersonal dynamics related to present and past trauma.

4.2.9. Conducts risk assessments appropriate to one's therapeutic context.

4.2.10. Identifies how clients' spiritual, religious, philosophical and cultural beliefs and values may inform treatment choices.

4.2.11. Assesses ritual/ceremonial needs and spiritual/religious care appropriate to one's context.

4.2.12. Assesses limits of one's professional ability and identifies circumstances when consultation or referral may be beneficial or required

4.3. INTERVENTION

Provides a variety of interventions according to a co-created therapeutic plan that supports clients' overall goals and includes their community of care.

4.3.1. Collaboratively develops appropriate interventions consistent with clients' social location.

4.3.2. Facilitates expression of clients' stories and emotions to address spiritual distress and enhance spiritual resources.

4.3.3. Utilizes reflection from religious/theological/spiritual/cultural perspectives for the purpose of meaning-making with clients.

4.3.4. Provides or facilitates prayers, rituals, rites, ceremonies and services appropriate to context.

4.3.5. Offers support and guidance for spiritual growth.

4.3.6. Supports relational connections and experiences of community.

4.3.7. Evaluates with clients the effectiveness of the therapeutic relationship and interventions.

4.3.8. Utilizes clinical supervision and consultation to monitor effectiveness of interventions.

4.3.9. Refers to additional professional or community-based services when appropriate, including the inter-professional care team, elders and religious leaders.

4.4. DOCUMENTATION

Documents referrals, informed consent, clinical assessments and interventions relevant to one's clinical context.

4.4.1. Notes reason for initial referral or presenting issue, assessment and follow-up plans.

4.4.2. Differentiates facts from opinion in the clinical record.

4.4.3. Demonstrates the necessity and limits of confidentiality regarding client information.

4.4.4. Uses an informed consent process relevant to one's practice context.

4.4.5. Employs electronic communication as relevant to practice and maintains appropriate security in its use.

4.4.6. Keeps records and statistics in a timely manner for an appropriately designated length of time.

4.4.7. Maintains professional documentation on clients in a secure location.

4.5. LEADERSHIP

Envisions creative possibilities that inspire oneself and others to supportive and advocacy action with individuals and communities and within organizations.

4.5.1. Demonstrates a non-anxious presence and neutral stance in the provision of mediation and consultation.

4.5.2. Acts as a change agent in one's clinical setting to promote a culture of care, respect, justice and reconciliation.

4.5.3. Promotes, facilitates and supports ethical decision-making in one's workplace.

4.5.4. Thinks and acts creatively in times of crisis or conflict while attending to the emotions and differing viewpoints in the situation.

4.5.5. Demonstrates planning and management skills in the development of spiritual and therapeutic practice in private or organizational settings.

4.5.6. Establishes and maintains inter-professional relationships.

4.5.7. Educates and advocates for the value of spirituality to health and wellbeing at the individual, communal and systemic levels. This includes advocating for the uniqueness of CASC/ACSS Certified Professionals.

4.5.8. Builds capacity for spiritual health and wellbeing among other professionals and community partners.

4.5.9. Participates and contributes in one's spiritual / religious / cultural communities and professional organizations.