College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario

Entry-to-Practice Competency Profile for Registered Psychotherapists

Philosophy, Assumptions and Uses of the Competency Profile

The competency profile lists the competencies that must be possessed by individuals entering the profession for the first time, in order for them to practise safely, effectively and ethically across a variety of practice settings. "Entering the profession for the first time" signifies registration following completion of entry-to-practice requirements.

- A *competency* is the ability to achieve a specified level of proficiency in a practice activity, and results from specific skills, knowledge and judgement.
- *Entry-to-practice competency* is the ability to achieve *entry-level proficiency.*
- *Entry-level proficiency* is defined as follows:
    - In the ordinary practice of the profession, the entry-level Registered Psychotherapist (RP) calls upon competencies in an informed manner based upon the practice context, and does not normally require immediate supervision or direction. The entry-level RP monitors responses and reacts appropriately, and works within a reasonable timeframe, towards the achievement of outcomes consistent with the generally accepted standards in the profession.
    - When dealing with unusual, difficult to resolve and complex situations, the entry- level RP recognizes situations which are beyond his/her professional capacity and addresses them in discussion with his/her supervisor and/or through referral to a practitioner who is appropriately qualified.

The competency profile establishes minimum requirements, and creates a foundation upon which to build. The possession at entry-to-practice of additional competencies, and higher levels of proficiency, is encouraged.

Following entry-to-practice, a member's competencies will evolve based upon work experience and continuing professional development. Specifically:

- New competencies may be added.
- Levels of proficiency in competencies that are regularly utilized may increase.
- Levels of proficiency in competencies that are not regularly utilized may decrease.

The competency profile informs the registration requirements for new registrants entering the profession for the first time. Additionally, it informs the requirements for the registration of experienced workers, as well as the College's ongoing expectations for members such as its standards of practice and quality assurance program.

Principles Behind the Competency Profile

The competency profile is constructed to serve users both within and outside the profession. The terminology is generic, and should be interpreted in the context of professional self- regulation in Ontario and in a manner relevant to the therapist's orientation, modality and practice.

The individual competencies within the profile should be thought of as an *interdependent array of abilities* which an individual brings to the workplace, and uses according to the situation at hand. Competencies are not used in isolation.

The profile does not represent a protocol, or a listing of what the practitioner *must do* in practice; rather, it represents what the practitioner *must be able to do* when necessary.

In any practice situation the order of use, and the significance, of the competencies will vary according to context.

At entry-to-practice the RP is able to:	
1. Foundations	
1.1 Integrate a theory of human psychological functioning.	
a	Integrate knowledge of human development across the lifespan.
b	Integrate knowledge of contextual and systemic factors that facilitate or impair human functioning.
c	Integrate knowledge of the psychological significance of spiritual, moral, social, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, sexual, gender, and biological development.
1.2 Work within a framework based upon established psychotherapeutic theory.	
a	Integrate the theory or theories upon which the therapist's practice is based.
b	Integrate knowledge of how human problems develop, from the viewpoint of the therapist's theoretical orientation.
c	Identify circumstances where therapy is contraindicated.
d	Recognize the benefits, limitations, and contraindications of differing psychotherapeutic approaches.
e	Establish a therapeutic relationship informed by the theoretical framework.
f	Integrate a theory of change consistent with the therapist's theoretical orientation.
g	Integrate knowledge of the impact of trauma on psychological functioning.

At entry-to-practice the RP is able to:	
1.3 Integrate knowledge of comparative psychotherapy relevant to practice.	
a	Integrate knowledge of key concepts common to all psychotherapy practice.
b	Recognize the range of psychotherapy practised within the province of Ontario.
c	Integrate knowledge of psychopathology.
d	Recognize the major diagnostic categories in current use.
e	Recognize the major classes of psychoactive drugs and their effects.
1.4 Integrate awareness of self in relation to professional role.	
a	Integrate knowledge of the impact of the therapist's self on the therapeutic process.
b	Recognize how the therapist's values and attitudes, both in and out of awareness, may impact diverse clients.
c	Recognize the cognitive, emotional and behavioural patterns of the therapist that may influence therapeutic relationship.
d	Recognize instances where the therapist's life experiences may enhance or compromise therapeutic effectiveness.
1.5 Integrate knowledge of human and cultural diversity.	
a	Integrate knowledge of human diversity.
b	Recognize how oppression, power and social injustice may affect the client and also the therapeutic process.
c	Adapt the therapist's approach when working with culturally diverse clients.
d	Recognize barriers that may affect access to therapeutic services.
e	Identify culturally-relevant resources.

At entry-to-practice the RP is able to:	
2. Collegial & Interprofessional Relationships	
2.1 Use effective professional communication.	
a	Use clear and concise written communication.
b	Use clear and concise oral communication.
c	Use clear and concise electronic communication.
d	Communicate in a manner appropriate to the recipient.
e	Use effective listening skills.
f	Differentiate fact from opinion.
g	Recognize and respond appropriately to non-verbal communication.
2.2 Maintain effective relationships.	
a	Show respect to others.
b	Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
c	Recognize and address conflict in a constructive manner.
d	Demonstrate personal and professional integrity.
2.3 Contribute to a collaborative and productive atmosphere.	
a	Create and sustain working relationships with other professionals encountered in practice.
b	Create and sustain working relationships with colleagues of diverse socio- cultural identities.
c	Initiate interprofessional collaborative practice.

At entry-to-practice the RP is able to:	
3. Professional Responsibilities	
3.1 Comply with legal and professional obligations.	
a	Comply with applicable federal and provincial legislation.
b	Comply with CRPRMHTO legislation and professional standards.
c	Address organizational policies and practices that are inconsistent with legislation and professional standards.
d	Comply with relevant municipal and local bylaws related to private practice.
3.2 Apply an ethical decision making process.	
a	Recognize ethical issues encountered in practice.
b	Resolve ethical dilemmas in a manner consistent with legislation and professional standards.
c	Accept responsibility for course of action taken.
3.3 Maintain self-care and level of health necessary for responsible therapy.	
a	Maintain personal physical, psychological, cognitive and emotional fitness to practice.
b	Build and use a personal and professional support network.
c	Maintain personal hygiene and appropriate professional presentation.
3.4 Evaluate and enhance professional practice.	
a	Undertake critical self-reflection.
b	Solicit client feedback throughout the therapeutic process.
c	Plan and implement methods to assess effectiveness of interventions.
d	Obtain feedback from peers and supervisors to assist in practice review.
e	Identify strengths as a therapist, and areas for development.
f	Set goals for improvement.
g	Modify practice to enhance effectiveness.
h	Participate in relevant professional development activities.
i	Maintain awareness of resources and sources of support relevant to practice.
3.5 Obtain clinical supervision or consultation.	
a	Initiate clinical supervision or consultation when appropriate or required.
b	Articulate parameters of supervision or consultation.
c	Protect client privacy and confidentiality, making disclosure only where permitted or required.
d	Initiate a legal consultation when necessary.
3.6 Provide education and training consistent with the therapist's practice.	
a	Recognize when to provide education and training to clients and others.
b	Recognize therapist's limits of professional expertise as a trainer / educator.
c	Plan and implement effective instructional activities.
3.7 Maintain client records.	
a	Comply with the requirements of CRPRMHTO and relevant professional standards.

At entry-to-practice the RP is able to:	
3.8 Assist client with needs for advocacy and support.	
a	Identify when advocacy or third-party support may be of value to the client, and advise client accordingly.
b	Support client to overcome barriers.
3.9 Provide reports to third parties.	
a	Prepare clear, concise, accurate and timely reports for third parties, appropriate to the needs of the recipient.
b	Recognize ethical and legal implications when preparing third-party reports.
3.10 Establish business practices relevant to professional role.	
a	Comply with the requirements of CRPRMHTO and relevant professional standards.
b	Explain limitations of service availability.

At entry-to-practice the RP is able to:	
4. Therapeutic Process	
4.1 Orient client to therapist's practice.	
a	Describe therapist's education, qualifications and role.
b	Differentiate the role of the therapist in relation to other health professionals.
c	Explain the responsibilities of the client and the therapist in a therapeutic relationship.
d	Explain the advantages and disadvantages of participating in psychotherapy.
e	Explain client rights to privacy and confidentiality, and the limitations imposed upon it by law.
f	Explain relevant rules and policies.
g	Respond to client questions.
h	Explain and obtain informed consent in accordance with legal requirements.
4.2 Establish and maintain core conditions for therapy.	
a	Employ empathy, respect, and authenticity.
b	Establish rapport.
c	Demonstrate awareness of the impact of the client's context on the therapeutic process.
d	Demonstrate sensitivity to the setting in which therapy takes place.
e	Assume non-judgmental stance.
f	Explain theoretical concepts in terms the client can understand.
g	Foster client autonomy.
h	Maintain appropriate therapeutic boundaries.
i	Define clear boundaries of response to client's requests or demands.
j	Take all reasonable measures to safeguard physical and emotional safety of client during clinical work.
k	Employ effective skills in observation of self, the client and the therapeutic process.
l	Demonstrate dependability.
4.3 Ensure safe and effective use of self in the therapeutic relationship.	
a	Demonstrate awareness of the impact of the therapist's subjective context on the therapeutic process.
b	Recognize the impact of power dynamics within the therapeutic relationship.
c	Protect client from imposition of the therapist's personal issues.
d	Employ effective and congruent verbal and non-verbal communication.
e	Use self-disclosure appropriately.
4.4 Conduct an appropriate risk assessment.	
a	Assess for specific risks as indicated.
b	Develop safety plans with clients at risk.
c	Refer to specific professional services where appropriate.
d	Report to authorities as required by law.

At entry-to-practice the RP is able to:	
e	Follow up to monitor risk over time.
4.5 Structure and facilitate the therapeutic process.	
a	Communicate in a manner appropriate to client's developmental level and socio- cultural identity.
b	Identify and respond appropriately to client's strengths, vulnerabilities, resilience and resources.
c	Respond non-reactively to anger, hostility and criticism from the client.
d	Respond professionally to expressions of inappropriate attachment from the client.
e	Anticipate and respond appropriately to the expression of intense emotions and help the client to understanding and management.
f	Recognize a variety of assessment approaches.
g	Formulate an assessment.
h	Develop individualized goals and objectives with the client.
i	Formulate a direction for treatment or therapy.
j	Practise therapy that is within therapist's level of skill, knowledge and judgement.
k	Focus and guide sessions.
l	Engage client according to their demonstrated level of commitment to therapy.
m	Facilitate client exploration of issues and patterns of behaviour.
n	Support client to explore a range of emotions.
o	Employ a variety of helping strategies.
p	Ensure timeliness of interventions.
q	Recognize the significance of both action and inaction.
r	Identify contextual influences.
s	Review therapeutic process and progress with client periodically, and make appropriate adjustments.
t	Recognize when to discontinue or conclude therapy.
4.6 Refer client.	
a	Develop and maintain a referral network.
b	Identify situations in which referral or specialized treatment may benefit the client, or be required.
c	Refer client, where indicated, in a reasonable time.
4.7 Conduct an effective closure process.	
a	Prepare client in a timely manner for the ending of a course of therapy.
b	Outline follow-up options, support systems and resources.

At entry-to-practice the RP is able to:	
5. Professional Literature & Applied Research	
5.1 Remain current with professional literature.	
a	Read current professional literature relevant to practice area.
b	Access information from a variety of current sources.
c	Analyze information critically.
d	Determine the applicability of information to particular clinical situations.
e	Apply knowledge gathered to enhance practice.
f	Remain current with developments in foundational areas.
5.2 Use research findings to inform clinical practice.	
a	Integrate knowledge of research methods and practices.
b	Determine the applicability of research findings to particular clinical situations.
c	Analyze research findings critically.
d	Apply knowledge gathered to enhance practice.