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Membership Advisory

Supervision of the Communication of Diagnoses by Provisional Members or Psychology Interns/Residents

Section 23 of the Psychologists Act 1997 identifies the protected act of diagnosing mental health conditions by Psychologists. Section 13 of the Regulatory Bylaws identifies the requirements for one to be granted diagnostic privilege as well as the terms and conditions of the practice. The focus of this advisory is the supervision of Provisional members and Psychology Interns / Residents in the provision of diagnostic services in light of amendments (June 2016) to the Regulatory Bylaws of the College.

Consultation with legal counsel, and reference to the College Regulatory Bylaws, the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists 3rd Edition (Code) [CPA, 2000] and the Saskatchewan College of Psychologists (College) Professional Practice Guidelines (PPGs) occurred in the revision of this advisory.

Section 23 of *the Psychologists Act 1997* reads:

- 23(1) An authorized practice is the communication of a diagnosis identifying, as the cause of a person's symptoms, a neuropsychological disorder or a psychologically-based psychotic, neurotic or personality disorder.*
- (2) No person shall perform an authorized practice described in subsection (1) in the course of providing services to an individual unless the person is a practising member authorized by council pursuant to his or her licence or the bylaws to perform that authorized practice.*
- (3) Prior to authorizing a member to perform an authorized practice, the council may require that member to successfully complete any examinations as may be prescribed in the bylaws.*
- (4) This section does not apply to a duly qualified medical practitioner.*

Section 23 of the legislation directs that only those who have the APE on their license which by definition is a Full Practice Registered Psychologist or a duly qualified medical practitioner may communicate psychological/psychiatric diagnoses. Section 13 of the Regulatory Bylaws outlines the knowledge, skills, and training that one must have to be eligible to apply for the APE. All applicants for the APE seeking independent diagnostic privilege must successfully examine for the endorsement, and must have a Full Practice license in order for it to be awarded. When the legislation was drafted, the Government did not contemplate diagnoses being provided by students or Provisional members of the College who are under the direct supervision of a Full Practice member with the APE. It is the College's view that practicum students should not be establishing or communicating diagnoses.

The June 2016 amendment to the Regulatory Bylaw addresses the issue of the communication of diagnoses by Provisional Psychologists and Doctoral Psychology Interns/Residents who are under the supervision of Full Practice members of the College with the APE on their licenses. The College views practice and experience in diagnostics as key in the training of the professional psychologist, and in the establishment of one's qualification to diagnose in the case of Provisional Psychologists. Full Practice Psychologists providing supervision in diagnostics have the ultimate responsibility for the diagnosis (es) being established and communicated. The Code and PPGs would direct that one must not provide a diagnosis (es) without direct involvement and knowledge of the client.

Full Practice members with the APE providing supervision in diagnostics are advised that in light of the bylaw amendments, supervisees (i.e. only Provisional members and Doctoral Psychology Residents/Interns) may communicate diagnoses without your physical presence at the time the diagnoses are being presented to the client or your prior communication to the client in regard to the diagnoses established, under the following conditions:

- 1) The supervisory relationship and all that it entails must be clearly identified and discussed with clients in the informed consent process.
- 2) The supervisor must have been directly involved in the assessment process (i.e. have reviewed the assessments, consulted with the Provisional Member / Resident/Intern as to the signs and symptoms, have directly interviewed or observed an interview of the client etc.)
- 3) The supervising Psychologist accepts responsibility for the diagnoses established and communicated.