



The CPCA Competency Based Model for Clinical Practice

WHAT IS COMPETENCY IN CLINICAL PRACTICE?

Within the field of clinical counselling competency involves:

- A combination of many areas of knowledge and education and experience.
- The ability to perform numerous skills at appropriate and discernible points in time.
- An understanding and application of the boundaries of ethical practice.
- Understanding one's own process and issues to address.
- A commitment to always growing and learning as a clinician.
- Openness to feedback and influence of clinical supervision.
- Regular reflective practice and self-care for the clinician to ensure their best mental health.
- Willingness to be accountable to other professionals to ensure optimum clinical practice.

WHAT ARE COMMON ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING CLINICAL COMPETENCY?

The main assumption that many associations, insurance companies, and employers make is to assume that a specific educational degree equates with clinical competency. But this is not the case.

master's degree ≠ clinical competency

There are many cases where well educated individuals with master's or doctorate degrees have lacked clinical competency, done poor clinical practice and even unethical practice, and have caused harm to clients.

Another assumption is that the longer one is in clinical practice the more competent they become. This can be the case for dedicated clinicians, but it too is an assumption. Research has shown that those who are new to the practice of therapy or counselling can be sharper and better clinically due to their recent training and their hypervigilance to be a good clinician.

more experience ≠ greater clinical competency

It is unfortunate that some who age in the profession can also become less effective and lazy when working with clients. It is for this reason that accountability, self reflective practice, continuing education, and continual clinical supervision are critical to maintain optimum clinical performance.

WHY IS THE CPCa COMMITTED TO A COMPETENCY BASED MODEL?

The CPCa is committed to a competency-based model of clinical practice because it is more holistic in its approach to understanding the nature of competency. It does not assume that competency is only based on a specific form of education, but rather encompasses all the aspects of what competency



means in clinical practice and endeavors to ensure that competency is the highest priority within all of our clinicians.

WHAT IS THE CPCa COMPETENCY BASED MODEL?

If we take the competency-based model definition from page 2 we can build a picture of what competency looks like within the Canadian Professional Counselling Association. The CPCa is a competency-based professional association whose members voluntarily participate in the regulation and oversight of clinical practice for the protection of the public.



These standards include a Code of Ethics, Professional Standards of Practice, and a formal, adjudicated Complaints & Discipline process. All CPCa members in active practice must complete *a minimum* of 12 hours of professional development and 6 hours of clinical supervision per calendar year to remain in good standing as practicing clinicians.

Our members are deemed competent after a rigorous application process which includes a theory-based qualifying exam, proof of supervised clinical practice, and letters of recommendation from registered/licensed mental health professionals who have personal knowledge of the applicant's clinical skills.

In addition to the entry-level registration, the *Registered Professional Counsellor* (RPC), CPCa members may apply for advanced recognition as *Master Practitioner in Clinical Counselling* (MPCC), which represents a significant body of education and experience over and above the RPC registration. An

MPCC-level member has completed a *minimum* of 1250 hours of direct client contact, 250 hours of clinical supervision, and has been in active practice for at least 5 of the past 8 years. This designation is purposefully modelled on the education and experience typically earned through a graduate degree program.

The following chart highlights what is needed for each certification within the CPCAs:

Title	Registered Professional Counsellor Candidate	Registered Professional Counsellor	Master Practitioner in Clinical Counselling
Designation	RPC-C	RPC	MPCC
Education All international education must be verified and assessed by WES or other such Canadian recognized organization	A minimum of 1100 approved competent education hours (including supervised practicum hours) in the field of Psychotherapy/ Counselling that facilitate skill development of entry-level core competencies is required for professional registration.	A minimum of 1100 approved competent education hours (including supervised practicum hours) in the field of Psychotherapy/Counselling that facilitate the skill development of entry-level core competencies is required for professional registration.	Completed the approved competent education requirements of an RPC plus a minimum of 60 hours advanced education (which meet the requirements of CE or Professional Development credits)
Specific Course Requirements	Completed an approved competent education program that directly trained the student in the entry level core competencies of the CPCAs. However, they have not yet met the criteria for an RPC designation but are in the process of gaining the experience necessary for RPC designation.	Counselling Foundations I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human Development ▪ Culture & Diversity Counselling Foundations II: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Theoretical Framework ▪ Evidence-based Practice Counselling Foundations III: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Psychopathology/Abnormal Psych/DSM-5/ ICD Counselling Interventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clinical assessment ▪ Crisis Intervention ▪ Conflict Resolution Skills Counselling Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Orientation ▪ Assessment ▪ Closure Counselling Skills and Techniques: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Therapeutic Communication ▪ Therapeutic Relationship ▪ Therapeutic Process Ethics & Ethical Practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legal & Regulatory Practice ▪ Scope of Practice ▪ Ethical Practice ▪ Ethical Decision-Making ▪ Ethical Communication 	The Same educational Competencies as an RPC plus 60 additional hours in any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accredited specialized training • approved CE or professional development hours • related specialized certification • accredited post graduate degree(s)

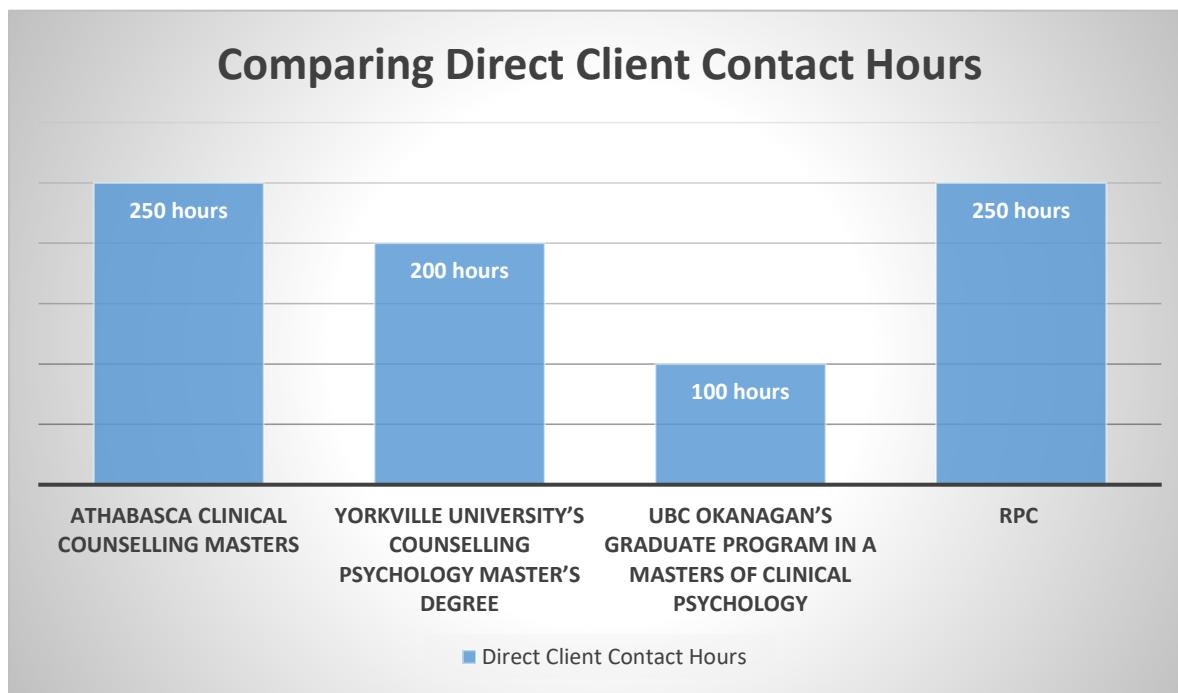
Specific Course Requirements Continued		Reflective Practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-care & personal safety ▪ Awareness of Self ▪ Supervision/Clinical Governance Professional Practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Practices ▪ Records ▪ Relationships (Collegial Consultation/Collaborative Practice) ▪ Supervision/Practice Governance Professional Communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clinical Documentation ▪ Referrals ▪ Third Party Reports ▪ Media/Social Media 	
Pre-Grad Supervised Practicum Hours	120 hours min required	120 hours min required	120 hours min required
Post-Grad Supervision before receiving designation	None	Minimum 150 clinical supervision hours	Minimum 250 clinical supervision hours
Supervisor Requirements	All clinical supervision must be completed by a registered qualified clinical supervisor (QCS). The clinical supervisor does not need to be a member of the CPCA, but must meet all the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be registered as a qualified clinical supervisor with a recognized professional assoc. • a member in good standing within their professional assoc. • meets the equivalency criteria of a CPCA supervisor (MPCC-S): ➢ A minimum of eight years active practice within the past 10 years in mental health services including a minimum 1,500 documented hours of direct service with clients. ➢ 100 hours of documented supervision experience (supervising practicum students, graduates, licensees, peers) ➢ 30 hours additional approved competent education specifically related to the practice of 	All clinical supervision must be completed by a registered qualified clinical supervisor (QCS). The clinical supervisor does not need to be a member of the CPCA, but must meet all the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be registered as a qualified clinical supervisor with a recognized professional association • a member in good standing within their professional association • meets the equivalency criteria of a CPCA supervisor (MPCC-S): ➢ A minimum of eight years active practice within the past 10 years in mental health services including a minimum 1,500 documented hours of direct service with clients. ➢ 100 hours of documented supervision experience (supervising practicum students, graduates, licensees, peers) ➢ 30 hours additional approved competent education specifically related to the practice of 	All clinical supervision must be completed by a registered qualified clinical supervisor (QCS). The clinical supervisor does not need to be a member of the CPCA, but must meet all the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be registered as a qualified clinical supervisor with a recognized professional association • a member in good standing within their professional association • meets the equivalency criteria of a CPCA supervisor (MPCC-S): ➢ A minimum of eight years active practice within the past 10 years in mental health services including a minimum 1,500 documented hours of direct service with clients.

<p>Supervisor Requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ hours of direct service with clients. ➤ 100 hours of documented supervision experience (supervising practicum students, graduates, licensees, peers) ➤ 30 hours additional approved competent education specifically related to the practice of supervision, including at least one 'Ethics and Supervision' course no older than three years ➤ Three letters of recommendation substantiating professional recognition of clinical knowledge and practical skills. 	<p>supervision, including at least one 'Ethics and Supervision' course no older than three years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Three letters of Professional recommendation substantiating professional recognition of clinical knowledge and practical skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 100 hours of documented supervision experience (supervising practicum students, graduates, licensees, peers) ➤ 30 hours additional approved competent education specifically related to the practice of supervision, including at least one 'Ethics and Supervision' course no older than three years ➤ Three letters of recommendation substantiating professional recognition of clinical knowledge and practical skills.
<p>Experience</p>	<p>Minimum of 150 hours of combined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision hours • direct client contact hours (DCC) • clinical practice hours • must have completed 260 – 360 hours <p>Has completed an approved competent education program that directly trained the student in the entry level core competencies of the CPCA.</p> <p>However, they have not yet met the criteria for an RPC designation but are in the process of gaining the experience necessary for RPC designation.</p>	<p>Minimum of 600 hours includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 supervision hours • 250 direct client contact hours (DCC) • 200 clinical practice hours <p>Thus, for client contact, there is a <i>minimum of 450</i> directly related hours. "Clinical practice hours" includes time that specifically relates to direct client hours (i.e.: case notes, research on a specific case, report writing for a case, preparation time before a session (but clinical supervision is not included in "clinical practice hours").</p>	<p>Minimum of 1250 hours includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 250 supervision hours • 750 direct client contact hours (DCC) • 250 clinical practice hours <p>In addition to having practiced in the counselling field for a minimum of five (5) of the last eight (8) years.</p>

Criminal Records Check	Required at first membership registration and with each upgrade in designation. The CPCA policy is that Criminal Record Checks are updated after every 5 years of practice.	Required at first membership registration and with each upgrade in designation. The CPCA policy is that Criminal Record Checks are updated after every 5 years of practice.	Required at first membership registration and with each upgrade in designation. The CPCA policy is that Criminal Record Checks are updated after every 5 years of practice.
Vulnerable Records Check	Required at first membership registration and with each upgrade in designation. The CPCA policy is that Criminal Record Checks are updated after every 5 years of practice.	Required at first membership registration and with each upgrade in designation. The CPCA policy is that Criminal Record Checks are updated after every 5 years of practice.	Required at first membership registration and with each upgrade in designation. The CPCA policy is that Criminal Record Checks are updated after every 5 years of practice.
Exam	Successful completion of Qualifying Exam with 70% score or greater	Successful completion of Qualifying Exam with 70% score or greater	Successful completion of Qualifying Exam with 70% score or greater <u>if new member application only</u>
Membership	RPC-C's are candidate counsellors must practice under the supervision of a contracted qualified clinical supervisor. Candidate counsellors are eligible to apply for upgrade to RPC (Registered Professional Counsellor) once their candidacy is satisfied.	RPC's are clinical counsellors who have completed their candidacy (RPC-C) or have substantiated the requirements of an RPC.	MPCC's are RPC clinical counsellors who have completed extended clinical practice hours, additional education, and additional clinical supervision hours as listed above. If a new member application, they must substantiate the requirements of an MPCC.
Letters of Reference/Recommendation	Minimum of 2 letters	Minimum of 2 letters	Minimum of 3 letters

DIRECT CLIENT CONTACT SUPERVISED HOURS

When looking at Master level programs, by way of comparison, a graduate student from Athabasca University's Clinical Counselling Master's Program must have 500 hours of clinical experience completed within the degree program; but of those 500 hours, only **250 hours must be "direct client contact"**. Yorkville University's Counselling Psychology Master's degree requires 400 hours of clinical experience, of which **200 hours must be "direct client contact"**. And the UBC Okanagan's graduate program in a Master of Clinical Psychology requires **100 hours "direct client contact"** with 65 hours of clinical supervision. The standard for an RPC designation is 250 Direct Client Contact Hours, after having completed a supervised clinical practicum of 120 hours, and the CPCA Qualifying Exam.

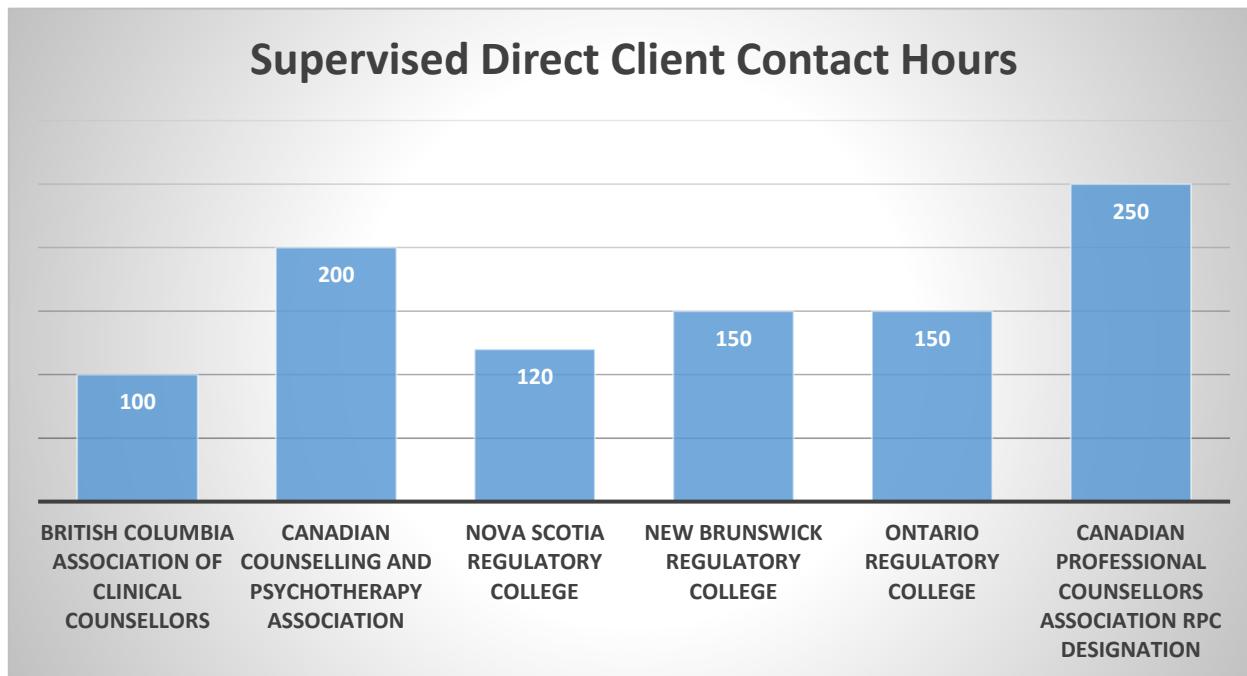


These graduate degrees are accepted by many professional associations and are also recognized by most insurance underwriters, EAPs, Government agencies, and 3rd party benefit policies. The requirements of the RPC designation of the CPCA fully meets this standard. The requirements of the RPC-C designation also meet the standard of some recognized degree programs.

A MASTERS LEVEL STANDARD AND THE RPC DESIGNATION

The RPC minimum requirements have been established for many years. Most applicants exceed these minimums with an average number of approved competent educational hours of 1100 - 100 hours and an average number of hours of supervised practicum between 200 – 360 hours.

When we compare the standards for Supervised Direct Client Contact Hours of the CPCA to that of other professional counselling associations and regulatory colleges, the requirements for the RPC designation are higher than those of Associations which require a master's degree. In the chart below is a comparison:



For some associations and regulatory colleges, these Supervised Direct Client Contact Hours can be credited or achieved through a practicum. However, the CPCA requires 250 Supervised Direct Client Contact Hours to be in addition to the 120 minimum supervised practicum hours completed.

The CPCA does not apologize for these standards for the RPC certification/designation. The CPCA is committed to high professional standards and protecting the public. The CPCA also requires that these supervised hours be supervised by a qualified clinical supervisor who has:

1. A minimum of **8 years** in active practice within the last 10 years.
2. 1500 Direct Client Contact Hours with clients documented.
3. **100 hours of supervision experience** documented.
4. **30 hours specific supervision education** with at least one 'Ethics and Supervision' course.
5. **3 letters of recommendation** substantiating professional recognition of clinical knowledge and practical skills.

These standards for Clinical Supervisors are to ensure the quality of clinical supervision of those who obtaining their RPC designation.

FOCUSED EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Applicants for registration must have completed a training program accredited by a recognized body charged with this responsibility or have documented education and training substantively equivalent to such a program. All applicants must submit original transcripts as part of the application process, and any foreign education must be verified by a 3rd party education evaluation process, such as www.wes.org.

Each successful applicant must demonstrate held knowledge in the areas defined above no matter what program, degree, or credential is held, and this is validated by successfully completing the Qualifying Exam in Counselling Theory. The key educational criteria for holding an RPC designation must have the following educational components:

Counselling Foundations

- ❖ Human Development, Culture and Diversity, Theoretical Framework, Evidence-Based Practice
- ❖ Psychopathology, Abnormal Psychology, DSM V, ICD

Counselling Interventions

- ❖ Clinical Assessment, Crisis Intervention, Conflict Resolution

Counselling Processes

- ❖ Clinical Orientation, Assessment and Closure

Counselling Skills and Techniques

- ❖ Therapeutic Communication, Relationship and Process

Ethics and Ethical Practice

- ❖ Legal and Regulatory Practice, Scope of Practice, Ethical Practice and Decision Making
- ❖ Ethical Communication

Reflective Practice

- ❖ Self-Care and Personal Safety, Awareness of Self
- ❖ Supervision and Clinical Governance

Professional Practice

- ❖ Records and other Business
- ❖ Collegial Relationships – Consultation and Collaboration

Professional Communication

- ❖ Clinical Documentation, Referrals, Third Party Reports
- ❖ Media/Social Media.



HOW DO YOU CONFIRM THAT THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS MEET COMPETENT EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS?

The schools/institutions in question have verified reciprocal agreements with other accredited schools/institutions; the credential(s) granted are accepted by the College of Registered Psychologists, the College of Social Workers, the Federal government; are listed as providing acceptable degrees for applications for the Canadian Counsellors and Psychotherapists Association (CCPA), the British Columbia Association of Clinical Counsellors (BCACC), and other associations contemporary to the CPCA.

THE MPCC DESIGNATION

In addition to the foundational registration, CPCA members may apply for a master level designation – **Master Practitioner in Clinical Counselling (MPCC)**, which represents a significant body of education and experience earned and recognized in clinical practice. This earned designation requires 1250 hours of clinical practice hours which must include a minimum of 250 hours of clinical supervision, 750 hours of direct client contact; 5 years of active clinical practice in the past 8 years, 3 current letters of recommendation from qualified mental health professionals with personal knowledge of the member's clinical practice, and 60 hours of advanced education specific to the practice of therapy. Therefore, the MPCC practicing clinician holds an equivalent to graduate degree education and experience. Most applicants for RPC and MPCC membership exceed these minimum measures by a great margin. These graduate degrees are accepted by other professional associations which are recognized by most insurance underwriters, EAPs, Government agencies, and 3rd party benefit policies. The requirements of the RPC designation meet this standard criterion while the requirements of the MPCC designation exceed every graduate degree in Canada.

All CPCA members, in active practice, must complete 12 hours of professional development and 6 hours of clinical supervision per calendar year to remain in good standing as practicing clinicians. In the promotion and support of competency in clinical counselling/psychotherapy, we are the first counselling association to make ongoing clinical supervision an annual requirement. We established this in 2015 as an essential step in our commitment to excellence in competence, strengthening a foundation for client safety.

THE CPCA DESIGNATIONS & INSURANCE COMPANIES

All CPCA Registered Professional Counsellor Candidates (RPC-C), Registered Professional Counsellors (RPC) and Master Practitioners in Clinical Counselling (MPCC) have been approved with Sunlife and with TELUS Health for direct billing across Canada. Although there is no way we can provide an



exhaustive list, here are a few more insurers who have covered the cost of counselling services by our members: Aspiria, some branches of Blue Cross, ComPsych, Great West Life, Green shield, Homewood Health, Lifeworks (formerly known as Ceridian), Manulife, Morneau Shepell, Municipal Fire Departments who provide their own coverage, Optima Global Health, Pacific Blue Cross, Pacific Life, Sunlife, Victim Services and others. The number of Insurance companies who recognize the CPCA continues to grow over time.

THE CPCA AND REGULATION ACROSS CANADA

As Canada's largest and oldest competency-based professional association, we are proud to have participated in the formation of the Ontario College of Registered Psychotherapists (CRPO) as well as the College of Counselling Therapy in Alberta. The CPCA is proud to be a founding member of the Federation of Associations of Counselling Therapists (FACT) in each province in Canada currently still pursuing the formation of regulatory colleges. As the provinces enact legislation to regulate mental health services, our registered counsellors are accepted into the new regulatory colleges as fully accredited professionals.

Why are we dedicated to establishment of regulatory bodies across Canada for the profession of counselling therapy? It is because regulation is a form of accountability that endeavors to ensure the protection of the public, which the CPCA is dedicated to. The CPCA maintains a robust process of complaints and discipline following its mandate to regulate its registrants to provide safety to the public.

CONCLUSION

The competency-based model offers inclusion for those who have come to excellence in clinical practice in a variety of ways, traditional and non-traditional. In this regard, the CPCA is the oldest competency-based professional association in Canada. CPCA members have continued to voluntarily participate in regulation and oversight of clinical practice for the protection of the public. This is particularly true today as provinces across Canada adopt/enact legislation to regulate mental health professionals – the standard being adopted by the majority is competency-based registration.

Credentials alone do not guarantee competence or ethical practice. The adoption of a competency-based model for registration is evidence-based practice, and the CPCA and its members have been leaders in this model.