

Practice Advisory #6

Legibility of Practice Records

DRAFT FOR REGISTRANT FEEDBACK

Practice Issue

The maintenance of legible practice records is an important aspect of the professional responsibility and accountability of registrants.

Rationale

Practice records, in addition to being used for the clinical purposes for which they may have been primarily intended, may be used by the courts as evidence, by clients and by other registrants to whom they may be referred, and by the College for regulatory purposes. Both the *Health Professions Act* and the College's bylaws provide for the inspection of a registrant's practice records by the College.

In addition to their professional responsibilities, registrants may owe a legal duty of care relating to the professional services they provide to clients, including properly maintaining their practice records.

The Code of Conduct requires that registrants appropriately document their professional and scientific work (Standard **7.19**), present their professional opinions and information about clients in clear and understandable form (Standard **3.20**), and ensure they maintain records that include specific information relating to the provision of psychological services (Standard **13.6**.)

Given the multifaceted importance of practice records and the possibility that more than the individual who created them will need to rely on them, it is imperative that practice records be understandable to others.

Relevant Standard of the Code of Conduct

13.7 Complete and Legible Records

- (1) A registrant must ensure that the information in the records that are under the registrant's control, required in standard 13.6 is complete and accessible, regardless of whether the records are kept in a single file or in several files or housed at one location or at several locations.
- (2) *A registrant must, with respect to all records created by or under the supervision of the registrant,*
 - (a) *keep all practice records legible;*
 - (b) *if a record is illegible or in a language other than English, provide a transcript or translation of the record, and an attestation by the registrant verifying the accuracy of the transcript or translation, when the record is to be copied or transferred as part of a legitimate request by the College of Psychologists of British Columbia, a client or other person;*
 - (c) *initial and date all entries in a clinical record;*
 - (d) *initial and date any amendments or alterations to a clinical record;*
 - (e) *where practice records contain any idiosyncratic or non-standard abbreviations, provide, at the beginning or end of the record, a glossary for the meanings of the non-standard abbreviations; and*
 - (f) *paginate a practice record at the point the practice record is provided to another person. (Emphasis added.)*

Advisory

- Section **13.7(2)** of the *Code* makes explicit the need for registrants to maintain practice records in legible form.

In complying with Standard **13.7(2)** of the *Code*, a registrant must attest to the accuracy of any transcript or translation provided under Standard **13.7(2)(b)**. To assist registrants, the College has provided a sample attestation form which can be downloaded [here](#). The original attestation should be attached to the transcript or translation, and a copy retained by the registrant for reference purposes.

This sample attestation does not constitute nor substitute for legal advice. It is intended for use by registrants of the College of Psychologists of British Columbia.

Sample Attestation to accompany Practice Advisory #6

Attestation Regarding Accuracy of Transcription of Clinical Notes for

[Client's Name or other identifier]

I, [Registrant's name], hereby attest that I am a psychologist or psychological associate registered with the College of Psychologists of British Columbia and practising at [Location of practice].

I further attest I have reviewed the attached transcript, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is a true and accurate transcription and/or translation of the clinical notes that I or someone under my supervision prepared in the provision of my professional psychological services to [Client's Name or other identifier] from [first date of service] to [final date of services].

I understand that knowingly providing false information in a matter within the jurisdiction of the College of Psychologists of British Columbia may be professional misconduct and subject to penalties under the College's Bylaws.

(Attester's Signature and Title)

(Date of Attestation)

(Attester's Practice Address)