



Core Competencies for Canada's Substance Abuse Professionals

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Introduction

The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) is a trusted leader in the alcohol and drug field, a position that has been well earned since CCSA was created by statute in 1988 as Canada's national addictions agency. CCSA's Workforce Development Division collaborates with a variety of partners to translate evidence-informed knowledge into learning opportunities for the growth and development of Canada's addictions workforce.

To this end, the first national workforce survey of executive directors / agency heads and front-line staff was conducted in 2004–2005. The survey aimed to determine the levels and types of education and professional development experience managers and front-line workers possess, identify training and professional development needs, and explore factors that influence the ability of the workforce to provide services of the highest quality. One of the 10 recommendations resulting from the survey was to "promote the development of national standards and competencies for the addiction workforce that can be tailored to meet the needs of provincial-territorial jurisdictions."

In January 2007 CCSA set about working with the Hay Group and key stakeholders from across the country to develop a set of core competencies for Canada's substance abuse workforce. This was in response to the needs of the field, as identified in the Canadian Addiction Treatment Workforce Survey, in alignment with a key priority area of the *National Framework for Action to Reduce the Harms Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs and Substances in Canada* to "sustain workforce development," and with the endorsement of both the Canadian Executive Council on Addictions (CECA) and the National Advisory Group on Workforce Development (NAGWD). These core competencies would ultimately serve to:

- enhance professionalism within the field by supporting the adoption of evidence-informed practice;
- support the hiring and retention of the right people, with the right skills at the right time; and
- develop strategies for learning and development that will equip the field for excellence now, and in the future.

It is also important to point out that this initiative is being developed in parallel with the National Treatment Strategy, an initiative arising from another key priority area of the National Framework: "improving the quality, accessibility and range of options to treat harmful substance use including substance use disorders (Treatment)." Best efforts are being made to ensure that, where appropriate, these initiatives are reflective and supportive of each other.

Phase One of the competencies initiative involved the identification and comparative analysis of existing and developing Canadian and international addictions workforce competencies and the subsequent development of a set of core national competencies for Canada's addictions workforce.

Phase Two of the project involved a two-day interactive workshop, held in February 2007, with members of NAGWD, a group of substance abuse professionals from a broad spectrum of jurisdictions and sectors, and other subject matter experts from across the country. The objective of the workshop was to gather feedback on the preliminary draft of core competencies, revise or remove those competencies that did not resonate with participants, and develop new competencies where gaps were identified.

Phase Three of the initiative will seek to engage with the field at a broader level in the further refinement and validation of the competencies. A variety of engagement strategies will be used in order to accomplish this:

- regional focus groups and/or teleconferences
- key informant interviews
- time-limited "open consultation" with substance abuse and allied professionals by e-mail or "blog."

Following the conclusion of this phase, the competencies document will be revised to reflect feedback from the field, matched against the recommendations arising from the National Treatment Strategy, finalized, and presented to CECA, senior officials within provincial/territorial governments, and the academic community for endorsement. Future applications of the competencies document may include curriculum development by colleges and universities, strategic workforce planning by service providing organizations, linkages to certification bodies, and so forth.

It is hoped that the work resulting from this initiative will support all of the above purposes as well as others; however, it is important to note that the implementation of these competencies will, for the most part, be determined by those jurisdictions with mandates to educate, train and employ substance abuse professionals across Canada. The purpose of this initiative is to provide these jurisdictional partners with a common resource that can then serve as a foundation-piece in the development or enhancement of education and training curricula, professional development activities, recruitment practices, performance evaluation, and strategic workforce planning.

As well, it is important to consider that competencies are dynamic and must be able to support and reflect emerging knowledge and skills within the field. To this end, this document will continue to evolve over time as new competencies are identified and others are possibly "retired" or adjusted to reflect transformational changes in theory and practice.

Phase Three Consultation

For the purpose of Phase Three of this initiative, substance abuse and allied professionals are invited to provide input on the latest draft of *Core Competencies for Canada's Substance Abuse Professionals*. To facilitate this process we have included a working definition of competencies, an overview of how they can be used, five key discussion questions and information on how the field can engage in this process.

What are competencies?

Competencies are identifiable capabilities that can be measured for effective performance. A competency may be made up of *knowledge* and/or *skills* defined as follows:

- *Knowledge* is awareness, information, or understanding about facts, rules, principles, guidelines, concepts, theories or processes needed to successfully perform a task. The knowledge may be concrete, specific, and easily measurable or more complex, abstract, and difficult to assess. Knowledge is acquired through learning and experience (Marrelli, 2001; Mirabile, 1997).
- A *skill* is a capacity to perform mental or physical tasks with a specified outcome. Similar to knowledge, skills can range from highly concrete and easily identifiable tasks, such as completing a checklist during an assessment interview, to those that

are less tangible and more abstract, such as managing a program evaluation process (Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999).

Abilities, sometimes called *personal characteristics*, are also occasionally considered in the development of competencies; however, for the purpose of this initiative, *abilities* or *personal characteristics* will be dealt with separately at a later point in time. Therefore, the competencies presented in this document are comprised only of one or more area of knowledge or skill.

How are competencies used?

Competencies work together to define and enable the successful performance of work-related tasks. In this way, the identification and measurement of competencies is useful in determining the types and degrees of knowledge and skills required for successful job performance.

Competencies can be used for a variety of purposes, including the development of job profiles, the evaluation of job performance, the identification of training and professional development requirements, and the identification of succession planning requirements.

Purpose and structure of Core Competencies for Canada's substance abuse professionals

Each competency features two major components – a *definition*, which provides context and a common language, and associated *behavioural examples* grouped together into “levels.” Some roles may require a higher or lower “level” of demonstration, depending on the type of work being performed. Therefore, it may be entirely acceptable for certain roles to require demonstration of a competency at a level 1; while other roles may require the demonstration of the same competency at a level 3 or 4.

The competencies that comprise this document are to be treated as a “menu” from which appropriate competencies and level of competency demonstration can be selected, depending on the role that is being defined. It is important to note that this collection of competencies represents the “core” knowledge and skills that are specific to “specialized” substance abuse services. In all likelihood, persons working within the specialized substance abuse field would be required to demonstrate most of these competencies while persons working outside the specialized substance abuse field who have some work-related connection to persons who are affected by substance abuse issues may be required to demonstrate some of these competencies.

The following diagram links the core competencies to the continuum of key services and supports that comprise the field of substance abuse. It illustrates how the core competencies apply to substance abuse professionals and overlap with those persons working in an “infrastructure” capacity (i.e. administrative support, research and policy, and management), and allied professionals (e.g. primary care physicians, public health nurses, mental health specialists, housing specialists, police officers, school guidance counsellors, etc.).



Consultation process – engaging with the field

During the months of July and August, the field is invited to provide feedback on the competencies by responding to **five key questions**.

1. Are the competencies and the examples given relevant to the knowledge, skills, and expertise you use when delivering services to people affected by substance use problems?
2. Bearing in mind that this collection of competencies focuses on the knowledge and skills required to deliver services specific to substance use, does this collection of competencies look complete to you? Are any competencies missing? Are any of the competencies that have been included unnecessary?
3. Are the definitions clear and accurate?
4. Are the examples clear and is the progression across the levels accurate/logical?
5. Is there anything else you want to share?

For example:

- Are competencies currently used in the organization you work for and, if so, what impact (positive or negative) is this having?
- What concerns do you have, if any, about this project and its implications for the field?
- What are your views on how competencies can assist professionals in the field achieve their professional development goals?
- Do you have any ideas about how to link competencies with education/certification programs?
- etc.

Note: Language is an ongoing challenge in the field of substance abuse so please feel free to provide constructive comments on the language used in this document.

Feedback can be provided in a variety of ways including regional focus groups, teleconferences, key informant interviews and a time-limited "open consultation" by e-mail or "blog."

For more information about participating in a regional focus group, teleconference or key informant interview, please contact Karen Cumberland at competencies@ccsa.ca or by phone at (613) 235-4048 x 234.

To participate in the "open consultation," please choose one of the following options:

Option A – E-mail responses

1. Review *Core Competencies for Canada's Substance Abuse Professionals*
2. E-mail your answers to the above questions to: competencies@ccsa.ca
3. Your submission can remain anonymous, however, the following information would be helpful and appreciated – your job title, the city or region where you are employed
4. All submissions must be received by no later than August 15, 2007

OR

Option B – Blog

1. Go to <http://competenciesconsultation.blogspot.com/>. This link can also be accessed from the home page of the Canadian Network of Substance Abuse and Allied Professionals (www.cnsaap.ca) or the Workforce Development Division section of the CCSA website (www.ccsa.ca)
2. Download the *Core Competencies for Canada's Substance Abuse Professionals* from the resource gallery
3. Provide your comments around the five key questions. You will also be able to review what others have said about the competencies document as it relates to those five key questions and provide additional feedback
4. Check back as often as you wish to continue the dialogue
5. The blog will close August 15, 2007 at 5:00pm EST

References

- Lucia, A. & Lepsinger, R. (1999). *The art and science of competency models: Pinpointing critical success factors in organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.
- Marrelli, A.F. (2001). *Introduction to competency modeling*. New York: American Express.
- Mirabile, R. (1997). Everything you wanted to know about competency modeling. *Training and Development* 51, 8; 73-78.

Core Competencies

Awareness of Aboriginal Peoples and Other Populations/Communities is the knowledge of Aboriginal Peoples and other Populations/Communities, as well as a consideration and respect for the historical and other contextual factors that warrant attention to the customs, values and norms and community practices specific to Aboriginal Peoples and other Populations/Communities (for example, as defined by age, gender, language, ethnicity, socio-economic status, legal status, geography, historical circumstance, sexual orientation, type of substance being abused, etc.).

CORE: Does this person have an adequate understanding of the diversity of issues that affect various populations?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
	Limited knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in restricted situations	Basic knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in routine situations	Considerable knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in a variety of situations	Advanced knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency across a broad range of increasingly complex situations	Expert knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in the most varied and complex situations
E X A M P L E S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates minimal awareness that conditions and considerations may vary from one population to another • Has a minimal understanding of the cultural norms or special interests of various populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands how issues of diversity impact the delivery of culturally and contextually appropriate services • Identifies and responds appropriately to the cultural/contextual norms of the presenting individual or population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to a diversity of client populations by incorporating culturally and contextually relevant strategies that effectively address presenting and/or underlying issues • Possesses considerable knowledge and understanding of the various historical, cultural, political and socio-economic issues that affect the diversity of client populations served and develops effective working relationships with members of these populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a thorough, detailed understanding of the inter-relationships within a given population and between key individuals, agencies and groups; applies this understanding in the delivery of appropriate and effective services • Raises the level of historical, cultural and/or political awareness of colleagues • Supports diverse populations in developing and implementing their own solutions to problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a deep and wide-ranging knowledge of diverse populations and can strategically apply this information in planning proactive and appropriate service responses • Demonstrates leadership in establishing appropriate mechanisms for consultation with and within various special populations in order to identify the needs and priorities of the population in question

Scale Progression: From foundational to expert knowledge of and skill in working effectively with diverse populations/communities

Case Management is the knowledge and skill required to engage with and advocate on behalf of the client while navigating, reducing barriers to, coordinating and conducting an ongoing evaluation of services both internal and external to the service providing organization. Case management specifically involves matching clients with the most appropriate available services, as determined through the screening and assessment process, and in accordance with the treatment plan, and effectively managing client movement between service(s), thereby ensuring continuity in the level and quality of care.

CORE: Does this person have an adequate understanding of and skill in case management?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
E X A M P L E S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates limited understanding of auxiliary/complementary resources available within the community • Demonstrates limited knowledge of the referral process to and from these community resources, including required documentation and information-sharing protocols • Assists case management workers/teams in an administrative capacity • Is helpful and welcoming when dealing with clients, family members, co-workers and external colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to use information obtained through the assessment process to facilitate an initial match between clients and the most appropriate available services • Is familiar with a range of service provision options and is able to apply this information in referring clients to the most appropriate available services • Is able to track and maintain required information; shares information appropriately and in accordance with information-sharing protocols • Establishes and maintains helping relationship with clients, family members, co-workers and external colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes and maintains therapeutic rapport to assist clients in exploring and considering a range of treatment options and in making and following through on decisions related to treatment planning • Is effective in the ongoing evaluation of treatment plans; adjusting plans, as appropriate • Has established effective relationships with a range of service providers, both within and beyond the immediate agency, and is able to call upon these relationships to facilitate client referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has advanced skills in enhancing client motivation in order to make and follow through on decisions related to treatment planning • Is effective in the ongoing evaluation of complex treatment plans, engaging with the client and other resources (e.g. mental health specialists) in adjusting the plan, as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is an expert at negotiation and client motivation, ensuring that clients and service providers remain engaged in the process of working toward mutually agreed-upon goals • Demonstrates a leadership role in the facilitation and maintenance of strong collaborative relationships across a diversity of service delivery agencies / service providing organizations

Scale Progression: From foundational to expert knowledge of and skill in case management

Conflict Management Approaches and Practices is the knowledge and skill required to manage and bring an effective resolution to differences between parties and collaterals using a range of appropriate approaches and techniques.

CORE: Does this person have the necessary skill to apply the approaches and techniques necessary in order to constructively resolve own conflicts with others and/or conflicts between others?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
	Limited knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in restricted situations	Basic knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in routine situations	Considerable knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in a variety of situations	Advanced knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency across a broad range of increasingly complex situations	Expert knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in the most varied and complex situations
E X A M P L E S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates minimal knowledge of the sources of conflict and conflict management approaches and practices Is aware of and follows appropriate protocols for seeking assistance when facing conflict in the workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates a fundamental understanding of sources of conflict such as anger, fear, power struggle, etc. Facilitates a discussion with or between client(s) in order to resolve conflict Seeks assistance from others such as experienced colleagues or supervisor, as needed, in the management and/or resolution of conflict with or between clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully facilitates a discussion with or between client(s) to resolve conflict through the use of appropriate techniques such as identifying common ground, finding alternate solutions, gaining agreement from clients, building trust, etc. Recognizes conflict and takes steps to support clients in dealing with it effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully facilitates a dialogue with or between clients to resolve conflicts by leveraging a diversity of clinical skills and strategies Coaches/mentors others in developing effective conflict management and resolution approaches and techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is widely recognized as an expert in the management and effective resolution of conflict Is sought out by a variety of stakeholders for expert advice and guidance in the resolution of complex conflict situations

Scale Progression: from foundational to expert knowledge of and skill in conflict management and resolution approaches and practices

Counselling Skills is the knowledge and skill required to draw from and utilize counselling styles and techniques that are informed by an evidence base, including a comprehensive understanding of the human developmental process and extensive knowledge of a wide range of theoretical approaches, skills and modes of practice that inform clinical practice in the treatment of alcohol and other drugs and/or problem gambling. This knowledge and skill is applied and reinforced through the use of enhanced therapeutic rapport in order to motivate and engage the person in a treatment process, leading to a change in the client's substance abuse/dependency while improving his or her overall bio/psycho/social/spiritual health.

CORE: Does this person have the necessary skill to effectively facilitate intentional change?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
	Limited knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in restricted situations	Basic knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in routine situations	Considerable knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in a variety of situations	Advanced knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency across a broad range of increasingly complex situations	Expert knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in the most varied and complex situations
E X A M P L E S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates minimal knowledge of evidence-informed counselling styles and techniques and the role of therapeutic rapport to facilitate client motivation • Assists counsellors in an administrative capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a basic ability to establish a helping relationship with the client as characterized by warmth, respect, genuineness, concreteness and empathy • Is able to appropriately use various evidence-informed addiction counselling models in working with individuals and groups to effectively facilitate intentional change • Recognizes professional and personal limitations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a thorough knowledge of addiction counselling theory and evidence-informed practice • Demonstrates an ability to respond efficiently and effectively to assist with client motivation • Selects techniques and approaches to match client needs • Identifies and navigates counselling challenges such as client resistance, etc. • Demonstrates ability to appropriately use various addiction counselling models as they apply to individuals, groups, couples and families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a specialist knowledge of addiction counselling theory and evidence-informed practice • Works effectively with challenging clients who present with multiple and complex problems • Demonstrates ability to monitor and mentor counsellors to ensure adherence to best practices, individual case standards, program integrity and professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is widely recognized as an expert in the field of substance abuse counselling • Is sought out by other professionals in the field in the development, implementation and evaluation of evidence-informed counselling practices

Scale Progression: From foundational to expert knowledge of and skill in counselling

Crisis Intervention is the knowledge and/or skill to recognize and respond to a client in crisis.

CORE: Does this person have an adequate understanding of techniques, models and programs for crisis intervention?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
E X A M P L E S	<p>Limited knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in restricted situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to recognize a client in crisis • Is aware of and follows appropriate protocols for seeking assistance when confronted with a client in crisis 	<p>Basic knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in routine situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of what constitutes a crisis and is aware of the principles of crisis intervention • Is able to calm volatile situations through effective verbal and non-verbal communication • Is able to identify client's frame of reference • Is able to develop and implement a plan for resolving a crisis • Is aware of local resources or supports 	<p>Considerable knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in a variety of situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is technically experienced and has the ability to counsel individuals in crisis in order to ensure safety and promote positive change • Has knowledge of the stages of a crisis and how to intervene at each stage • Is aware of community resources and supports that may assist in the management of the crisis and is able to link client with said resources as part of a comprehensive treatment plan 	<p>Advanced knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency across a broad range of increasingly complex situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has specialist knowledge in crisis counselling • Recognizes that a crisis situation may be a response to deeper issues • Is able to counsel clients on strategies to increase coping abilities during crisis • Can recognize or anticipate when counselling interventions may trigger a crisis 	<p>Expert knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in the most varied and complex situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is widely recognized as an expert in the area of crisis intervention • Is sought out by other professionals in the field for expert advice and guidance on matters related to crisis intervention

Scale Progression: From foundational to expert knowledge of and skill in crisis intervention

Ethics and Professionalism is the knowledge and skill required to be held accountable to appropriate standards of ethical behaviour and professionalism in one's interactions with clients, colleagues, and external partners, with particular emphasis on the counsellor-client relationship.

CORE: Does this person have an adequate understanding of ethics as they pertain to the helping profession?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
	Limited knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in restricted situations	Basic knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in routine situations	Considerable knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in a variety of situations	Advanced knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency across a broad range of increasingly complex situations	Expert knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in the most varied and complex situations
E X A M P L E S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a minimal awareness of ethical issues in the human services field • Demonstrates a fundamental commitment to conducting oneself in a professional manner when interacting with the agency's clients, co-workers, as evidenced through respect for others, tolerance of differences and understanding of individual perspectives and experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands how ethics inform professional conduct and the legal implications of protecting therapist-client confidentiality, including the conditions whereby information can be shared (e.g. warrant, subpoena, court orders) • Identifies and responds appropriately to situations where ethical issues must be considered, for example, with regard to appropriate counsellor/client boundaries and in dealing with sensitive topics such as physical and psychological abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a thorough, detailed understanding of professional ethics as pertains to the human services field and, in particular, to the field of substance abuse with reference to the counsellor-client relationship • Demonstrates ability to consistently and effectively consider implications of ethical issues in interactions with a variety of client populations across various levels of severity of substance use and mental health problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models compliance with ethical standards; mentors others in the consideration of and adherence to ethics • Works with internal and external partners to raise the collective level of compliance to appropriate standards of professional practice • Demonstrates ability to consider the ethical implications of complex, unclear or controversial issues and to apply ethical principles appropriately • Creates safe and highly productive therapeutic relationships with clients with expert focus on ethical practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is considered an expert in the area of ethics within the human services field with special reference to the substance abuse field • Demonstrates leadership in navigating complex ethical issues, establishing appropriate ethical parameters around emerging and/or controversial policies and practices

Scale Progression: From foundational to expert understanding and demonstration of ethics and professionalism when interacting with clients, colleagues, and external partners

Factors and Sources of Substance Use, Abuse and Dependency is the knowledge about the range and types of substances; the continuum of substance use, abuse, and dependency; and the diverse factors that aggravate or mitigate risk for problematic substance use.

CORE: Does this person have an adequate understanding of the different types of substances used; their effect on functioning; the continuum of substance use, abuse and dependency; and the various factors that advance or deter progression along the continuum?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
E X A M P L E S	<p>Limited knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in restricted situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates minimal knowledge of different types of substances and how they affect functioning • Demonstrates a minimal understanding that substance use occurs along a continuum (from use to dependency) 	<p>Basic knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in routine situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is familiar with a wide range of different substances by classification (e.g. stimulant, sedative, hallucinogen, etc.), the various ways in which they are consumed, and the various ways in which they affect functioning • Demonstrates a basic understanding of substance use along a continuum (from use to dependency) and of the variety of factors that aggravate or mitigate for problematic substance use 	<p>Considerable knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in a variety of situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of different substances, the ways in which they are consumed, and the various ways in which they affect functioning, whether consumed alone or in combination • Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of substance use along a continuum, the variety of specific factors that aggravate or mitigate risk (e.g. poverty, employment, housing, health, social networks, trauma, mental and physical health, etc.), and the ways in which these factors vary by population group 	<p>Advanced knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency across a broad range of increasingly complex situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a specialist knowledge of different substances and the various ways in which they affect functioning, whether consumed/used alone or in combination • Demonstrates a specialist understanding of substance use along a continuum and the variety of specific factors, including the interactions and manifestations of other presenting physical and mental health issues that aggravate or mitigate for risk • Demonstrates ability to monitor and mentor counsellors and other substance abuse professionals in developing knowledge with regard to the various factors and sources of problematic substance use 	<p>Expert knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in the most varied and complex situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is widely recognized as an expert in the area of factors and sources of problematic substance use • Is sought out by other professionals in the field for expert advice and guidance on matters related to the continuum of problematic substance use

Scale Progression: From foundational to expert knowledge of factors and sources of problematic substance use

Family and Social Support is the knowledge and skill required to work effectively with family members and concerned others in order to support treatment goals set by the significant other and to effectively address the impact of the significant other's substance use on individual family members and/or the family or social group as a whole. Working with family members and concerned others requires knowledge of interpersonal dynamics and the processes of family systems across different cultures, as well as a skillful ability to engage and work with families as a group.

CORE: Does this person have an adequate knowledge of family and social support issues and the skill necessary for effective interventions?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
	Limited knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in restricted situations	Basic knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in routine situations	Considerable knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in a variety of situations	Advanced knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency across a broad range of increasingly complex situations	Expert knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in the most varied and complex situations
E X A M P L E S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has minimal knowledge of the role played by family and social support factors in addiction Welcomes and interacts respectfully and helpfully with family members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands that family and social support factors impact the delivery of effective service Is able to communicate and provide information to family members about addictions and treatment approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiates and engages family members in a review of their own needs and concerns and provides practical support and assistance when appropriate Supports family members' right to assistance, involving other resources when required Is able to determine level of need of family members and their potential for involvement in care plan of client Is aware of community resources for family members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has a thorough, detailed understanding of family processes Is able to assess family functioning and to work with family members as a counsellor with a focus on the social support the family can provide in helping the family member develop an effective recovery plan Works intentionally to increase family cohesion and support, and commitment to work collaboratively Is able to formulate and carry out a treatment plan that sees the family as the unit of treatment Is proficient in at least one evidence-informed approach to family therapy Supervises others in family therapy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is widely recognized as an expert in at least one evidence-informed family therapy model Is sought out by other professionals in the field for expert advice and guidance on matters related to family and social support Has a deep and wide-ranging knowledge of family dynamics and how they can contribute to dysfunction within and between family members

Scale Progression: From foundational to expert knowledge of family and social support and skill in effective intervention strategies

Group Facilitation Techniques is the knowledge and skill required to develop and implement research-informed models, methods, and strategies when working in a group treatment setting. This requires a clear understanding of how to manage group dynamics in order to motivate and engage participants in a group process, and of the acquisition of skills associated with positive behaviour change.

CORE: Does the person have the necessary skill to design and facilitate effective sessions that support the objectives of the client or training session?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
	Limited knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in restricted situations	Basic knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in routine situations	Considerable knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in a variety of situations	Advanced knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency across a broad range of increasingly complex situations	Expert knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in the most varied and complex situations
E X A M P L E S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrates a minimal understanding of the role of group therapy in the treatment process ▪ Assists group facilitators in an administrative capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a basic understanding of various principles and methods of group facilitation • Assists group leader or leads group sessions according to the organization's prescribed boundaries and guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively facilitates/instructs on a wide range of topics and interventions • Designs and implements strategies to meet needs of a specific group • Recognizes and accommodates needs of specific individuals in groups • Is able to motivate and engage with a group of clients in the treatment process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the subject content by drawing on and applying current research/literature • Recognizes complex issues and undercurrents in groups and selects appropriate strategies and methods to facilitate discussion and resolution of underlying issues • Demonstrates ability to monitor and mentor other group facilitators in order to ensure best practices, service standards, program integrity and professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an expert knowledge of the subject content by contributing new knowledge to research and literature • Effectively facilitates even the most complex topics or interventions to achieve goals • Demonstrates an expert understanding of group dynamics and how to motivate and engage with a wide range of clients, including those who are resistant to change

Scale Progression: From foundational to expert knowledge of and skill in group facilitation

Interviewing Approaches and Techniques is the knowledge and skill required to use effective interviewing techniques to gather relevant and complete information and make informed observations and recommendations.

CORE: Can this person adequately conduct effective interviews and gather sufficient information for assessment and other purposes?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
E X A M P L E S	<p>Limited knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in restricted situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates minimal understanding of the role of interviewing in the gathering of essential information • Is able to follow a pre-planned guide in order to acquire basic client information 	<p>Basic knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in routine situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a productive and appropriate rapport with interviewees • Conducts interviews without allowing own emotions, biases, stereotypes, etc. to influence the assessment • Is mindful of legalities regarding privacy and human rights • Keeps clear and accurate records of all key information gathered during the interview • Adopts a style of interviewing that is conducive to client motivation 	<p>Considerable knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in a variety of situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively gathers a comprehensive account of the presenting problems • Motivates and engages with the client in order to effectively elicit appropriate information from people who may be feeling anxious and/or reluctant to disclose details freely • Where appropriate, investigates the problem or situation beyond routine questioning in order to verify information or to achieve a better understanding of the underlying thoughts and/or emotions 	<p>Advanced knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency across a broad range of increasingly complex situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a thorough knowledge of a range of questioning techniques and tailors their use to the situation • Is attuned to incongruence between verbal and non-verbal communication and skillfully uncovers the discrepancy in order to obtain an accurate account while maintaining rapport • Provides feedback, coaching and/or training to colleagues to assist them with the development of their interviewing techniques 	<p>Expert knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in the most varied and complex situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is recognized as an expert interviewer and is sought out for his/her experience and skill

Scale Progression: From foundational to expert knowledge of and skill in interviewing

Outreach is the knowledge of the tools and techniques and the skills required to effectively design and deliver outreach services in variety of settings in order to mobilize a diverse spectrum of community resources.

CORE: Does this person have an adequate understanding of outreach services and the skill required to deliver these services to diverse populations?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
	Limited knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in restricted situations	Basic knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in routine situations	Considerable knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in a variety of situations	Advanced knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency across a broad range of increasingly complex situations	Expert knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in the most varied and complex situations
E X A M P L E S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates limited understanding of the role and scope of outreach services • Assists outreach workers/teams in an administrative capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates basic understanding of the role and scope of outreach services • Delivers or assists in the delivery of select outreach services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates thorough knowledge of the various outreach needs within a given community • Develops and delivers effective outreach services in accordance with best and/or promising practices • Works in partnership with other organizations in order to develop outreach programs that address specific community needs • Participates in the evaluation of outreach services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates leadership in building capacity of others in order to design and deliver outreach services and support programs and activities • Is relied upon for guidance, support and mentoring to others • Supports/enhances a variety of outreach services in the community, according to research-based standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides expertise in creating research-based frameworks and programs to bridge gaps in current approaches and techniques to support outreach services • Provides leadership in building/enhancing community-based interventions and programs

Scale Progression: From foundational to expert knowledge of and skill in effective outreach services

Prevention is the knowledge and skill required to effectively design and deliver prevention programming/services in variety of settings to diverse communities and groups.

CORE: Does this person have an adequate understanding and the skills required to deliver these services in situations of differing complexity?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
	Limited knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in restricted situations	Basic knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in routine situations	Considerable knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in a variety of situations	Advanced knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency across a broad range of increasingly complex situations	Expert knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in the most varied and complex situations
E X A M P L E S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates minimal familiarity with prevention models and their continuum of services • Assists prevention workers/teams in an administrative capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of prevention models • Develops basic prevention education activities using evidence-informed resources and information • Facilitates basic prevention activities by presenting information in an organized manner, responding to basic questions and clarifying to ensure information is understood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a comprehensive working knowledge of prevention models • Demonstrates ability to respond to prevention needs by selecting and delivering programs that are appropriate to the target audience (e.g. youth-oriented, culturally sensitive, etc.) • Demonstrates ability to monitor and evaluate the program to ensure it is meeting the needs of the target audience • Effectively manages group dynamics by dealing with challenging comments and behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides expertise in prevention models and the continuum of service and is relied on for guidance • Involves community partners and stakeholders in the design and delivery of targeted programs • Designs and delivers programs that are based on best practice, address sustainability and include benchmarks for evaluation purposes. • Participates in research and evaluation to ensure programs are compliant with evidence-informed practices and are having the intended impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is widely recognized as an expert in the area of prevention and is considered a leader in the development and evaluation of emerging trends • Is sought out by other professionals in the field for expert advice and guidance on matters related to prevention

Scale Progression: From foundational to expert knowledge of and skill in[designing and delivering] effective prevention programming/services

Program Development, Implementation and Evaluation is the knowledge and skill required to develop a new program or modify an existing program, oversee its implementation, and evaluate program effectiveness in meeting the core goals and objectives.

CORE: Does this person have an adequate understanding of and skill in program development, implementation and evaluation?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
	Limited knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in restricted situations	Basic knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in routine situations	Considerable knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in a variety of situations	Advanced knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency across a broad range of increasingly complex situations	Expert knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in the most varied and complex situations
E X A M P L E S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates limited awareness of the process of program development, implementation and evaluation • Supports program development, implementation and evaluation in an administrative capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands key elements of program development and program goal/objective setting • Assists in the development of new programs or the modification of existing programs in cases where the objectives, milestones and time lines have been defined • Demonstrates a basic understanding of program evaluation procedures, protocols and standards • Demonstrates a basic knowledge of how to analyze and interpret data results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a practical knowledge of program development principles and techniques • Identifies goals and objectives for new programs within an organization • Plans, defines, and implements projects within an organization • Identifies key personnel resources required to implement the program • Demonstrates a considerable knowledge of program evaluation procedures, protocols, and standards • Demonstrates formal analytic skills to facilitate evaluation process • Writes major sections of final reports in collaboration with subject matter experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervises and guides others in the idea generation, design, implementation and evaluation of programs • Designs customized programs in complex, sensitive situations that call for a high degree of multi-disciplinary collaboration • Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge and expertise in the design and implementation of program evaluation • Has an in-depth understanding of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to analyze and interpret data results • Independently writes final reports in accordance with evidence-informed standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs, implements and evaluates development of new programs based on existing and emerging research • Conducts ongoing and independent evaluations on complex topics with direct reference to existing and emerging evidence-informed research • Provides advice and recommendations on the establishment of plans, new designs, training and/or means of improving program or service delivery

Scale Progression: From foundational to expert knowledge of and skill in effective program development, implementation and evaluation

Screening and Assessment Techniques, Tools and Practices is the knowledge of and skill in the area of screening and assessing for substance use, abuse and dependence as demonstrated by the selection, administration and interpretation of appropriate evidence-informed screening and assessment tools. Information is gathered and the results are interpreted for the purpose of informing the development of a client-centred treatment plan and motivating and referring the client to an appropriate intervention service (for example withdrawal management, day outpatient treatment, residential treatment, etc.). Screening and assessment can also refer to a broad psycho-social assessment of the client's major life areas.

CORE: Does this person have an adequate understanding of and skill in screening and assessing for substance use, abuse and dependency?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
		Limited knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in restricted situations	Basic knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in routine situations	Considerable knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in a variety of situations	Advanced knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency across a broad range of increasingly complex situations
E X A M P L E S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates minimal knowledge and understanding of the role of screening and assessment as essential components of a client-centred treatment plan • Has no/minimal experience in conducting a screening or assessment exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a basic understanding of and skill in screening and assessment and how to engage and motivate the client • Conducts routine tasks such as gathering data and applying screening instruments • Identifies clients assessed to be at risk for causing harm to self or others and seeks assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is knowledgeable at selecting, applying and interpreting evidence-informed screening and assessment tools • Demonstrates ability to intervene appropriately with clients assessed to be at risk for causing harm to self or others • Demonstrates ability to effectively facilitate brief interventions with individuals attending for screening or assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates advanced knowledge of screening and assessment, including the principles and strategies associated with client motivation • Demonstrates ability to monitor and coach/mentor others to ensure screening and assessment integrity and professional development • Understands and applies development research in relation to screening and assessment tools • Demonstrates knowledge of existing practices and emerging trends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates expert knowledge of screening and assessment • Applies development research in the creation and evaluation of innovative screening and assessment tools • Advances new and innovative knowledge and application of screening and assessment practices

Scale Progression: From foundational to expert understanding of and skill in screening and assessment

Teamwork is the knowledge and skill required to work cooperatively with others as part of a team comprised of colleagues within the field of substance abuse or allied professionals from other sectors, including but not limited to primary health, mental health, education, enforcement, and social services/housing.

CORE: Does this person have an adequate understanding of the need to work cooperatively and the skill required to build and sustain cooperative relationships?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
E X A M P L E S	<p>Limited knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in restricted situations</p>	<p>Basic knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in routine situations</p>	<p>Considerable knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in a variety of situations</p>	<p>Advanced knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency across a broad range of increasingly complex situations</p>	<p>Expert knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in the most varied and complex situations</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates ability to work as part of a team and/or to support the work of teams by following clearly defined protocols and procedures in order to meet client needs • Demonstrates a welcoming and respectful attitude toward team members, including those from external organizations • Supports teams in an administrative capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates clear understanding of the role and purpose of team(s) of which he/she is a member, particularly in terms of meeting client needs • Demonstrates respect for team and team members by adhering to protocols and procedures, honouring time lines, communicating clearly, proactively addressing misunderstandings, etc. • Participates effectively in team-building and/or cross-training activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies and initiates opportunities to undertake new cooperative efforts in order to better meet client needs • Demonstrates leadership role in reinforcing team-building principles and/or cross-training concepts within team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervises, guides, and mentors others in the development of cooperative work practices in order to meet client needs • Develops protocols and procedures that support and enhance teamwork both within the organization and in partnership with other sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates leadership through the initiation, implementation and evaluation of innovative cross-sectoral practices that address a variety of presenting client issues

Scale Progression: From foundational to expert knowledge of and skill in working cooperatively as part of a team

Treatment Planning is the knowledge and skill required to participate effectively in a collaborative process that seeks to identify the client's goals derived from the assessment findings and match the client to the treatment activities that will assist in achieving these goals. *SMART goals are a useful format to consider: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.*

CORE: Does this person have an adequate understanding of treatment system and services and what options the client is eligible to receive through the treatment planning process?

S C A L E	1 = Foundational	2 = Basic	3 = Intermediate	4 = Advanced	5 = Expert
E X A M P L E S	<p>Limited knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in restricted situations</p>	<p>Basic knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in routine situations</p>	<p>Considerable knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in a variety of situations</p>	<p>Advanced knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency across a broad range of increasingly complex situations</p>	<p>Expert knowledge and understanding; ability to apply the competency in the most varied and complex situations</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates limited understanding of the treatment planning process • Provides basic information regarding available treatment and recovery programs • Supports the treatment planning process in an administrative capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates clients in developing plans based on pre-existing guidelines • Demonstrates ability to make basic treatment recommendations based on evidence-informed diagnostic instruments • Assists the client in developing realistic and achievable goals, matching goals to corresponding treatment activities • Demonstrates awareness of available treatment options within own jurisdiction • Ability to refer clients to local programs or to others for further assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customizes the treatment planning approach to match the client's needs and abilities and preferences • Demonstrates knowledge of the full range of current treatment approaches, modalities and program criteria • Independently and effectively monitors client progress throughout course of treatment; recognizes setbacks or obstacles and supports client in effectively overcoming same • Has experience with the styles and techniques of motivation, and uses this experience to effectively engage the client in the treatment process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervises, guides, and mentors others in the design and delivery of assessment-based planning • Designs customized plans in complex, sensitive situations that call for a high degree of cross-coordination • Uses innovative strategies throughout the planning process to help motivate the client in realizing his or her goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates masterful experience and understanding in the design and delivery of evidence-informed plans • Designs and implements rehabilitation models and programs based on existing and emerging research

Scale Progression: From foundational to expert knowledge of and skill in of treatment planning



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