



Paving the Way: Development of Generic Support Materials for Canadian Provinces/Territories Related to Enhanced Mobility of the Counselling Profession

Project Working Group Meeting June 26 and 27, 2010

A national dialogue on the mobility of the counselling profession in Canada has been sponsored by HRSDC and hosted by the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy since 2007. Last November at the 2009 Symposium on Counsellor Mobility four key objectives were met:

- To provide participants with a basic understanding of the issues related to professional mobility and to fully discuss and explore them.
- To expand awareness of the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) and the boundaries that it imposes on regulatory realities across all jurisdictions.
- To develop consensus across the country for a nationally representative group to develop supportive materials for the use of provinces and territories as they seek regulation. These materials would also serve as a core set of principles that increase the mobility of labour across Canada by simplifying and streamlining the regulatory process.
- To give ownership of the results of the symposium to a pan-Canadian group who were willing to take the results back to their communities and play a coordinating and advocacy role.

As a result of this success, on June 26 and 27, 2010, the Project Working Group for Counsellor Labour Mobility met in Ottawa to take the next step towards the development of generic support materials for Canadian provinces/territories. To ensure that national interests are represented, the Project Working Group has a wide variety of expertise, varying backgrounds and jurisdictional diversity.

A major focus of the current project is to validate a generic definition, set of recommended titles, and scope of practice, that capture the breadth and depth of the counselling profession. This will be accomplished through a series of stakeholder surveys and consultations. The goal is to obtain agreement and adoption of these three components through consensus-building by representatives of the profession at a two-day Symposium in the Spring of 2011. In addition, the 2011 Symposium participants will provide feedback on sample materials related to the Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, and Ethical Decision-Making models. This important feedback will be used as primary data for the Project Working Group regarding the best developmental models for pan-Canadian guidelines for a code of ethics and scope of practice.

The Project Working Group maintains regular time-limited monthly meetings. On June 26 and 27, it held extensive discussions over two full days to ensure that the goals of this next phase of the project are



met in a timely and efficient manner that provides for information giving, information sharing, and consultation across the provinces and territories.

The largest portion of the meeting was devoted to crafting the working draft of the titles, definition and scope of practice. Using a consensus-building model, the project working group considered diverse professional counselling modalities to choose the most meaningful words that describe the foundation of our common experience: what we do, who we are, and who we serve. Social policy in Canada lends itself to overlapping scopes of practice across multiple professions. Therefore, the generic scope of practice attempts to simultaneously embrace the unique features and the shared areas of our practice.

The development of these generic materials is a first step. An extensive online and paper survey will be broadly conducted to obtain the collective wisdom of stakeholders which will then inform the Project Working Group of next steps. At the June meeting the first draft of this survey was developed. The survey will be available for stakeholder response between September 15 and October 29, 2010.

The counselling profession is diverse and multi-faceted. Recognizing this, it is hoped that members of the profession will be able to see themselves in the titles, definition, and generic scope of practice. These generic materials are designed as national guidelines to inform government, regulators, and the public about the characteristics of our work. The cohesion, the momentum, and the mobility of the counselling profession are founded on effective consensus building. Additionally, all provincially/ territorially-based professional colleges must meet the labour mobility requirements of the Agreement on Internal Trade. This means that they must make provision for counsellors to move freely within the country. The existence of national, overarching guidelines for the profession may be informative to the public and to potential employers, simplifying the mobility of counselling professionals from one part of Canada to another.

The June meeting concluded with a review of the current work plan, a discussion of what success would look like on Day 2 of the 2011 Symposium, and strategies to engage stakeholders in a meaningful way.

The Project Working Group will continue refining the newly crafted generic materials through a series of teleconferences which will be held throughout July and August 2010.

Please feel free to contact the CCPA National Office at 613-237-1099 or bmaccallum@ccpa-accp.ca for further information about this project.