

# CAREER COUNSELLING GUIDELINES 2023

**November 2023**

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**CCPA Career Counsellors Chapter**



**CANADIAN COUNSELLING AND  
PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION**

**L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE  
COUNSELING ET DE PSYCHOTHÉRAPIE**



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# Introduction

Work<sup>1</sup> is a central theme embedded in many of the concerns and hopes that clients raise with their counsellors and psychotherapists. Negative work concerns may be associated with increased risk for common mental health problems or may exacerbate existing symptomatology. Conversely, positive work experiences are frequently linked to life satisfaction across various domains because work often provides people with a sense of meaning, identity, belonging, competence, contribution, and motivation.

## Purpose

The work of counsellors and psychotherapists is varied and important. Easing human suffering and improving people's lives and relationships is critical to effective practice. With close attention to the context of clients, professional practice can often be further enhanced through the competent integration of work-related attitudes, knowledge, and skills to improve the mental health outcomes of clients. To support Canadian counsellors and psychotherapists, these guidelines have been developed to provide clear and practical guidelines for the integration of work-related contexts into general counselling and psychotherapy practice.

## Scope

*Career Counselling Guidelines* (2023) presents seven guidelines that suggest or recommend specific professional conduct. While Guidelines are distinct from Standards of Practice or a Code of Ethics, they provide critical signposts for developing increased and ongoing professionalism. Standards of Practice are directly aligned to a Code of Ethics. Both are mandatory and may be accompanied by an enforcement mechanism. Guidelines are aspirational in nature and are designed to facilitate the continued development of the profession and to support a high level of professional practice. Guidelines are not intended to be mandatory, exhaustive, or applicable to every professional and clinical situation. They are not definitive and are not intended to take precedence over the judgment of counsellors or psychotherapists, professional ethics and standards, or federal and provincial employment laws. They rely on the professionalism of the practitioner to identify the contexts to which they apply. They are, nonetheless, aligned directly to the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics for professional practice. These alignments are identified in each Guideline.

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<sup>1</sup> While work itself is defined as the creation of a valued good or service (Kelloway et al., 2004), the concept of working can include both paid and unpaid activities (e.g., paid labour, unpaid family care, volunteering retirees; Richardson & Schaeffer, 2013). Furthermore, the experience of working can be understood to include both those who are working, and those who want to, such as unemployed job-seekers (Blustein, 2006; Blustein, 2017). For some, working can be a means of survival, plagued by desperation or resignation, while others might experience high levels of vocational choice and opportunity, deriving identity and meaning from their work. With this diversity of occupational activity, it has been suggested that 'working' is a more inclusive descriptor than 'career' for discussing work-related topics (Blustein, 2006). Thus, to foster inclusion, succinctness, and consistency, this document will mostly refer to issues of vocation, occupation, career, and the like as 'work'.

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As with all activities undertaken by counsellors and psychotherapists, the contents of these Guidelines are also intended to be delivered within an individual practitioner’s boundaries of competence and within their professional scope of practice. Each Guideline allows room for new evidence and revised and updated information as the field of counselling, psychotherapy, and career development grows and adapts. While these Guidelines provide direction for counsellors and psychotherapists to integrate career interventions into general practice, it is important that practitioners refer to their local licensing bodies for guidance on who is licensed to do what work and in which contexts.

## Background

These Guidelines were developed by members of the CCPA Career Counsellors Chapter and in consultation with career-related specialists and career and counselling- and psychotherapy-related organizations. The process of developing the Guidelines included consultation of best practices for developing guidelines, a systematic search of peer-reviewed and grey literature of evidence-based practices for integrating career into general counselling and psychotherapy, and a review of related guidelines in counselling, psychotherapy, and career counselling specialities. During this process, attempts were made to integrate specific literature and topics relevant to the Canadian context, including that of French Canadian and Indigenous academics and practitioners.

## Organization

This document contains seven guidelines. Each guideline is divided into components:

- Identification of the guideline
- Context of the guideline
- Demonstration of the guideline
- Alignment of the guideline to:
  - Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association Code of Ethics (2020)
  - Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association Standards of Practice (2021)
  - Code of Ethics for Career Development Professionals (2021)
  - Pan-Canadian Competency Framework for Career Development Professionals (2021)

The document ends with a conclusion, followed by a glossary of key terms, and a list of references and resources directly related to the contents of *Career Counselling Guidelines (2023)*.

*Note: CCPA publications containing standards of practice, code of ethics, and/or related guidelines should be considered by all members in the care of their clients and in the practice of the profession. The development of **Career Counselling Guidelines (2023)** included consultation with a broad array of members of the profession and describes current professional expectations.*



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# Guideline 1: Role of Attitudes

*Guideline 1:* Cultivate attitudes that recognize the importance of work in clients' lives and how it might play a role in psychological well-being and distress for clients seeking counselling and/or psychotherapy.

## Context

Clients' working lives are intrinsically tied to their mental health, well-being, and distress. An exploration of career and work life is intrinsic to a counsellor's/psychotherapist's role. Well-being may be compromised by such events as precarious work, workplace harassment, bullying, microaggressions, and discrimination. Low workplace autonomy and high job demands are risk factors to overall health and well-being.

Both work and mental health mutually influence each other. Negative or non-existent work conditions may negatively impact mental health, resulting in anxiety, stress, fatigue, and sleep problems. Symptoms of anxiety, depression, or substance overuse can interfere with work demands, contributing to additional stressors in one's work and personal life. By contrast, positive work experiences tend to improve overall well-being, including finding re-employment. Counselling primarily focused on non-career issues is more effective if salient contextual career issues also are addressed. Career development interventions may not only alleviate psychological distress but can also serve as protective factors against future mental illness. Work can greatly contribute to one's quality of life as a source of meaning and identity, a means of social connection, and opportunity for achievement. Counsellors and psychotherapists become nimbler in addressing client needs when they are able to cultivate an attitude that recognizes the significance of work in clients' lives and consider the role it plays in the psychological well-being of clients who seek mental health counselling.

## Demonstrating the Guideline

- Help clients address work strain and interpersonal problems in the work environment, as well as advocate for organizational justice, proper compensation, and job security.
- Explicitly address precarious, non-existent, or negative work lives of clients. Integrate career counselling and career-related interventions to potentially alleviate psychological distress for clients experiencing negative work-related situations.

- Add cues to an office that welcome an exploration of work (e.g., posters about work and mental health). Additional cues may be embedded within intake interviews/assessments and case notes as a helpful reminder for counsellors and psychotherapists to explore and assess clients’ work-related concerns and distress.
- Directly and actively address clients’ work uncertainties in session to potentially alleviate clients’ distress. Written exercises on career exploration and planning, as well as individualized feedback from counsellors and psychotherapists on clients’ career choice are helpful as career development tools and in reducing psychological distress.
- Establish collegial support networks and develop an awareness of their work values, including what is meaningful to them about their work, to improve mental health outcomes.

## Alignments to this Guideline

CCPA CODE OF ETHICS	A3. Boundaries of Competence B1. Primary Responsibility B9. Respecting Inclusivity, Diversity, Difference, and Intersectionality
CCPA STANDARDS OF PRACTICE	Boundaries of Competence (p.3) Counselling Relationships: Primary Responsibility (p. 14) Respecting Inclusivity, Diversity, Difference, and Intersectionality (p. 28)
CDP CODE OF ETHICS	1e. Boundaries of Competence 3d. Contextualized Inclusivity Practices 7c. Stakeholder Partnerships
CDP COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK	1.1. Delivery Services within Scope of Practice 6.3. Collaborate with Peers 15.2. Work with Clients to Write Communications

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## Guideline 2: Knowledge and Skills

*Guideline 2:* Gain knowledge and skills related to various career counselling theories, practice, and assessment and/or how to apply traditional counselling theories to work-related issues.

### Context

Career-specific counselling and psychotherapy may include humanistic, constructivist, emotion-focused, and acceptance and commitment therapy approaches, as well as motivational interviewing to help clients who are ambivalent about career development. There are also intersections with solution-focused approaches, empowerment theory, and anti-racist theory in career counselling.

Career interventions can significantly complement traditional counselling and psychotherapy practice by going beyond alleviating symptoms related to anxiety or depression, and addressing the root causes of issues that have potential origins in the client's work life. Counsellors and psychotherapists who practice with both career development and mental health-related outcomes in mind may potentially see much greater improvement and resiliency in client well-being.

### Demonstrating the Guideline

- Seek knowledge and training in career counselling and career development theory, research, practice, assessment, assessment tools, and interpretation of results. This may include integrating career-related concerns in client diagnostic conceptualizations and treatment plans and the skills required or effective implementation.
- Use career theory and interventions to empower clients to make vocational choices, which can contribute to significant changes among social, economic, personal, and work-related outcomes.
- Work from an orientation of integrationism. Employ various relevant career theories in work with clients (e.g., person-environment fit, developmental self-concept, psychology of working, social learning, Holland's theory of vocational types, career construction, engagement, system, culture, emancipation). Integrate career interventions into work while remaining consistent with the fundamentals of existing therapeutic orientation.

- Explore and assess clients’ work-related interests, beliefs, values, skills, and abilities through a variety of career counselling tools (e.g., interests, values inventories, narrative methods) and connecting these to market needs to empower clients to make relevant and informed career choices.
- Develop professional skills that support client skill development such as resume writing, job interview role-play, and strategies to access and use digital Labour Market Information and other work-related community resources.

## Alignments to this Guideline

CCPA CODE OF ETHICS	A1. Professional Responsibility: General Responsibility A3. Boundaries of Competence B1. Counselling Relationships: Primary Responsibility
CCPA STANDARDS OF PRACTICE	Professional Responsibility: General Responsibility (p. 1) Boundaries of Competence (p. 3) Counselling Relationships: Primary Responsibility (p. 14)
CDP CODE OF ETHICS	1a. Professionalism 1b. Current Career Development and Labour Market Knowledge 1c. Lifelong Learning
CDP COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK	1.1. Delivery Services within Scope of Practice 6.3. Collaborate with Peers 15.2. Work with Clients to Write Communications

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## Guideline 3: Diversity & Intersectionality

*Guideline 3:* Seek knowledge on the influence of diversity and intersectionality on work experiences and trajectories, and develop skills to work from an intersectional lens.

### Context

Counsellors and psychotherapists have long appreciated the diverse cultures and identities that exist for clients. This includes a recognition of how various identities intersect and build upon each other in ways that bestow them with certain privileges or experiences of overlapping oppression. In the career counselling realm, awareness of the impact of clients' social and cultural identities on workplace beliefs, opportunities, and experiences is paramount.

The multiplicity of racialization, ethnicity, disability status, social class, gender, or sexual orientation may coalesce to bring forward experiences of oppression, inequity, or opportunity within work environments. Micro-aggressions are also common within the various layers of oppression, which contribute significantly to psychological distress.

As part of their professional practice, counsellors and psychotherapists typically consider various contexts of vulnerable persons, clients identifying as members of cultural minorities, and those who may hold worldviews and life experiences that are substantially different from them. Adding the important layer of complexity related to the impacts of these contexts on work-life balance, work opportunities, and workplace experiences should also be considered. Counsellors and psychotherapists who are attuned to these contexts are well positioned to provide strategies and support for such clients. It should be noted that when working with cases involving bullying and discrimination, these phenomena may manifest differently between work and school organizations and environments. Prejudice and discrimination may be both externalized and internalized, be present through a single person or multiple individuals, or may be embedded into workplace processes when they become part of workplace culture. Counsellors need to be aware of various manifestations of bullying and workplace hostilities, so that they may understand and empathize with a client's experiences, rather than mistake them for other symptoms and disorders.

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## Demonstrating the Guideline

- Support clients in addressing work strain and interpersonal problems in the work environment, as well as advocate for organizational justice, proper compensation, and job security.
- Actively seek to understand how identity and diversity relates to clients' work experiences, opportunities, and challenges through an intersectional lens.
- Actively explore with clients how their identities and diverse backgrounds influence their experiences at work and their work-related beliefs.
- Incorporate cultural humility and open curiosity in working with clients and their various intersecting identities.
- Support clients to advocate for fair practices at work and provide psychoeducation on workplace discrimination and harassment based on clients' identities. Support may take various forms, including accessing formal grievance processes, advantages and disadvantages of filing a workplace complaint, and location of workplace rights information.
- Provide psychological support for clients addressing workplace discrimination and harassment, sometimes a process that feels threatening and arduous.
- Consider using a trauma-informed approach to help clients navigate the emotions associated with workplace adversity.

## Alignments to this Guideline

CCPA CODE OF ETHICS	A12. Diversity Responsiveness B9. Respecting Inclusivity, Diversity, Difference, and Intersectionality C10. Sensitivity to Diversity When Assessing and Evaluating
CCPA STANDARDS OF PRACTICE	Counselling Relationships: Primary Responsibility (p. 14) Respecting Inclusivity, Diversity, Difference, and Intersectionality (p. 28) Sensitivity to Diversity When Assessing and Evaluating (p. 41)
CDP CODE OF ETHICS	1e. Boundaries of Competence 3d. Contextualized Inclusivity Practices 7c. Stakeholder Partnerships
CDP COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK	4.1. Respect Diversity and Inclusion 4.2. Promote Diversity and Inclusion 4.3. Advocate for Client 10.1. Understand Career Development Theories and Models 10.2. Apply Career Development Theories and Models 13. Awareness of Diverse Worldviews

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# Guideline 4: Work and Transitions

*Guideline 4: Seek knowledge on the role of work concerns and transitions across the lifespan.*

## Context

People in contemporary times must prepare for a lifetime of work transitions. Counsellors and psychotherapists are uniquely positioned to be in contact and intervene with clients at various points in their lives, including before, after, and during transitions, as well as preparing clients for future transitions.

It is also important for counsellors and psychotherapists to be aware of the impacts of forced transitions across the lifespan. Transitions may be required for a variety of reasons, some unique to the individual's circumstances, others due to external circumstances. In either case, the individual is no longer able to continue working within their chosen occupation or job. Previously established work roles and career trajectories may suddenly no longer be available for individuals. Counsellors and psychotherapists support clients in developing an awareness of and insight into not just the physical, but also the psychological barriers during a career transition.

Lifespan models of career can be helpful in developing knowledge of career concerns at various life stages (e.g., Super, 1980). When counsellors and psychotherapists assist clients in understanding how work considerations evolve from childhood to adulthood and the various concerns that might be embedded within these stages the clients' psychological well-being may be improved.

## Demonstrating the Guideline

- Encourage clients to explore opportunities that build upon their interests and identity outside their present or chosen vocational occupation.
- Engage in career planning with clients by emphasizing the development of skills and abilities that are robust rather than fixed, in appreciation of the fact that labour markets are in a state of perpetual change.
- Work with clients to develop a whole-person understanding of their work-related attributes (e.g., knowledge, abilities, interests, attitudes, motivations) across the lifespan and how to adapt and apply these attributes in a changing work landscape.



- Recognize the physical, psychological, and social barriers clients may experience with or without acquired or developmental disabilities. Be attuned to the level of adaptation needed by clients during a career transition.
- Assist clients in acquiring skills to advocate for needed accommodations and resources.
- Instill hope and meaning, encourage action, and assist in the planning of transitions across the lifespan.

## Alignments to this Guideline

CCPA CODE OF ETHICS	A12. Diversity Responsiveness B9. Respecting Inclusivity, Diversity, Difference, and Intersectionality C10. Sensitivity to Diversity When Assessing and Evaluating
CCPA STANDARDS OF PRACTICE	Counselling Relationships: Primary Responsibility (p. 14) Respecting Inclusivity, Diversity, Difference, and Intersectionality (p. 28) Sensitivity to Diversity When Assessing and Evaluating (p. 41)
CDP CODE OF ETHICS	1k. Respect for Persons 2o. Advocacy 3c. Respecting Inclusivity, Diversity, Difference, and Intersectionality 3d. Contextualized Inclusivity Practices
CDP COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK	13.5 Work with Clients Affected by Work Disruption 13.6 Work with Clients Living in Poverty 13.7 Work with Clients Post-Incarceration 13.8 Work with Clients Living with a Disability

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# Guideline 5: Social, Cultural, and Economic Factors

*Guideline 5:* Seek knowledge on broader social, cultural, and economic factors that hinder or help employment, work, and career development and maintenance.

## Context

Social, cultural, and economic factors can hinder or help with finding or maintaining employment and career development opportunities. Factors like economic recession or automation have implications for job prospects. Other factors, such as federal policies on migrant work have implications for work options and decisions. People's access to *decent* work can also be greatly affected by broader environments in which they are embedded. Clients may have reduced choice and opportunity based on their geographic location, social location (e.g., racialized status, disability, sexual orientation), the labour market, access to education and technology, and financial, practical, and health constraints. Those with differing ability statuses may also be differentially affected by these changes, where access to accommodations or technology needed to engage in work might not be readily available across workplace settings.

Ultimately, counsellors and psychotherapists must recognize that within the therapeutic context, access to work affects mental and physical safety and wellbeing. Work opportunities are directly impacted by broader social, cultural, and economic factors that are oftentimes outside of clients' control. These impacts are important to consider in the counselling and psychotherapy setting as access to work, and decent work particularly, is recognized as a primary social determinant of psychological and physical health.

## Demonstrating the Guideline

- Seek out resources related to the current work landscape in Canada that can inform good practice generally, and guide client-specific interventions.
- Foster an awareness of and reflect on the implications of a post-COVID 19 environment and the widespread transition to working from home. This includes multiple contexts such as feelings of isolation and disruptions in balancing home and family responsibilities with work responsibilities.

- Identify immediate, ongoing, and historic issues generally affecting people with acquired and developmental disabilities. Address the specific context of the client in how issues are or are not causing an impact on mental health and wellness.

## Alignments to this Guideline

CCPA CODE OF ETHICS	A12. Diversity Responsiveness B9. Respecting Inclusivity, Diversity, Difference, and Intersectionality C10. Sensitivity to Diversity When Assessing and Evaluating
CCPA STANDARDS OF PRACTICE	Counselling Relationships: Primary Responsibility (p. 14) Respecting Inclusivity, Diversity, Difference, and Intersectionality (p. 28) Sensitivity to Diversity When Assessing and Evaluating (p. 41)
CDP CODE OF ETHICS	1k. Respect for Persons 2o. Advocacy 3c. Respecting Inclusivity, Diversity, Difference, and Intersectionality 3d. Contextualized Inclusivity Practices
CDP COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK	13.2 Work with Immigrant Clients 13.5 Work with Clients Affected by Work Disruption 13.6 Work with Clients Living in Poverty 13.7 Work with Clients Post-Incarceration 13.8 Work with Clients Living with a Disability

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# Guideline 6: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation

*Guideline 6:* Use the principles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to support clients identifying as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit with work-related issues.

## Context

The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association began a journey with Indigenous Peoples and Communities to facilitate a more inclusive and respectful approach to collaborative counselling and psychotherapy practice in 2021 when it published its *Standards of Practice* (6<sup>th</sup> ed). The *Standards of Practice* remind counsellors and psychotherapists of the importance of working “in a good way” with clients identifying as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Similarly, the Canadian Psychological Association published a report that strived to establish a sense of how the discipline of psychology could make amends for the historical harm done to the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities of Canada. Although neither the CCPA nor the CPA documents explicitly address career development, there are valuable learnings that can be interpreted and acted upon. The most important of these learnings have their foundation in humility, in seeking forgiveness, and in honouring the strengths of the Indigenous way of being.

For counsellors and psychotherapists working with clients who identify as First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit, recognizing that Western-developed tools and interventions often misrepresent, harm, or misidentify the strengths of the Indigenous clients is paramount. It is critical to the client’s wellbeing that counsellors and psychotherapists grow in their appreciation for and understanding of Indigenous concepts related to wellness, growth, and healing. In areas such as assessment, intervention, and program evaluation, Western-derived instruments and protocols should be used sparingly, if at all, dependent upon the context of the client.

It is paramount for counsellors and psychotherapists to recognize, appreciate, and honour First Nations, Métis, and Inuit knowledge, tradition, culture, spiritual expertise, and ways of being on client wellness, career choices, and development.

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## Demonstrating the Guideline

- For counsellors and psychotherapists who identify as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, seek out opportunities to teach valuable learnings to allies.
- Uphold and facilitate Indigenous knowledge. Avoid directing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit clients toward more Eurocentric understandings and frameworks of work. Develop an understanding of how Indigenous peoples have used their traditional knowledge to conceptualize the role of work in well-being and its relation to mental health.
- Learn about and share knowledge of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit concepts of self, family, community, and the colonial history and harms that Canada and its institutions have imposed.
- Embrace cultural allyship when invited to work with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit clients or communities. Engage reflexively with their permission on existing practices, and collaboratively explore alternative, more culturally relevant, and more empowering approaches that align with their understandings.
- Foster an awareness that much of counselling and psychological knowledge in Canada is rooted in colonial European values of what constitutes “normal”, and that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people and communities in Canada have been historically forced to adapt to Western ideologies, including in the counselling and psychotherapy context. The Western view of “normal” must also be interrogated when considering work and career development interventions with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit clients.
- Collaborate, when invited, with Indigenous career counsellors, scholars, and career development practitioners to develop an understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives of work and career development, including the various familial, social, economic, political, and historic factors which influence career aspirations.
- Critically appraise career assessment tools for use with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit clients. Where possible, refer to tools and interventions developed by and/or with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit populations.
- Consult, whenever possible and appropriate, with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit practitioners who may provide contextualized information and guidance.
- Respond to the TRC’s final report. Learn the past and present history of colonialism and its impacts in Canada.

- Be mindful of the unique career development needs of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples who remain underrepresented in the post-secondary population. This may include working with students to develop an understanding of historical and ongoing discrimination, the importance of mentorship, and the accessibility of career and educational opportunities.
- Use positions of privilege and authority to explore the barriers to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit employment and student retention, and work to reduce these barriers.

## Alignments to this Guideline

CCPA CODE OF ETHICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Awareness of Historical and Contemporary Contexts</li> <li>12. Reflections on Self and Personal Cultural Identities</li> <li>13. Recognition of Indigenous Diversity</li> <li>14. Respectful Awareness of Traditional Practices</li> <li>15. Appropriate Participation in Traditional Practices</li> <li>16. Strengths-Based Community Development</li> <li>17. Relevant Cross-Cultural Practice</li> <li>18. Relationships</li> <li>19. Culturally Embedded Relationships</li> <li>110. Appropriate Use of Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Teachings</li> <li>111. Honouring Client Self-Identification</li> </ul>
CCPA STANDARDS OF PRACTICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness of Historical and Contemporary Contexts (p. 90)</li> <li>Reflections on Self and Personal Cultural Identities (p. 91)</li> <li>Recognition of Indigenous Diversity (p. 92)</li> <li>Respectful Awareness of Traditional Practices (p. 92)</li> <li>Respectful Participation in Traditional Practices (p. 93)</li> <li>Strengths-Based Community Development (p. 94)</li> <li>Relevant Cross-Cultural Practice (p. 95)</li> <li>Relationships (p. 96)</li> <li>Culturally Embedded Relationships (p. 96)</li> <li>Appropriate Use of Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Teachings (p. 97)</li> <li>Honouring Client Self-Identification (p. 98)</li> </ul>
CDP CODE OF ETHICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3a. Working with Diverse Clients</li> <li>3c. Respecting Inclusivity, Diversity, Difference and Intersectionality</li> <li>5a. Assessment and Evaluation Competence and Methodology</li> </ul>
CDP COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1 Respect Diversity and Inclusion</li> <li>4.2 Promote Diversity and Inclusion</li> <li>13.1 Work with Indigenous Clients</li> <li>19.1. Identify Assessment and Evaluation Methods</li> </ul>

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# Guideline 7: Professional Advocacy

*Guideline 7:* Engage in professional advocacy for decent work and integrating career development into mental health initiatives.

## Context

Advocacy is a crucial aspect of the social justice orientation for counsellors and psychotherapists. They will be best equipped to advocate for social justice when they are familiar with career development theory. Part of this advocacy work can involve bringing career development into mental health initiatives.

Although many graduate counselling and psychotherapy training programs, practica, and clinically oriented courses address aspects of career issues, they are often not explicit, thus inadvertently delegitimizing career concerns that often directly affect the mental health of clients. Multicultural counselling courses also often discuss occupational barriers and economic issues that are relevant to various groups, while measurement courses highlight test biases that may preclude individuals from furthering their education, in turn restricting career options. There is a need to explicitly label these as specific career components in education and training. Specific guidance on the appropriate, contextualized use of career-based information to advocate for clients and their mental health is critical.

Ultimately, integrating career development and career counselling into general and clinical counselling and psychotherapy, while retaining the important referral process to career development professionals, is supportive of the health and wellbeing of clients. The interplay between the realities of clients' working and personal lives, economy, and society cannot be disputed. For the counselling and psychotherapy profession to continue to evolve with the needs of clients, increased attention to best practices and recommendations that recognize the value of career counselling and general counselling and psychotherapy are required.

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## Demonstrating the Guideline

- Explicitly name and identify issues related to work and career development within counselling training programs. Highlight relevant areas for advocacy related to decent work and improving mental health outcomes.
- Recognize that decent work is tied to the changing work environment related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and an ever-changing economy.
- Advocate for decent and meaningful work for all, and especially for those with disabilities. Work collaboratively with the clients to facilitate a greater understanding of how their disabilities (visible or invisible, permanent, temporary, or transitory) may influence their career development.
- Advocate for work-centred programs that sustain workability for older adults. Provide organizational supports for new skill learning, and agency-based programs that reduce barriers to work for older adults.
- Advocate for policy change to increase access to decent, sustainable, and meaningful work.
- Engage in research initiatives to educate governmental policymakers about the role of decent work in mental health or collaborating with workplace organizations and institutions to address issues of bullying and discrimination.



## Alignments to this Guideline

CCPA CODE OF ETHICS	A3. Boundaries of Competence B1. Primary Responsibility D1. Researcher Responsibility
CCPA STANDARDS OF PRACTICE	Boundaries of Competence (p.3) Counselling Relationships: Primary Responsibility (p. 14) Researcher Responsibility (p. 45)
CDP CODE OF ETHICS	1e. Boundaries of Competence 2o. Advocacy 3d. Contextualized Inclusivity Practices 4c. Evidence-Based Practice 4d. Researcher Responsibility 7c. Stakeholder Partnerships
CDP COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK	4.3 Advocate for Client 18.2 Conduct Research 24.1 Contribute to Development of Public Policy

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# Conclusion

*Career Counselling Guidelines* (2023) supports the strategic integration of career-related theories and interventions in general counselling and psychotherapy practice. Seven overarching guidelines are presented that support counsellors and psychotherapists as they continue to develop and hone the attitudes, knowledge, and skills consistent with work-related competencies. The aim of the guidelines is to encourage, support and empower counsellors and psychotherapists to understand the importance of work and career and to integrate this understanding into their practice, while recognizing that referrals to career specialists will remain essential in many contexts. Economic considerations are also incorporated into the guidelines, with many cost-effective recommendations for those wanting to integrate the guidelines in under-resourced settings.

Additional information and specific references for this publication are available in the working paper upon which it is based:

Karnjanavijaya, J., McLean, M., Schell, D., & Hudson Breen, R. (2022). *Professional practice guidelines for integrating the role of work and career into general counselling practice* available on the CCPA Career Counsellors Chapter at: <https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/chapters/career-counsellors/>

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# Professional Development Resources

## ***Self-Directed Learning Resources***

Canadian Career Development Foundation <https://CDP.ca/>

Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association Annual Conference  
<https://www.ccpaaccp.ca/general-continuing-education/ccpa-annual-conference/>

Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association: Career Counsellors Chapter  
<https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/chapters/career-counsellors/>

Canadian Council for Career Development <http://cccda.org/>

Cannexus: Canada's Career Development Conference <https://cannexus.ceric.ca/>

CERIC <https://ceric.ca/>

International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance <https://iaevg.com/>

Vocational Rehabilitation Association of Canada <https://vraCanada.com/>

## ***Formal Learning Resources***

Career Development Professional Formal Training Programs and courses are available across Canada. A sample of institutions in Canada includes:

Canadian Career Development Foundation - Career Development Professional Training

Career Professionals of Canada – Career Development Practitioner (CDP) Certificate Program

Conestoga College – Career Development Professional

Dalhousie University – Certificate of Professional and Leadership Studies in Career Development

Douglas College – Career Development Practice Certificate Program

Fanshawe College – Career Development Practitioner

George Brown College – Career Development Practitioner Program

Life Strategies – Career Management Professional Program (CMPP)

Mohawk College – Career Consultant Certificate

Simon Fraser University – Career Development Practitioner Certificate: Employment Services

Université du Québec en Abitibi – Témiscamingue: Certificate in Employability and Career Development in Indigenous Context

University of Calgary – Certificate in Career Development and Academic Advising

University of Calgary – Certificate in Adult Learning specializing in Career and Academic Advising

Winnipeg Transition Centre – Career/Employment Coach Certificate (CECC)

Yukon University – Community Education and Employment Support

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# Glossary

**Counselling:** Defined by CCPA (2022) as a “relational process based upon the ethical use of specific professional competencies to facilitate human change. Counselling addresses wellness, relationships, personal growth, career development, mental health, and psychological illness or distress. The counselling process is characterized by the application of recognized cognitive, affective, expressive, somatic, spiritual, developmental, behavioural, learning, and systemic principles.”

**Counsellor:** Someone who engages in the above professional activity within the regulated counselling field. This might include but is not limited to the terms psychotherapist, counselling psychologist, clinical counsellor, or counsellor.

**Career/Work:** There are many definitions of career in the literature. For example, Super (1980) defines career as comprising a multitude of overlapping roles across a person’s lifespan (e.g., the role of student, parent, work, and so on, which can exist simultaneously or sequentially). Blustein’s (2001) definition of career affirms this lifespan role while also highlighting that, for some people, the work they engage in is intentional, volitional, and meaningful, whereas for others, work is primarily motivated by the need for survival. As noted above, Blustein (2006) often uses the more inclusive term of ‘work’ to include topics of vocation, occupation, and career to reflect that people’s working lives are often complex, involving various levels of choice and intentionality. While we use the term ‘career’ often in this document based on convention, many of the career-related counselling topics covered include the broader understanding of work as put forward by Blustein (2006).

**Career Counselling:** Defined by CERIC (n.d.) as an “individual or group process which emphasizes self-awareness and a better understanding of the world of work. It helps people to develop a satisfying and meaningful life/work direction by helping them make career, educational and life decisions. Career counselling is used to guide learning, work and transition decisions, as well as to manage responses to changing work and learning environments over the lifespan. Its predominant ethos is one of facilitation rather than of advice-giving.” Chen (2001) also notes that “life is career and vice versa.” (p. 523), highlighting that career/work happens within people’s life contexts, which calls for an inclusive, comprehensive, and intersectional approach to career counselling.

**Career Counsellor:** Defined by CERIC (n.d.) as a professional who “provides counselling in educational, career and personal domains. A career counsellor assists individuals to achieve greater self-awareness, develop a life/work direction, increase understanding of learning and work opportunities and become self-directed in managing learning, work and transitions. Career counsellors have a unique scope of practice and specialized counselling competencies – they are fully competent career development practitioners and also fully competent counsellors.”

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**Career Development:** Defined by CCDF and CERIC (n.d.) “the lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure, and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future. There are a number of factors that influence career development, including interests, abilities, values, personality, background, and circumstances. Career development encompasses the development of the whole person and is more than just deciding on a major or a job; it really is a lifelong process, meaning that throughout life a person changes, situations change, and every individual must continually make career and life decisions.”

**Career Development Professional:** Defined by the CDP (2021) as a professional who helps people navigate learning and work transitions across the lifespan, acquire and enhance skills, seek and create employment, and access community services that support personal and professional growth in an increasingly complex, interdependent and changing world.

**Career Assessment:** Defined by the OCCOQ (2011) as a process of gathering information, identifying issues, needs, and clarifying personal and environmental resources in relation to the issues and needs. Assessment helps individuals to increase self-awareness; understand their career issues; establish work, learning, and/or life balance goals; and provide a foundation for taking action and an indicator of ongoing progress. Assessment methods may include a variety of formal and informal techniques such as standardized and non-standardized instruments, interviews, personality measures, questionnaires, checklists, behavioural observations, and reports by significant others. Assessment can be done in individual or group contexts.

**Client(s):** In this document, clients can refer to individuals, groups, or organizations accessing counselling services.

**Mental Health:** The World Health Organization (WHO, 2022) defines mental health as “a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community.”

**Vocational Psychology:** Vocational psychology is the scientific study of career and career development (Jackson & Verdino, 2012). The applied arm of vocational psychology is career counselling.

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