

The Ontario College of Registered Psychotherapists

Autumn 2013 Report, by Bob Bond

Hope endures that the College of Registered Psychotherapists can open, with its members both registered and fully functioning, on April 1, 2014. The largest hurdle-in-the-way is at the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, which is lagging behind schedule both in affirming the Transitional Council's Registration Regulation and in declaring the Ministry's exclusionary principle or clause by which those caregivers previously expecting to be Regulated Mental Health Professionals shall be permitted to continue practicing their aspects of psychotherapy.

CASC members wishing to join the College need to push forward in (a) establishing an on-line account with the College, (b) paying for and thereafter completing the Jurisprudence Module, (c) *for those who will seek to be 'grandparented'*, working through the available scoring instrument in preparation to complete your College application, and (d) *for those (few) who will seek entrance by regular means*, preparing to write the competency exam once it is available.

Regarding the Jurisprudence Module, please know that your payment will take three days to process before you can start the Module, and please be assured that the approximately 10 hours it will take you to do the Module can be spread out across days / weeks / months (coming in and out of the Module at your convenience).

Regarding the grandparenting 'scoring instrument', know that The CASC-Ontario Educational Standards Committee is marshaling the production of consensus CPE and PCE Unit scores, a project possibly to be finalized in early December ... this data promises to be very helpful!

There is continuing angst amongst some CASC chaplains about their decision whether or not to join this College. Where these individuals are relying on pre-existing non-comfort with the title "psychotherapist", or upon the judgment of people outside our profession, I'd observe that confusion *should* exist. Clarity can be wrestled, though, by exercising the exegetical skills basic to our profession. Critically reading the 1991 Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) together with the College's accepted definition of "counselling" as put forward by the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Committee (HPRAC), local faith community leaders/'practitioners' (pastors, priests, rabbis, imams, ...) freely continue to "counsel" and to "treat" based upon their religion (and essentially advocating for their religion) because they are excepted via the RHPA. *Adding* the Psychotherapy Act and CASC Handbook to the texts under consideration, CASC chaplains and pastoral counsellors

(1) do not "counsel" in terms of HPRAC's definition (or, at least, do not primarily do so), and

(2) do not 'treat according to the tenets/dogma of their own faith', instead, CASC chaplains and pastoral counsellors

(a) treat according to basic (and sometimes quite advanced!) psychotherapeutic practice,

- (b) conduct ethical “ministry” [based on nationally vetted (via certification) ‘theology of ministry’], and
- (c) treat according to the tenets of the religion / spirituality / ‘meaning-making’ of *the client or patient*.

This altogether means CASC chaplains and pastoral counsellors find a legally required home in the College of Registered Psychotherapists (if their job description / practice demonstrates this requirement).

Advocacy work concerning the College goes on. The Ontario Alliance of Mental Health Practitioners (OAMHP) has taken part in this autumn’s consultation process by the Transitional Council concerning the By-Laws of the College. A second consultation concerning the Professional Practice Standards of the College is in process at time-of-writing. (Within these consultations, the OAMHP presents the combined feedback of its member organizations.)

Pastoral Counsellors will be particularly interested to know about the OAMHP’s inquiries regarding ‘third party payment’ by insurance companies. Basically quoting OAMHP material:

OAMHP’s president, Rod Cohen, has been working with a consultant who himself is the former senior Vice-President and member of the Board of Directors of Green Shield Canada and Chairperson of the Life Insurance Institute of Canada. When this consultant asked his former colleagues at Green Shield their intentions about recognizing practitioners and thus providing coverage, here was the response: "Yes, Green Shield Canada puts measures in place to ensure a smooth transition when a health profession becomes regulated. Once regulation is proclaimed in order for a provider to be considered as eligible to render the service and to be able to identify themselves as a Psychotherapist they will be required to be registered and in good standing with their College. ..."

While this is good and welcome news, and while Green Shield Canada is a leader in the field and thus somewhat of a watermark for the industry, we must be quite aware that all insurance companies act independently and exclusively and therefore may or may not hold the same view as Green Shield Canada. As well there is an issue related to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and the lack of regulated provinces which could come into the mix regarding the insurers’ decision-making as there are tax concerns for them.

The OAMHP is following this whole matter and will keep all its member Associations informed as more is learned.

A final matter of note: The Transitional Council is recruiting current and former educators and curriculum specialists to evaluate education and training programs. The link for this announcement, including details for those interested in applying, is as follows: <http://www.crpo.ca/home/transitional-council-newsletters/>

Our march towards-and-into the College goes on!