

SPRING 2025

PERSPECTIVE

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MESSAGE FROM THE REGISTRAR AND CEO

FROM LEGACY TO LEADERSHIP: 25 YEARS OF REGULATORY EXCELLENCE



Spring is a time of renewal, growth and transformation – an ideal reflection as we embark on a new era of regulation and public protection. This year, we proudly celebrate the College’s 25th anniversary. Over the past twenty-five years, we have created an organization rooted in accountability, ethical practice and unwavering commitment to public protection.

Since its inception, the College has continuously evolved to meet the changing needs of the public and the profession. Our core mandate has remained constant: to safeguard the public through the effective regulation of social work and social service work. As we enter this next chapter, our [2024-2029 Strategic Plan](#) marks a defining milestone in our journey. This roadmap continues to guide our pursuit of regulatory excellence, embracing innovation and our commitment to ongoing communication and collaboration with the communities we serve.

Innovation is at the heart of this new era. The College is advancing regulatory frameworks, adopting modern

technologies and enhancing engagement to make every effort to ensure that we not only meet but exceed the expectations placed upon us. Our goal remains clear – to continually strengthen public safety while upholding ethical and professional standards that support you, our registrants, in acting with integrity, competence and care. In this issue of *Perspective*, we explore innovative approaches to care in the feature article on the [International Crisis Response Association](#) and in our new [Practice Notes on practising within scope](#). Registrants should also make sure they are up-to-date on [information regarding complaints](#).

Spring reminds us that growth is a continuous process and renewal is essential. Just as the spring season brings new beginnings, we remain committed to strengthening public protection with purpose, progress and impact. With the foundation of our past and the promise of our future, the College will continue to cultivate a regulatory landscape that flourishes in service to the public.

Here's to 25 years together and to many more years to come!

Sincerely,

Denitha Breau, RN, MSN, MBA
Registrar and CEO
Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers



**Ontario College of
Social Workers and
Social Service Workers**

A Legacy of Care, A Future of Impact **25** Years Together

THE FUTURE OF CRISIS RESPONSE:

HOW THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE ASSOCIATION IS LEADING CHANGE



➤ In times of crisis, rapid and appropriate intervention is vital for de-escalation and safety. The [International Crisis Response Association \(ICRA\)](#), founded in 2019, has been pivotal in reshaping mental health crisis intervention by promoting non-police alternatives. Today, the ICRA supports over 200 municipalities across North America in establishing such services.

FROM VISION TO MOVEMENT

ICRA co-founders Rachel Bromberg and Asante Haughton recognized the need for non-police responses to mental health crises, beginning their work in Toronto. “We started because we wanted a non-police crisis service for Toronto,” says Bromberg. What began as a local initiative in 2019 has since expanded throughout Canada and the U.S. linking cities to similar models.

In the ICRA’s first year, the [CAHOOTS \(Crisis Assistance Helping Out on the Streets\) program](#) in Eugene, Oregon was the only established non-police crisis model. Other cities like Olympia, Washington, began to implement their own their own programs. The ICRA facilitated collaboration through monthly calls among a small

group of cities. By February 2025, that number of calls has now grown to over 100, with more than 200 models operating across Canada and the U.S.

THE TORONTO COMMUNITY CRISIS SERVICE (TCCS) MODEL

The [Toronto Community Crisis Service \(TCCS\)](#) is a leading example of a non-police mental health crisis intervention. TCCS teams work alongside community partners, including the [TAIBU Community Health Centre](#), [2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations](#), [Gerstein Crisis Centre](#), and the [Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto](#). The teams provide immediate support through de-escalation, needs assessment and short-term intervention, focusing on trauma-informed care and harm reduction.

The goal is not just crisis stabilization but connecting individuals to longer-term support, such as case management and healthcare services to name a few.

A TRANSITION INTO THE FUTURE

Bromberg highlights that we are in a transitional period for crisis response. “Twenty years from now, the



Rachel Bromberg, ICRA Executive Director



Asante Haughton, ICRA Consultant

standard of care may be to access non-police models instead of calling the police for mental health crises," she explains. For College registrants, this shift means adapting to emerging best practices and understanding the implications for crisis response in their own work. Bromberg underscores the importance of staying ahead of this transformation. "Every community is going to have one of these models. This is the way of the future."

ADDRESSING SAFETY CONCERNS

A common concern with non-police crisis response is the safety of both responders and individuals in crisis. Bromberg assures that in over 200 operational models, no crisis worker has been seriously injured or killed. Crisis response teams are trained to de-escalate situations before they can escalate into danger and are only dispatched to incidents without

weapons or immediate threats. "These teams handle situations where police involvement could lead to unnecessary escalation," Bromberg says. When crisis response teams are deployed, the risk of escalation is significantly decreased.

The safety record of these teams, combined with their effectiveness, demonstrates that non-police responses offer compassionate and effective support.

ACTIONS THAT REGISTRANTS CAN TAKE

Social workers and social service workers can take several steps to advocate for or implement non-police crisis response models in their communities:

- Engage with existing models like the TCCS for valuable insights.
- Advocate for municipal support, as local government backing is key.
- Collaborate with healthcare providers and social services to create a comprehensive response.
- Educate colleagues and policymakers about the benefits of non-police crisis services.
- Raise awareness by incorporating crisis response information into communications – something as simple as updated email signatures.

Registrants can also reach out to the ICRA to help get community responder models started via email at hello@icraconnect.org.

Haughton encourages registrants to embrace their power to drive change. "Our power is larger than we think."

THE FUTURE OF CRISIS RESPONSE

The future of crisis response is promising, with the ICRA's expansion continuing to provide cities with the resources and knowledge to develop and refine their services. Non-police models are proving successful in a wide range of communities, including those with high levels of immigration, poverty and diversity.

Haughton highlights the broader societal impact of the work done by College registrants. "Registrants often face challenges that reflect larger societal issues. Recognizing this allows them to organize and address these challenges head-on," he says.

Bromberg offers a compelling analogy: “Think of the 9-1-1 system, which was developed in the 1960s. It wasn’t always there, but within two generations, it became the standard. Non-police crisis response will surely also become the standard.”

The call to action is clear: advocate, get involved and support these transformative models. As the future of crisis response unfolds, shaping it requires active participation. By championing these services, we can build a more compassionate, effective system that prioritizes care over criminalization and healing over harm.

The College thanks Rachel Bromberg and Asante Haughton for speaking with us and sharing their experiences. In appreciation, the College has made a donation to the International Crisis Response Association.

CRISIS RESPONSE TEAMS BY REGION

Note: this information was taken from the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health

Below is a list of how to access mobile crisis response services across Ontario. Please note that this list includes both police and non-police interventions as each city/region may offer different partnerships.

To find a civilian mental health crisis program near you, visit <https://justmentalhealth.ca/programs> for a full comprehensive directory.

CENTRAL ONTARIO

- Barrie Police Service and CMHA Simcoe County
 - Local: 705-728-5044
 - Toll Free: 1-888-893-8333
- Durham Regional Police Service and Lakeridge Health
 - 905-433-4384
- Halton Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COAST) and CMHA Halton Region:
 - 1-877-825-9011
- Hamilton Police Service and St. Joseph’s Hospital Crisis Outreach and Support Team (COAST)
 - 905-972-8338

- OPP Orillia and CMHA Simcoe County
 - Local: 705-728-5044
 - Toll Free: 1-888-893-8333
- Peel Regional Police and CMHA Peel Dufferin
 - Local: 905-278-9036
 - Toll Free: 1-888-811-2222
- Toronto Community Crisis Service
 - Local: 2-1-1
- Toronto Gerstein Crisis Centre
 - Substance use crisis line: 416-962-0220
 - Mobile crisis intervention and follow-up team: 647-361-8333
 - Youthdale (up to 18): 416-363-9990
- York Support Services Network
 - 1-855-310-COPE (2673)

NORTHERN ONTARIO

- OPP Kenora and CMHA Kenora
 - Mobile Crisis Response Team (MCRT) 1-866-888-8988
- OPP North Bay and Nipissing Mental Health Housing & Support Services
 - 9-1-1 ACTIVATED SERVICE
- North Bay Regional Health Centre
 - Local: 705-495-8198
 - Toll Free: 1-800-352-1141
- Sudbury Mental Health and Addictions Centre, CMHA Sudbury/Manitoulin, Compass, Greater Sudbury Police Service – crisis line and mobile crisis team
 - Local: 705-675-4760
 - Toll Free: 1-877-841-1101
- CMHA Thunder Bay Crisis Response Services
 - Local: 807-346-8282
 - Toll-free: 1-888-269-3100

EASTERN ONTARIO

- Brockville General Hospital
 - Local: 613-345-4600
 - Toll Free: 1-866-281-2911
- Cornwall Police Service and Cornwall Community Hospital – crisis line and mobile crisis team
 - 1-866-996-0991
- Kingston & Frontenac Addiction and Mental Health Services
 - Local: 613-544-4229
 - Toll Free: 1-866-616-6005

- Lennox & Addington Addiction and Mental Health Services
 - Local: 613-354-7388
 - Toll Free: 1-800-267-7877
- Lindsay Kawartha Lakes Police Service and Ross Memorial Hospital
 - Local: 705-745-6484
 - Toll Free: 1-866-95-9933
- Ottawa Alternate Neighbourhood Crisis Response (ANCHOR)
 - 2-1-1
- Peterborough Police Service, OPP Peterborough County and CMHA Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge – Mobile Crisis Intervention Team
 - Local: 705-745-6484
 - Toll Free: 1-866-995-9933

SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

- Brantford Police Service, Brant County, St. Leonard's Community Service
 - 9-1-1
- Cambridge Waterloo Regional Police Service and CMHA Waterloo Wellington – Integrated Mobile Police and Crisis Team (IMPACT)
 - 9-1-1 (Available from 10 a.m. – 11 p.m.)
- Chatham-Kent CMHA Lambton Kent 24-7 Mental Health First Response Service:
 - 1-866-299-7447
- Guelph HERE 24/7 – Addictions, Mental Health & Crisis Services Waterloo-Wellington
 - Local: 519-821-3582
 - Toll Free: 1-844-437-3247
- London Police Service and CMHA Elgin Middlesex
 - Local: 519-433-2023
 - Toll Free: 1-866-933-2023
- CMHA Niagara
 - 1-866-550-5205
- Sarnia/Lambton CMHA Lambton Kent 24-7 Mental Health First Response Service:
 - 1-800-307-4319
- St. Thomas Police and CMHA Elgin-Middlesex
 - 9-1-1
- Waterloo Regional Police Service and CMHA Waterloo Wellington – Integrated Mobile Police and Crisis Team (IMPACT)
 - 9-1-1 (Available from 10 a.m. – 11 p.m.)
- CMHA Windsor-Essex County
 - 519-973-4435

CURIOUS ABOUT COMPLAINTS?

WE'VE GOT ANSWERS



➤ One of the key responsibilities of the College is to address concerns about the professional conduct of registrants. This work happens through our complaints and discipline processes. There are several ways that an issue can be brought forward to the College: through a complaint or through a report. Some complaints and reports, but not all, will move into the discipline process. It's normal for these processes to feel daunting to registrants, but they play a crucial role in ensuring public trust in the professions.

Below are some of the most common questions we receive from registrants about the complaints process. Stay tuned for future articles that delve into reports and discipline processes.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A COMPLAINT IS FILED AGAINST ME? WILL I BE NOTIFIED? SHOULD I HIRE A LAWYER?

If someone files a complaint against a registrant, the College will send them a written notice, usually by email. The registrant will have a chance to respond to the complaint, sharing their side of the story and will have at least 35 days to review the complaint and prepare a response.

Though not required, the College strongly recommends that registrants seek legal advice if a complaint has been filed against them. Consulting with a lawyer who is familiar with the College's complaints process can help registrants navigate the process and ensure they have properly addressed the concerns raised in the complaint in their response.

We understand that it can be a very stressful process for a registrant having a complaint filed against them. Registrants are not expected to respond to the complaint immediately, and they should take the time they need to review the information and speak with a lawyer. College staff in the Complaints and Discipline Department are also here to help answer any questions registrants may have about the complaints process.

IF A COMPLAINT IS FILED AGAINST ME, WILL MY CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION BE REVOKED?

No. If a complaint is filed against a registrant, the Complaints Committee does not have the legislative authority to revoke a certificate of registration. There is always a possibility that a complaint will lead to a discipline process where a registrants' certificate is

revoked; however, this is not the most likely outcome. The majority of complaints - 60% - go to no further action.

Of the remaining complaints, 30% result in the registrant receiving remedial guidance. Registrants may be required to get supervision and/or counselling or undergo specific professional development, but this information is not made public or shared on the Online Register.

A very small percentage are referred to the Discipline Committee. These cases are shared in Perspective and posted on the registrant's Online Register profile. Examples of cases that are referred to the Discipline Committee include sexual abuse, fraud and serious confidentiality breaches. It's also important to note that not all complaints referred to the Discipline Committee result in the revocation of the registrant's certificate.

Other outcomes include:

- a reprimand;
- restrictions on the registrant's registration, called "terms, conditions or limitations";
- imposing a fine; or
- suspending the certificate of registration.

CAN I STILL PRACTISE IF A COMPLAINT HAS BEEN FILED AGAINST ME?

In the majority of cases, a registrant can still practise if a complaint has been filed against them. In serious cases, such as cases involving allegations of sexual abuse, the College may ask a registrant to sign an undertaking agreeing not to practise and/or limiting their practice while the investigation is ongoing, or if the complaint is referred to Discipline, that restrictions be placed on the registrant pending the hearing.

WILL THE PUBLIC BE INFORMED THAT A COMPLAINT HAS BEEN FILED AGAINST ME?

No. The complaints process is a confidential process, meaning in most cases, the public will not be informed that a complaint has been filed against a registrant. However, if for example, the concerns raised in the complaint include serious allegations such as sexual abuse, the College can confirm and/or share the fact that the College is investigating.

WHAT MEASURES ARE TAKEN TO ENSURE THE VALIDITY OF A COMPLAINT?

Clients may be unsatisfied with the outcome of services for various reasons and file a complaint, but that doesn't mean anything unethical or unprofessional occurred.

All complaints go through a preliminary assessment when they are received to make sure that the information meets the requirements of a complaint. However, it is not the role of College staff to determine if a complaint received is "valid." As a screening Committee, the Complaints Committee reviews and determines the appropriate response to address the concerns raised in the complaint. At times, the Complaints Committee can decide to refuse to investigate a complaint if it meets certain criteria that meets a threshold of frivolous, vexatious or an abuse of process. These criteria are defined in the College's governing legislation (the [Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998](#)).

HOW LONG DOES THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS TAKE?

Generally, the investigation process can take from six months to a year to complete, meaning, before it goes to the [Complaints Committee](#) for review. There are several factors that may impact the time it takes for the College to complete an investigation - for example, a delay in receiving documents from third parties or the volume of complaints received at any given time by the College.

IF I DISAGREE WITH THE DECISION MADE, CAN I APPEAL?

No. There is no appeal process.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

As a first step, check out the [complaints information for registrants on our website](#). If your question isn't addressed on the webpage, contact the Complaints and Discipline Department at investigations@ocswssw.org.

EXTRA INFO: WHAT'S THE ROLE OF THE COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE?

The [Complaints Committee](#) acts as a screening body for complaints – they review complaints received and make decisions to address the concerns raised. They don't look for perfection in a registrant's conduct, but assess whether the behaviour meets the minimum requirements of professional standards. As mentioned above, most of the complaint cases (about 60%) go to no further action. This means that the Committee does not believe the conduct outlined in the complaint fell below professional standards.

In about 30% of complaints, the Committee orders the registrant to undergo a remedial process, such as completing a professional development course or being required to get supervision. The Complaints Committee only refers a very small percentage of complaints to the Discipline Committee. The discipline process, which includes a public hearing and penalties, is reserved for the most serious types of complaints such as accusations of sexual abuse or fraud.

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS - DECEMBER 10, 2024



➤ The public is welcome to watch Council meetings in real time via livestream. Livestream links are made available on this [webpage](#) as Council meetings take place.

DECEMBER 10, 2024

- Senior consultant Sheena Prasad from Diversio presented the identified trends from the Equity and Inclusion Data Initiative.
- Denitha Breau, RN, MSN, MBA, Registrar and CEO, presented her report to Council. The report provided updates under each strategic priority in the College's Strategic Plan and included information about the following: updates around practice resources for registrants including the latest Coffee with the College series; the recent Educational Forum; the College's new database upgrades and renewals.
- Council reviewed the Statement of Financial Position as of September 2024.
- Council reviewed the Statement of Operations for September 2024.
- Council reviewed the College's Risk Register.
- Council directed staff to conduct a comprehensive review and update of the College's bylaws to remove outdated provisions, incorporate current best practices, and enhance the clarity and accessibility of the bylaws for the public and College registrants.
- Council delegated oversight of revising the Practice Guidelines for Consent and Confidentiality with Children and Youth to the Standards of Practice Committee.
- Council approved the Funding for Therapy or Counselling for Persons Sexually Abused by Registrants Policy.
- Reports were received from the following statutory committees: Executive; Complaints; Discipline; Fitness to Practise; and Registration Appeals.
- Council approved administrative updates to the Per Diem and Expense Policy.
- Council approved the appointment of Crowe Soberman LLP as the College's auditors for the year ending December 31, 2025.
- Reports were received from the following non-statutory committees: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Standards of Practice; Election; Nominating; Finance and Audit; and Governance.

COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS - MARCH 6, 2025




> MARCH 6, 2025

- Guest Dr. Barbara Fallon presented to Council on her research from two studies: the [First Nations Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect \(2019\)](#), a national study on child welfare investigations across Canada, and the [Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect \(2018\)](#), a similar study conducted at the provincial level. Both studies focus on the incidence of reported child maltreatment and explore the characteristics of the children and families involved in child welfare investigations.
- Sanjay Govindaraj, Council Chair, provided his report to Council.
- Denitha Breau, RN, MSN, MBA, Registrar and CEO, presented her report to Council. The report provided updates under each strategic priority in the College's Strategic Plan and included information about the following: the College's upcoming Annual Meeting and Education Day; renewals and registrant-base data; upcoming Council elections in Electoral Districts 1, 2 and 5; and continued outreach efforts and engagement.
- Council reviewed the Statement of Financial Position as of December 2024.
- Council reviewed the Statement of Operations for December 2024.
- Council reviewed the College's Risk Register and Key Performance Indicators.
- Council reviewed and discussed the ongoing modernization of College bylaws, including key themes and recommendations with guest John Wilkinson from WeirFoulds LLP.
- Council received an update on the implementation of vulnerable sector check requirement as part of registration beginning in the fall 2025.
- Council received an update on the Equity and Inclusion Data Initiative.
- Council received an update on the College's governance management software, BoardEffect.
- Council reviewed and approved the College's new Fixed Assets Policy.
- Council approved that Dana Herriot, RSSW, be appointed as a member of the Executive Committee, to hold office for the remainder of this term (September 2025).
- Reports were received from the following statutory

committees: Executive; Complaints; Discipline; and Fitness to Practise.

- The Chair of the Registration Appeals Committee reported on its work and the unique mandate of the committee.
- Council reviewed the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee's report and confirmed their support of the committee's work.
- Reports were received from the following non-statutory committees: Standards of Practice; Election; Nominating; Finance and Audit; and Governance.

PRACTICE NOTES



➤ ARE YOU
PRACTISING IN
SCOPE?

PRACTICE NOTES

ARE YOU PRACTISING IN SCOPE?



Practice Notes is an educational tool designed to help Ontario social workers, social service workers, employers and members of the public gain a better understanding of recurring issues dealt with by the College's Professional Practice Department and Complaints Committee that may affect everyday practice. The notes offer general guidance only and College registrants with specific practice inquiries should consult the College, since the relevant standards and appropriate course of action will vary depending on the situation.

The Professional Practice Department regularly speaks to registrants interested in pursuing private practice as their primary employment or as a part-time supplement to their full-time role. This trend is growing, partly due to the increasing need for mental health services, the familiarity and availability of online service

platforms, and the flexibility private practice provides. Additionally, the Scopes of Practice for Social Work and Social Service Work are broad, allowing registrants to work with diverse client groups and practice modalities.

However, in addition to having the requisite competence² to work in private practice,³ registrants must determine whether their chosen modality is within their professional scope and based on a credible body of professional knowledge. The Scopes of Practice describe the proper scope of professional activities for social workers and social service workers, and provide some examples of workplace settings in which those professional activities may take place. Statements found in the Scopes of Practice provide three types of information: what each profession does, the methods it uses, and the purpose of its activities.⁴ Registrants

¹ Disclaimer: the term "member" and "registrant" are used interchangeably and synonymously as equivalent to the term "member" as used in the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998*, and the Regulations.

² Betteridge, Lise. "Practice Notes: "But How Do I Know If I'm Competent?" – Issue to Consider." *Perspective*, Fall 2013. https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/PN-How_Do_I_Know.pdf

³ "Practice Notes: Why You Need to Put the Time In Before Private Practice." *Perspective*, Fall 2023. <https://www.ocswssw.org/2023/10/14/why-you-need-to-put-in-the-time-before-private-practice/>

⁴ Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW), *Position Paper on Scopes of Practice*, October 2008.

must refer to this information to guide their work and ensure they are practising within the scope outlined by the College.

At times, Professional Practice staff speak with registrants who spend time and money training in an area outside their profession's scope of practice. They are disappointed to learn they cannot use this modality in their social work or social service work practice.

Similarly, Professional Practice staff hear from health benefit insurance providers who seek to determine whether a claim for services is fraudulent because a practice is not considered within the scope of practice.

Examples of practices the Professional Practice staff have been consulted on include the following:

- Christian counselling (as a standalone practice)
- Harmonic egg counselling
- Life/career/executive coaching
- Career counselling
- Financial social work/social service work
- Meditation (as a standalone practice)
- Cuddle therapy
- Infant sleep training and lactation consultant
- Therapeutic touch
- Placement of ear seeds
- Hypnotherapy/hypnosis
- Health and fitness coaching
- Trauma-sensitive or informed yoga (as a standalone practice)
- Reiki
- Tarot cards
- Supervising lactation and sleep consultants
- Pet therapy

Aspects of some of the above modalities might be able to be integrated into a registrant's social work or social service work practice, provided that the registrant has the necessary competence to do so and provided that the modality is used appropriately as a technique within the registrant's professional practice (rather than as a standalone practice). For example, in the context of a social work or social service work practice, it may

be appropriate at times to use meditation exercises, discuss career and financial goals or discuss a client's spiritual practices and support. However, registrants are "responsible for being aware of the extent and parameters of their competence and their professional scope of practice and limit their practice accordingly."⁵

It may be entirely inappropriate to incorporate certain modalities into social work or social service practice, for example modalities involving physical touch and/or where a client may be fully or partially undressed (for example, cuddle therapy, therapeutic touch, and massage). In such instances, clear and appropriate boundaries necessary for the provision of social work services and social service work services are inherently blurred. Registrants should ensure clients in these other modalities are not also social work or social service work clients.

In addition to the Scopes of Practice, registrants must also review the Standards of Practice, which state:

College registrants shall ensure that any professional recommendations or opinions they provide are supported by evidence and a credible body of professional social work or social service work knowledge.

Evidence can include information gathered from:

- direct observation;
- clinical sessions;
- professional meetings;
- Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing;
- collateral sources;
- documents and correspondence;
- clinical tools (e.g. diagnostic assessment measures, rating scales);
- research;
- training and continuing education;
- supervision; and/or
- relevant and reputable professional journals/literature.⁶

⁵ OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Principle II: Competence and Integrity, interpretation 2.1.1.

⁶ OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Principle II: Competence and Integrity, interpretation 2.1.7.

The Standards of Practice explain that a “body of professional social work knowledge and body of professional social service work knowledge relates to both theoretical and practical understanding. A body of knowledge can be attained through education, clinical experience, consultation and supervision, professional development and a review of relevant research and literature. Professional social work knowledge and professional social service work knowledge draw upon the knowledge base of other professions including sociology, psychology, anthropology, medicine, law and economics as well as their own respective distinct bodies of knowledge.”⁷

Registrants must always be prepared to explain the evidence and credible body of professional knowledge utilized in client care. This includes justifying why they select specific practice modalities and how the approach is appropriate for the client and their presenting issues and goals. “College registrants shall not offer a service and/or product that the registrant knows or ought reasonably to know is not likely to benefit the client and/or that is not relevant to the client’s needs.”⁸ Additionally, registrants must remember that all services provided must conform to College standards.⁹

Ensuring that a practice modality or approach benefits clients and meets their needs is of utmost importance. During Professional Practice consultations, it can be apparent that registrants have aligned with or are passionate about a specific modality. This could be problematic if a registrant wanted to use a particular modality when it was not indicated for a client. In practice, registrants must “distinguish their own needs and interests from those of their clients to ensure that, within professional relationships, clients’ needs and interests remain paramount.”¹⁰

PRACTISING OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF PRACTICE

When registrants practise and provide social work and social service work services, they must use their professional designation and/or title in communications with clients and/or the public.¹¹

Conversely, if registrants are practising using a modality that is outside the scope of practice, they must clearly identify that it is not part of their social work or social service work practice.

Registrants should be aware that it may not be appropriate to use their social work/ social service work protected titles in advertising non-social work/social service work services, like life coaching services, or on their life coaching (or other non-professional) website. Advertising for non-social work services/social service work services that relies on the use of title may be misleading to members of the public, and may create the impression that those other services fall within the practice of social work or social service work.

Consider the following scenario:

A registrant scheduled a Professional Practice consultation to discuss the launch of their life coaching practice. Professional Practice staff and the registrant reviewed how aspects of life coaching may overlap with social work and social service work practice; however, life coaching is not referenced in the Scopes of Practice for either profession.^{12,13}

Professional Practice staff stated that training for life coaching is not standardized. The registrant also identified that evidence for life coaching was emergent. Professional Practice staff suggested the registrant consider developing a different website from their social work or social service work website to advertise their

⁷ OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Glossary.

⁸ OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Principle III: Responsibility to Clients, interpretation 3.8.

⁹ OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Principle III: Responsibility to Clients, interpretation 3.9.

¹⁰ OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Principle I: Relationship with Clients, interpretation 1.8.

¹¹ OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Principle VII: Advertising and Communications, interpretation 7.2.1.

¹² OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Scope of Practice for Social Work.

¹³ OCSWSSW, *The Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, Third Edition, 2023*, Scope of Practice for Social Service Work.

life coaching business. They must also ensure separate billing for life coaching services from their social work or social service work services. The registrant was also informed that it could be a conflict of interest¹ to refer clients from their life coaching practice to their social work or social service work practice. Instead, if appropriate and indicated, the registrant should refer clients from their life coaching practice to another registrant for social work or social service work services. In a similar instance, clients from their social work or social service work practice should be referred to another life coach.

It was also discussed that registrants should still provide clients with information about the body of knowledge on which modalities are based when practising outside the scope of practice. This includes training the registrant has undertaken, the accepted approach or program for the modality, and any information regarding an oversight body or accepted standards for the modality.²

CONCLUSION

If a registrant embarks on private practice, they must have the requisite competence and use approaches based on evidence and a credible body of professional knowledge. These approaches must be in the client's best interest and within the registrant's scope of practice. The College of Regulated Psychotherapists of Ontario has a list on its [website](#) that provides five categories of psychotherapy and non-exhaustive examples of each modality, which may be helpful to registrants when considering these issues. Registrants should also reflect on the questions below:

- Is this modality supported by evidence from a credible body of knowledge?
- Is this approach indicated for the client and their presenting issues?
- If called into question, would I be able to defend my decision-making process and clearly explain why I used the modality I did?

If registrants want to utilize a modality that is outside the scope of practice, they must ensure they:

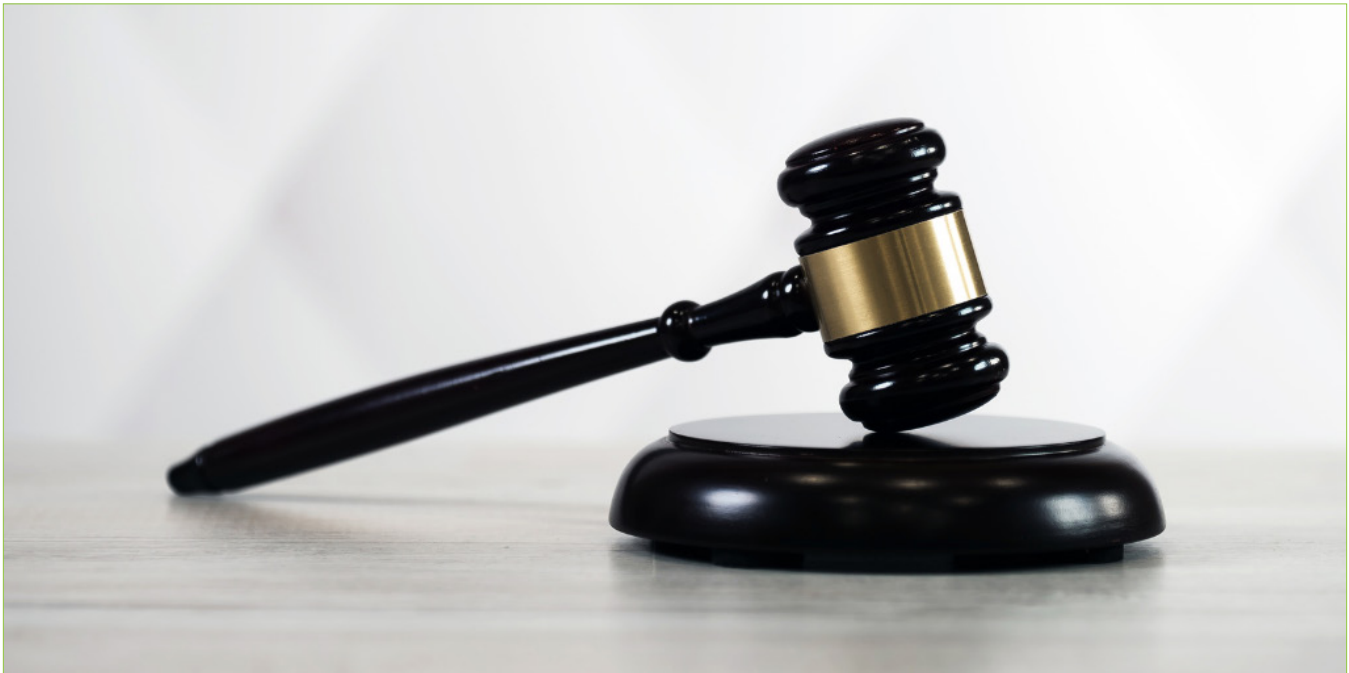
- Do not use it in their social work or social service work practice;
- Have clear boundaries between their practices, which may include in some cases ensuring they do not use that modality on social work or social service work clients;
- Provide clear information to clients about the proposed modality; and
- Invoice appropriately.

If you have questions about this issue or want to discuss further, please contact the Professional Practice Department at practice@ocswssw.org or [book a professional practice consult](#).

¹ A College registrant is in a "conflict of interest" when they have a personal, financial or professional interest or obligation that may influence how they carry out their professional responsibilities. A conflict of interest may be actual or perceived, the latter meaning that a reasonable person, informed of all the circumstances, would have concerns that the interest or obligation may influence the registrant in the exercise of their professional responsibilities. A mere possibility or suspicion of influence does not in itself create a conflict of interest.

² Blake, Pamela. "Practice Notes: Incorporating Adjunct Techniques – What Are The Considerations?" *Perspective*, Fall 2009. https://www.ocswssw.org/wp-content/uploads/PN-Incorporating_Adjunct_Techniques.pdf

DISCIPLINE DECISION SUMMARIES



➤ The College publishes summaries of decisions of the Discipline Committee and/or provides links to full-text, neutralized versions of its decisions. Information that is subject to a publication ban or that could reveal the identity of witnesses or clients, including the name of the facility, has been removed as necessary, or has been anonymized. As of January 2019, decisions are also available via the [Canadian Legal Information Institute](#) (CanLII).

By publishing decisions, the College endeavours to:

- Illustrate for social workers, social service workers and members of the public, what does or does not constitute professional misconduct
- Provide social workers and social service workers with direction about the College's standards of practice and professional behaviour, to be applied in future, should they find themselves in similar circumstances.
- Implement the Discipline Committee's decision.
- Provide social workers, social service workers and members of the public with an understanding of the College's discipline process.

February 6, 2025

Mary Ann Angeles #813050

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of

Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Mary Ann Angeles is guilty of professional misconduct. View the decision here: [Mary Ann Angeles #813050 \(Discipline Decision Summary and Reasons\)](#)

January 13, 2025

Osaro Sylvester #817628

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Osaro Sylvester is guilty of professional misconduct. View the decision here: [Osario Sylvester #817628 \(Discipline Decision Summary and Reasons\)](#)

December 18, 2024

John Fellows #806992

[Undertaking, Acknowledgement and Agreement](#)
(Written Decision pending)

November 25, 2024

Sean McQuarrie #822084

The Discipline Committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers found that Sean McQuarrie is guilty of professional misconduct. View the decision here: [Sean McQuarrie #822084 \(Discipline Decision Summary and Reasons\)](#)

COLLEGE UPDATES AND REMINDERS



➤ MARK YOUR CALENDARS – REGISTRATION FOR AMED 2025 WILL OPEN SOON!

We are happy to announce that the College's [Annual Meeting and Education Day \(AMED\)](#) will take place on June 3, 2025. This year's theme is *Advancing Innovation and Public Protection*.

The Annual Meeting, keynote address and afternoon educational sessions will be hosted virtually via an online conference platform. Registration for this year's virtual event will open in early May. Stay tuned for more information!

For questions or inquiries about AMED, contact the Communications Department at AMED@ocswssw.org.

REGISTER FOR UPCOMING COFFEE WITH THE COLLEGE SESSIONS

The College is pleased to invite registrants to join one of our next dates in our interactive series, [Coffee with the College](#).

Upcoming session dates

- [Wednesday, May 14, 2025](#) from noon to 1 p.m.
- [Wednesday, June 11, 2025](#) from noon to 1 p.m.

Hosted by the Professional Practice Team, this engaging lunch and learn discussion explores some of the most common ethical and practice dilemmas that registrants encounter. Registrants will also be able to ask questions and engage in live consultations with the Professional Practice staff.

For questions or inquiries regarding Coffee with the College, contact the Professional Practice Department at practice@ocswssw.org.

MISSED THE EDUCATIONAL FORUM? WATCH IT ONLINE!

The 2024 Educational Forum recording is now available to watch on the [College website](#) or [YouTube channel](#).

The College's Director of Professional Practice, Christina Van Sickel, MSW, RSW, facilitated a panel discussion entitled *Touchpoints of Trust: Setting Boundaries and Navigating Consent*. Panelists explored

how registrants can set appropriate boundaries with clients and the various aspects that need to be considered when navigating conversations about consent.

For questions or inquiries about the Educational Forum, contact the Communications Department communications@ocswssw.org.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN ELECTORAL DISTRICTS NO. 1, NO. 2 AND NO. 5

Beginning on April 30, registrants who practise in Electoral Districts No. 1, No. 2 and No. 5 will have the opportunity to vote for the Council members from their respective district.

Please note that the social service worker position in Electoral District No. 5 has already been acclaimed. For elections in Electoral District No. 5, only social workers may participate.

We encourage pertinent registrants to participate in this important process. The deadline to vote is May 30 at 5 p.m. EST.

More information about Council elections, including the voting process, can be found the [College's website](#).

For questions or inquiries about Council elections, contact elections@ocswssw.org.

COMPLETE THE 2025 CCP

The [Continuing Competence Program \(CCP\)](#) is a mandatory requirement for all College registrants except those in the [retired class of registration](#). As part of the 2025 CCP, registrants are required to review the following practice resources:

- [Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice](#)
- [AMED Educational Session Video – The Slippery Slope to Shattered Trust](#)
- [Educational Forum Video – Touchpoints of Trust: Setting Boundaries and Navigating Consent](#) (Note: for those registrants who watched the Forum in 2024 and listed it as a learning activity for their 2024 CCP, a rewatch is recommended, but not required, to complete their 2025 CCP.)
- [Practice Notes: “But How Do I know If I’m Competent” – Issues to Consider](#)

- [Practice Notes: The Importance of Professional Judgment](#)

For questions or inquiries about the CCP, contact the Professional Practice Department at CCP@ocswssw.org.

COMING SOON! RESULTS FROM THE EQUITY AND INCLUSION DATA INITIATIVE

The College is pleased to announce that we will be sharing insights and trends from the first year of the [Equity and Inclusion Data Initiative](#) in the upcoming Annual Report.

Reporting on this initiative is an important step towards equity and inclusion as we aim to establish a benchmark and provide insight into the degree to which the diversity of the Ontario public is reflected in College registration. The Annual Report will come out in late May.

For questions or inquiries about the Equity and Inclusion Data Initiative, contact inclusion@ocswssw.org.

REMINDER: SIGN UP FOR THE EMPLOYER COMMUNIQUÉ

The College encourages social work and social service work employers to subscribe to the [Employer Communiqué!](#)

The *Employer Communiqué* is the College's official quarterly publication for employers of social workers and social service workers.

The College invites registrants to share this publication with their employers. [Click on this link to sign up.](#)

BULLETIN BOARD



➤ CHANGE OF INFORMATION NOTIFICATION

If you change employers or move, please advise the College in writing within 30 days. The College is required to have the current business address of its registrants available to the public. Notification of change of address can be done by accessing the [Online Portal](#) or by sending the new employer address to the College by email to info@ocswssw.org. Please provide your College registration number when you communicate with us.

If you change your name or use a different name other than the one you registered with when providing social work or social service work services, you must advise the College of both your former name(s) and your new name(s) in writing and include a copy of the change of name certificate or marriage certificate or other official government document for our records. The information may be sent by email to info@ocswssw.org or by mail to the College office address.

If you wish to update your education, you must ask your academic institution to forward an official transcript with the institution seal and/or stamp directly to the College, by mail, or by email to info@ocswssw.org. We also accept transcripts that are shared directly with

us through third party platforms (such as MyCreds™ or Parchment) by email to info@ocswssw.org.

If your information changes, please advise the College in writing within 30 days. This includes:

CHANGE OF PREFERRED EMAIL ADDRESS

The College requires all registrants to provide a valid, unique email address. It is essential that you keep your email address up to date to ensure you receive important updates or information from us. To access the [Online Portal](#) and manage your registrant account, please use the preferred email address on file.

CHANGE OF BUSINESS ADDRESS

The College is required to have the current business address of its registrants available to the public. Notification of change of address can be done by accessing the [Online Portal](#) or by sending the new employer address to the College by email to info@ocswssw.org. Please provide your College registration number when you communicate with us.

CHANGE OF NAME

If you change your name or use a different name other than the one you registered with when providing social work or social service work services, you must advise

the College of both your former name(s) and your new name(s) in writing and include a copy of the change of name certificate or marriage certificate or other official government document for our records. The information may be sent by email to info@ocswssw.org or by mail to the College office address.

UPDATES TO ACADEMIC INFORMATION

If you wish to update the academic information on file, you must ask your academic institution to forward an official transcript with the institution seal and/or stamp directly to the College, by mail, or by email to info@ocswssw.org. We also accept transcripts that are shared directly with us through third party platforms (such as MyCreds™ or Parchment) by email to info@ocswssw.org.

Perspective is the official registrant publication of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers.

HOW TO REACH US

The College is open Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

250 Bloor Street East Suite 1000
Toronto, Ontario M4W 1E6

Telephone: 416-972-9882
Toll-Free: 1-877-828-9380
Fax: 416-972-1512
Email: info@ocswssw.org
Website: ocswssw.org

FOLLOW US

LinkedIn: [Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers](#)
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YouTube: [OCSWSSW / I'OTSTTSO](#)
Instagram: [@ocswssw_otsttso](#)

If you require this publication in an alternate format, contact the College at 1-877-828-9380 or communications@ocswssw.org

WHO TO CONTACT AT THE COLLEGE

COMMUNICATIONS

For inquiries regarding the College's website, newsletter, Annual Report and other publications, please email: communications@ocswssw.org.

COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINE

For information on complaints, discipline and mandatory reporting, please email: investigations@ocswssw.org.

If you are aware of any individual who is illegally using a protected title and/or holding themselves out as a social worker or social service worker, you may report this information to the College at titleprotection@ocswssw.org.

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

If you wish to contact the Office of the Registrar, or are seeking information related to the College Council, please email oor@ocswssw.org.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

For professional practice inquiries, please email: practice@ocswssw.org.

For inquiries related to the Continuing Competence Program (CCP), please email: ccp@ocswssw.org.

REGISTRATION AND RENEWALS

For general and renewal inquiries, please email: info@ocswssw.org.