

Rapport

Why Should I Register With The Register?

What the Canadian Register Offers Psychologists

Myles Genest, Ph.D.¹ - Vice-President, CRHSPP

I first applied to be listed on the Canadian Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology (CRHSPP) in 1987. For me, the process was frustrating and time-consuming. I had to have supervision-hours certified by former supervisors, had to secure and copy records and transcripts (I had thought I was done with all that!), and I had to complete a lengthy application form. It has turned out that it was time and effort well spent. In the early 1980's, psychological organizations were told repeatedly by private and public sector decision-makers that the licensing of psychologists was not credible because the profession also routinely registered/licensed psychologists who were not trained to provide health services. How could an agency know whether it was securing someone qualified to offer health services?

The message was clear: Until the profession either eliminated such provisions or created a credible, national, readily accessible vehicle to identify appropriately qualified health-service psychologists, there was no prospect for enhanced funding. The credibility and funding of all psychological practice was in jeopardy. This was a high-priority, national issue for organized professional psychology in Canada.

In 1985, at the initiative of Canadian psychological associations and regulatory boards, the CRHSPP was formed, a national credentialing body for health-service psychologists, which could address the concerns about the governance of psychological practice in Canada. The federal government was sufficiently convinced of the legitimacy of the CRHSPP credential that it then used CRHSPP registration to determine whether or not a psychologist was eligible for exemption from charging GST on services. The Register grew quickly: My registration number, a scant two years after CRHSPP was formed, was 3069.

What does the Register do?

- It credentials psychologists who provide health services. Because the Register maintains a national standard, its criteria for listing may differ somewhat from those of the regulator in a particular jurisdiction. (And because it has to certify a credential, applicants have to provide sufficient information for their qualifications to be vetted; thus, the lengthy application form.)
- CRHSPP publishes the Register of all psychologists who meet its standards. This Register is provided to third-party payers, and is made available to groups and individuals who request it.
- CRHSPP maintains a website with searchable listings from the Register. Members of the public, third-party payers, and other psychologists all use the site to help identify health-service psychologists in particular areas of the country, and with particular expertise.
- Many psychologists believe that the public has insufficient access to psychological services. CRHSPP's objectives include promoting that access, through promoting better funding and increased awareness of what psychology has to offer.
- In a recent survey of CRHSPP registrants and potential registrants, psychologists said that they would value more continuing education opportunities, and in particular, web-based opportunities. The Register has sponsored a variety of CE workshops, and has expanded that to the online environment.
- I found it striking that in that survey, many psychologists said that they believed that we have insufficient presence and credibility in this country. Psychologists said that there is a vacuum in terms of helping the public and decision-makers to understand what psychologists do, how what we do differs from that of other professionals, and how people can access psychological services. As a credentialing organization, CRHSPP cannot lobby on behalf of psychologists. Nevertheless, the Register is increasing its activities in educating the public and third-party payers about the value of psychological services and the distinctions between psychologists and other health professionals. In this respect, the Register continues to expand its "advocacy" role.

Like most of my colleagues who were surveyed, I applied to be listed on the Register because I recognized the value of having a credential that was recognized nationally, and I wanted to be part of an organization that could represent and promote the value of psychological services in Canada. Confirmation of exemption from the GST was also important.

All health-service psychologists in the country are now eligible for the GST-exemption. I have, nonetheless, remained with the Register and joined its Board because I continue to believe that it is important to have a national credential, and to promote the national credential to the public, politicians, insurers, and others. CRHSPP can also serve as a forum for psychologists to communicate with each other (e.g., it has recently launched a primary-care listserv), to access continuing educational opportunities, and to receive other benefits.

Until now, Master's-level psychologists, who are eligible to practice in their jurisdictions, have been able to apply for listing on the Register. Last year, the bylaws were amended so that Master's-level registration ended on January 31, 2011. Only doctoral-level psychologists are now eligible to join CRHSPP.

Please go to www.crhsp.ca for information and to download a Membership Application. If you have any questions about the Register, I would be pleased to hear from you (myles.genest@genestpsychology.com). As for my complaint about the onerous application process, part of the problem was that I had not been terribly organized about keeping records, so that I was tracking down information that was not right at hand. My impression is that psychologists trained in the last couple of decades have been more systematic about that, and I expect it would be less trouble now. Nonetheless, if you want a credential, there is no way past having to provide evidence that you deserve it.

CRHSPP is in the process of a major renewal. Its website, initiatives, and benefits are all under development by the Board. Expect to see and hear more of us; I hope you'll join us and be part of it.

1 Genest Psychological Services Incorporated, Halifax

Editorial

Dr Ester Cole

The New Year often promises better beginnings, and the Board of Directors is pleased to celebrate and share with members the new website as part of its renewal process through a multi-year strategic plan. Website enhancements and extensive upgrades will make it easier for all to communicate, receive and exchange timely information; contribute to a Listserv, and a newsletter which will be posted several times a year. CRHSPP's website will update members about useful resources, tools, Continuing Education opportunities, new policies that impact services; collaborative consultations with organizations at the provincial, territorial, national and international levels. Your views and feedback about the dynamic 2012 website are welcome.

In the spirit of providing members with useful and effective information, this newsletter includes the following:

An article by Dr. Craig Turner entitled "Do I Need a Professional Will?"

Readers will find succinctly organized information for the development of a professional will, as well as suggested guidelines concerning a professional executor, legal advice; confidential record-keeping and related practice materials leading to the development of an action plan.

An article by Dr. Myles Genest answers a key question – "Why Should I Register with the Register? What the Canadian Register Offers Psychologists"

An article by Dr. Ester Cole entitled "Understanding Young Adolescents – Handout for Parents, Caregivers and Educators"

It is the first in a series of handouts planned for service providers.

A new column will include listings of useful websites for members.

The first sample is included in this issue.

The publications in this copy are in part complementary to the recently published third edition of the gold standard text edited by Dr. David Evans *Law, Standards, and Ethics in the Practice of Psychology* (Carswell, 2011).

Readers may want to reflect on this valuable resource, and consider contributing to forthcoming CRHSPP's newsletters. Handouts, position papers, website suggestions, and local developments would be appreciated.

Please forward materials to me at ester.cole@sympatico.ca.

DO I NEED A PROFESSIONAL WILL?

L. Craig Turner, Ph. D., C. Psych. - President, CRHSPP

Like many of you who are private practitioners, part-time or full-time, I focus the majority of my energies on my patients and to provide them with the best health psychology service possible. I don't always spend adequate time focusing on the 'business of practice' issues such as insurance and marketing.

To be even more candid, other than an informal agreement between myself and another CRHSPP colleague, where we both agreed to 'look after' each other's practice in the case of our unfortunate demise, I had not looked closely at the need for a Professional Will.

This article is intended to provide you with some information about Professional Wills and to outline some details to consider if you decide to develop one for yourself. To be specific I am hoping this article, for those of you who have not already developed your own Professional Will, will give you some useful information and that it will lead you to get legal advice and direction on the development of a Professional Will.

As part of the preparation for this article I contacted all the provincial and territorial regulators regarding their position on Professional Wills. I received a 91% response rate from them. As it stands now three provinces (i.e. Quebec, Newfoundland & Labrador, and Prince Edward Island) do not require Professional Wills and have no current plans to make them a requirement; four provinces (i.e. New Brunswick, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan) do not require Professional Wills but are in the process of researching and debating the concept; two provinces (i.e. Ontario, Nova Scotia) while not requiring Professional Wills per se do require the private psychologist to formally identify who will oversee the dissolution of their practice due to incapacity or death (e.g. Custodian of Records), and finally one province (i.e. British Columbia) has clearly been the most proactive in this area by hosting numerous workshops and requiring all private psychologists to formally identify a Professional Executor. Please note that some provinces (e.g. Quebec) use the term Notary instead of Lawyer. For the purposes of brevity this writer is using the title Lawyer to refer to both. I believe it is only a matter of time until all provincial and territorial regulators require if not an actual Professional Will at least some type of formal verification of arrangements made by each psychologist regarding their practice.

The completion of a Professional Will is a good way to ensure that at least the most important bases are covered. In addition to meeting the requirement for naming a Professional Executor, the completion of a Professional Will should also include the name of your lawyer, specify record location(s) and information necessary for access, and include a list of clients to be contacted and their phone numbers. Your Professional Will should also include; information on how to access your voice mail, details about your insurance carrier, and may also include your wishes as it relates to client involvement in any type of memorial service. In addition your Professional Will may also include information on what you want communicated to your clients after you are gone.

The completion of a Professional Will is intended to make it much easier and less stressful for both family and executor to take care of what will need to be done in relation to your practice.

Below you will see I have identified 20 points (Guidelines) for you to consider when developing a Professional Will. The list is in no means exhaustive and is only intended to provide some initial guidance to you.

GUIDELINES

1. **What a Professional Will is not:** A Professional Will is not a substitute for a Personal Last Will and Testament. It is intended to give authority and instructions to your Professional Executor regarding your psychology practice, in the event of your incapacitation or death. In addition, this is not intended as legal advice regarding what you need to do. Consult a lawyer and anyone providing you with estate planning advice to see if this meets your needs and is consistent with any other documents you may already have in place.
2. **This is not the only way to do it:** There are many versions or styles of Professional Wills. The following guidelines will hopefully assist you in the process of thinking through the nature of your professional practice and to suggest a number of possible options and issues for you to consider in providing instructions for your Professional Executor.
3. **Professional Executor:** Your Professional Executor should be a Registrant who is certified / licensed / registered for the autonomous practice of psychology in the province / territory where you practise. Meet with this person as part of the process of writing your Professional Will in order to familiarize her/him with your practice and discuss what you would like done. Your Professional Will is most likely to be carried out effectively if your Professional Executor is involved in the planning process.
4. **Backup Professional Executor:** If, for any reason, your designated Professional Executor is unavailable or unable to perform this function, it is wise to have at least one backup.
5. **Authority for Professional Executor:** You need to give your Professional Executor the authority to take appropriate action with your records, and you also want him/her to be able to delegate activities to others so that no single person becomes overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task.
6. **Legal Advice:** Seek a knowledgeable lawyer and use her/his expertise in determining the details of how your professional affairs will be handled. A final copy of your Professional Will should be filed with your lawyer. Specifying who your lawyer is and how to get hold of her/him will expedite your Professional Executor's task. It should be noted however, that a Professional Will can be completed without involving a lawyer.
7. **Executor of Personal Will:** The presence and availability of a Personal Will strengthens the effectiveness of a Professional Will. Ensure that the name of your Personal Executor and how to contact her/him will allow your Professional Executor to reach this person quickly. There will be a number of things that the two of them will need to discuss and coordinate on your behalf.
8. **Client / Patient Records:** Specify the location(s) of your current and past client / patient records. While it is important that the entire file be legible, it is especially important that the face sheet, with the client's/ patient's name, phone number and address be easily understood.
9. **Test Materials:** The Professional Executor should ensure that all psychological test materials are maintained in a confidential and secure manner.
10. **Billing and Financial Records:** Specify the location of your billing and financial records. This will allow your Professional Executor to facilitate the completion of any outstanding billing and financial transactions related to your practice in an orderly manner.
11. **Appointment Book:** This will be one of the first things your Professional Executor will need. Ready access to this information will allow clients with whom you have appointments scheduled to be contacted personally prior to their arriving at your office.
12. **E-Mail Address Password and Voice Mail Access Code:** Having this information readily available will allow your voice mail message to be changed to indicate what has happened and/or who to contact and will facilitate response to any voice mail or e-mail messages in a timely fashion.
13. **Your Keys:** Your Professional Executor should be easily able to locate the keys to the various things she/he will need to access, such as your office, filing cabinets and storage facility.
14. **Further Assistance in Locating/Accessing Records:** List any all people who might be helpful in locating or accessing your client, billing and financial records, your appointment book, phone numbers, etc.
15. **Location of Copies of Professional Will:** The original should be filed with your personal will and copies be given to your lawyer and Professional Executor.
16. **Notification of Current and Past Clients:** The general notification of your death (or incapacitation) to your clients/patients can be done in a number of ways. For example, it can be done by phone, in writing, and/or through a notice in the newspaper. This can be left to the discretion of your Professional Executor or specified by you. Similarly, you can be specific regarding which clients/patients should be offered face-to-face meetings in the short term vs. being given referrals. Also, you can decide to whom you want referrals made or you can leave these decisions to your Professional Executor.
17. **Professional Liability Insurance:** Your malpractice carrier should be notified of your death as soon as possible. This will allow arrangements for any additional coverage that might be required (depending on the type of policy you have) to be made right away. Major carriers may provide additional coverage if they are notified in writing by your authorized representative within 60 days. This will require proof of your death.
18. **Client Records:** The Professional Executor will need to make arrangements for copies of your records to be sent to your clients'/patients' new psychologists and for storing, releasing and disposing of your records as per the Code of Conduct and Practice Advisories in your province/territory.
19. **Reimbursement of Your Professional Executor:** Your Professional Executor will be spending a lot of time implementing your wishes. It is important that the amount allocated and conditions under which it will be paid; be clearly delineated in the Registrant's Personal Will. You should discuss this with your Professional Executor in advance.
20. **For Further Information:** For immediate assistance, consult with fellow Registrants knowledgeable about Professional Wills and the role of the Professional Executor or put your question(s) in writing to your regulatory body.

I hope the above information has been helpful to your considering and developing your own Professional Will. Please share your experience including consultations with colleagues and professional resources such as regulatory bodies and lawyers.

Author's Note: The timely responses from the various provincial / territorial regulatory bodies is appreciated. A significant amount of information contained in this article was taken, with permission from the College of Psychologists of British Columbia, Quality Assurance Committee's Professional Will Materials 2008 document. The author and CRHSPP greatly appreciate the College of Psychologists of British Columbia's willingness to share this information with our membership.

UNDERSTANDING YOUNG ADOLESCENTS

Handout for Parents, Caregivers and Educators

Dr. Ester Cole

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Young adolescents face a multiplicity of changes associated with this developmental stage. These changes include cognitive, physical, psychological and social growth. Each youngster has of course, unique characteristics. In general, however, during this phase of development, young adolescents tend to fluctuate between childhood and emerging maturity in several areas. As such, the transition into adolescence tends to bring about rapid changes and new capacities.

The first area of growth involves physical development with its gender specific characteristics. As children enter puberty, they may have concerns about how they are changing. They may have uneasy feelings about maturing too fast and looking different than many of their friends. Others may worry about the fact that their friends are growing up faster, and may feel that they are lagging behind in some way.

The second area of growth is associated with cognitive development. Young adolescents are gradually moving from more concrete thinking to more formal, abstract thought. Periods of growth and periods of plateau typify this stage. In earlier years, children are interested in facts and skills. With the development of higher order thinking capabilities, adolescents generally become more involved with values. They learn to hypothesize and try to relate issues to personal experiences; start to have a better understanding of the past; become more interested in social issues; begin to plan for the near future and become more self-conscious about their social position and how others react to them.

The third area of development relates to the social/emotional growth of adolescents. They may experience a range of powerful emotions and reactions to events and people as their sense of identity emerges. Adolescent self-awareness and self-absorption may be related to confusion and subjective descriptions of self. They may also experience conflicting feelings about the self, authority and independence. For example, feelings of discomfort related to physical growth may result in moodiness. Sensitivity to body image may be expressed at times as bragging about appearance. Negative comments may also result in exaggerated reactions which seem dramatic to the adults in their lives.

The developmental tasks facing adolescents include: (a) a gradual acceptance of one's physique and sexual role, (b) attainment of emotional independence, (c) preparation for choice making and the future, (d) establishment of new friendships and social contacts, and (e) building values and morals. These tasks are a tall order for youngsters who broaden their understanding, knowledge, values and interests while coping with their own confusion, transitions, and expectations of others in their lives.

As a result, their developmental needs include: (a) freedom intellectually to explore, question and at times challenge, (b) positive communication, (c) supportive attitudes, (d) greater autonomy, (e) acceptance by peers and adults, (f) a clear value system, (g) psychological security and a sense of competence, and (h) opportunities to test their beliefs, exercise choices and new capacities.

When these types of needs are met consistently, adolescents tend to develop better coping skills, resiliency, and higher self-esteem. This means that they evaluate their qualities and attributes more positively and feel well integrated within their social reference group. Because self-esteem and validation are important within the home and school environments, educational goals across the curriculum aim to develop in students self reliance, adaptability, responsibility, problem-solving abilities, effective communication skills, realistic self-appraisal and esteem for others. Strong home/school ties are an important partnership in supporting the adults of tomorrow.

Helpful Websites

The ABCs of Mental Health at www.hincksdellcrest.org/abc has launched its new website early in 2012. Culturally sensitive, it provides two free, web-based Resources for teachers and parents. Mental health service providers will find in it useful information for consultation about children and adolescents. The information is easy to access and includes: a) ideas and suggestions for promoting good mental health, b) guidelines for understanding differences; how changes occur as children get older, and how special needs may affect mental health, c) descriptions of behaviours that might indicate problems, d) a framework for knowing when behaviour is normal, when monitoring or action is needed, and when to refer to a specialist. The website sections also include specific "hand-on" strategies for implementation at school and at home.

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