

## **Collaboration with ACPRO on a working definition of psychologist impairment**

Through a joint effort between the Council of Professional Associations of Psychologists (CPAP) and Association of Canadian Psychology Regulatory Organizations (ACPRO) a definition for psychologist impairment has been developed. All CPAP member Associations have endorsed this definition, making this the first nationally recognized and acknowledged definition of this important concept. For more information, please see below.

### **Psychologist Impairment**

Conditions in (a), (b), (c), and (d) must be present.

Psychologists shall not engage in the practice of psychology when the psychologist is, or could reasonably be expected by peers to be, impaired in judgement or practice.

#### Determining Impairment

A. Presence of one (or more) of the following conditions:

- Mental Health conditions
- Cognitive conditions
- Pharmacological abuse or pharmacologically induced conditions
- Substance abuse or induced conditions
- Physical illness
- Life condition or another dysfunction not noted above

B. The above-noted condition is sufficient to impair or compromise, or could reasonably be expected to impair or compromise, the ability to deliver psychological services at a competent level.

C. The above-noted condition is an obstacle to the psychologist's self-care and the psychologist is not receiving sufficient care in relation to this condition or the obstacles that it poses.

D. The psychologist deems themselves, or is deemed by others, to be unable to provide services in a manner that ensures that their clients are not adversely affected by the condition.

E. Ethical issues are at risk of arising in relation to (a), (b), (c) and (d).

#### Responding to Impairment

If such a condition develops, the psychologist will not initiate new professional relationships. If such a condition develops after a professional relationship has been initiated, the psychologist shall terminate the relationship in an appropriate manner, shall notify the client in writing of the termination, and shall assist the client in obtaining suitable alternative services with due regard for the welfare of the client or other recipient of services when feasible.

### Self-Care When Impaired

When a psychologist is deemed to have impairment or to be at significant risk of impairment, by self-identification or when concerns about their professional competence have been brought to their attention, they shall take appropriate measures such as obtaining professional consultation or assistance or seeking a formal assessment. If a member meets the above criteria for impairment, they will limit, suspend, or terminate work-related duties and engage in a self-care plan.

This is a national shared definition of psychologist impairment. It is up to individual jurisdictions to determine how, or if, they will adopt the national definition as it is not a national standard.