



Zero Tolerance for Sexual Misconduct

Approved	Revised	Related Policy	Supporting Documents
March 2022	n/a	RPN-01.0 (2022)	CTA 2(ag)(i)(ii)(iii); 4(a)(b)(c)

POLICY

The NSCCT takes a position of “zero tolerance” concerning all forms of sexual misconduct by registrants of the College. Any act of sexual misconduct is a misuse of power and a betrayal of trust. In recognition of the inherent power differential and vulnerability of clients within the client-therapist relationship, the NSCCT treats all such cases as egregious breaches of the *CCPA Code of Ethics (2020)* and *CCPA Standards of Practice (2021)*.

All complaints to the College regarding sexual misconduct by a registrant will be robustly perused.

- Where there is a finding of either professional misconduct or conduct unbecoming that constitutes sexual abuse, ***the College will seek the revocation of the counselling therapist's licence.***
- Where there is a finding of professional misconduct or conduct unbecoming arising from a finding of sexual misconduct that does not constitute sexual abuse, ***the College will seek a licensing sanction against the counselling therapist commensurate with the relevant circumstances.***

Throughout the process the College will remain committed to ensuring a fair process that maintains a safe and emotionally supportive environment for clients to disclose their experience.

Note: A detailed explanation of sexual misconduct in counselling therapy, the standards that apply, relevant definitions and a guide to reflecting that might present in your practice setting can be found in [Regulatory Practice Notice - 01.0: Sexual Misconduct.](#)

PURPOSE

To uphold the College's commitment to protect the public, maintain public trust, and preserve the integrity of the counselling therapy profession.

To recognize the psychological and emotional impact sexual misconduct has on victims by providing a safe process for the disclosure of sexual misconduct complaints against a registrant.

To help ensure registrants are aware of NSCCT's *zero tolerance* approach to sexual misconduct in the profession.

Commitment to Responding to Complaints Alleging Sexual Misconduct

The College investigates *all* complaints of alleged sexual misconduct against counselling therapists.

- There is no time-limit for filing a sexual misconduct complaint.
- There are no fees or costs to you involved in filing a complaint.

In 2022, as part of its strategic plan, the College committed to *redoubling efforts to prevent, collect and investigate sexual misconduct complaints and to impose appropriate discipline as warranted.*

The College recognizes the authority of the Complaints Committee and the Professional Conduct Committee under the *Counselling Therapists Act* and *Regulations* to make findings and to determine the disposition of matters brought before them.

As a party in a proceeding under the *Counselling Therapists Act*, the College takes the following positions:

- Sexual misconduct involving a current client or a vulnerable former client constitutes professional misconduct as defined by the *Counselling Therapists Act*;
- Sexualized conduct by a counselling therapist with a former client that runs contrary to the stipulations of the *Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice* and *Regulatory Practice Notice: 01.0* also constitutes professional misconduct within the meaning of the *Counselling Therapists Act*;
- Sexualized conduct by a counselling therapist that is entirely unconnected to the counselling therapist's practice, or their status as a counselling therapist, or the profession may constitute "conduct unbecoming" as defined in the *Act* if the sexualized conduct tends to bring discredit upon the counselling therapy profession;

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- A licensing sanction creates a disciplinary record for the counselling therapist, and can include one or more of a reprimand, conditions or restrictions, periods of suspension from practice, or a revocation of the counselling therapist's licence;
- Where touch is used as a clinically indicated therapeutic procedure but is performed contrary to acceptable standards in a manner that does not constitute sexual misconduct, the College will consider whether to address the actions of the counselling therapist as “incompetence” as defined in the *Counselling Therapists Act* or as a matter that should lead to a non-sanction outcome such as advice, remedial education or a caution;
- Where there is any other finding of a breach of these standards, the College will seek a disposition that is commensurate with the relevant circumstances.