

6th September 2010

Professor Brin Grenyer, Chair

Psychology Board of Australia

G.P.O Box 9958

Melbourne VIC 3001

Re: Guidelines on Psychology Area of Practice Endorsements

Dear Brin,

My name is Danielle Whowell and I am a Counselling Psychologist (Registrar) who has completed one year of my 'Specialist Title Supervision'.

I am writing to you re: the proposed PBA description of an endorsed 'Counselling Psychologist':

Counselling psychologists are specialists in the provision of psychological therapy. They provide psychological assessment and psychotherapy for individuals, couples, families and groups, and treat a wide range of psychological problems.

This description fails to mention that Counselling Psychologists work with clients with complex Mental Health disorders. This does, in fact, relate to the majority of the work that we do.

For my supervision requirements, I have been required to demonstrate skills in line with the 'Checklist of Specialist Skills and Knowledge' on the Psychology Board of Western Australia's web-page. This includes comprehensive assessment skills with clients with mental health disorders as well as skills regarding the diagnosis of such disorders. At current, I work for the Sexual Assault Resource Centre, working with clients with complex trauma. This includes clients with diagnosed personality disorders, mood and anxiety disorders, and most commonly a diagnosis of complex PTSD.

It is imperative that Counselling Psychologists be recognised for the work we do with mental health populations. Another important point to consider is that the core units which form a mandatory part of the Master of Psychology (Counselling) approved courses include a specific focus on the assessment and diagnosis of clients with mental health conditions. For example, one of the units I completed was called 'Advanced Psychopathology' and had a specific focus on assessment and treatment of clients with complex and co-morbid mental health conditions (such as working with clients with Personality Disorders).

We ask that the description for endorsed Counselling Psychologists be changed to reflect the actual skills, abilities, and therapeutic work that are conducted by a Counselling Psychologist.

Yours sincerely:

Danielle Whowell
Counselling Psychologist (Registrar)