



THE AUSTRALIAN
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY
ASSOCIATION

Submission regarding Improvements to Definitions of
Areas of Practice Endorsements

Contact:

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Dear Professor Grenyer,

Thank you for the invitation to provide suggested improvements to the guidelines on endorsed scopes of practice. The Australian Clinical Psychology Association (ACPA) is pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the scope of practice for clinical psychology, but we do not believe we have the expertise to define the scopes of practice of other areas of endorsement. This said, however, we believe that each area of endorsement requires a distinct scope of practice that differentiates it from other areas of endorsement.

We are extremely concerned about the encroachment on the domain of clinical psychology by other specialities in the interests of their providing services at the clinical rate for reimbursement for Medicare under the government's Better Access scheme. If there is substantial overlap between current scopes of practice for different areas of endorsement, definitions need to either return to those upon which post-graduate training programs were offered and distinguished from clinical psychology prior to the introduction of the Better Access program, or the area of endorsement needs to be discontinued as an area of endorsement. In terms of the scope of practice for clinical psychology, we would like to propose the following changes:

Competencies Required For Clinical Psychology Endorsement

Clinical psychologists specialise in the integration of scientific, theoretical and clinical knowledge and practice skills for the assessment, diagnosis, formulation, treatment, and prevention of psychological problems and mental illness across the lifespan. The core competencies that must be achieved by an endorsed clinical psychologist, at a level of depth and expertise appropriate to clinical psychology following on from post-graduate training, are:

- a) knowledge of the discipline – this includes
 - i. Knowledge of psychological theories, principles, and models of treatment in clinical psychology
 - ii. Knowledge of the empirical evidence underpinning the theories, principles, and models of treatment in clinical psychology
 - iii. Capacity to critically evaluate the major methods of inquiry leading to that evidence
 - iv. Knowledge of psychopathology and diagnostic classification systems (e.g. DSM; ICD, PDM) and their strengths and limitations
 - v. Capacity to work as a scientist practitioner, engaging knowledge in relevant psychological and social areas
 - vi. Ability to analyse accurately the functions of a clinical psychologist in particular settings

- vii. Knowledge of the roles of other professions and the capacity to report to other professionals appropriately and work collaboratively
- b) understanding and application of ethical, legal and professional knowledge relevant to the practice of clinical psychology, including:
- i. Conduct consistent with the code of ethics
 - ii. Understanding of how ethical principles are used to guide professional practice
 - iii. Understanding of ethical and legal requirements of informed consent
 - iv. Understanding of the requirements for protected psychological tests
 - v. Knowledge of limits of competence and personal limitations that may affect work with clients
 - vi. Understanding of the Mental Health Act and of assessment and management of risk factors
 - vii. Knowledge of Commonwealth, and State/Territory legislation bearing on psychological practice
- c) knowledge of psychological assessment and measurement
1. Competent to administer, interpret and integrate a range of assessment devices including:
 - i. clinical and diagnostic interviews
 - ii. clinical assessment tools
 - iii. observation and analysis of psychological and behavioural functioning
 - iv. tests of cognitive and academic functioning, including the assessment of intelligence, memory, attention and other abilities
 - v. assessment of behavioural, emotional, social and personality functioning
 - vi. evaluation of the outcomes of treatment
 2. Demonstrated competency in the following areas:
 - i. Selection of appropriate assessment and evaluation techniques or instruments with proper consideration of issues of reliability and validity
 - ii. Conduct clinical assessment interviews for a wide range of presentations that include:
 - A description of the presenting problem that supports all given diagnoses
 - History of the presenting problem and of major losses and trauma
 - Biological considerations (e.g. medical conditions, drug usage, family history of mental health problems)
 - Psychosocial functioning
 - Developmental and family history, and family functioning
 - Analysis of cognitive, behavioural and psychological functioning (as appropriate)

- Mental State Examination (where appropriate)
 - iii. Integrate, formulate and communicate clinical and psychometric assessment findings both in written and oral forms to appropriate audiences
 - iv. Accurately utilise appropriate diagnostic classification systems
 - v. Undertake psychometric and psychodiagnostic testing (where appropriate)
3. Competent in clinical formulation procedures, including information from the context of the referral, assessment information, diagnoses, prognosis and theoretical knowledge and understanding that provide guidelines and framework for intervention, with demonstrated knowledge of the implications of different forms of intervention for the case.
- d) competent in the knowledge, selection, design, adaptation and implementation of intervention strategies:
1. Competent in the implementation of intervention procedures as demonstrated by the ability to work as a scientist practitioner to:
 - i. Critically evaluate and draw from appropriate research literature
 - ii. Review documents of departmental and professional practice relevant to the intervention
 - iii. Formulate and test hypotheses
 - iv. Draw from knowledge of a range of evidence-based theoretical and treatment models
 - v. Design or select and implement appropriate evidence-based interventions
 - vi. Demonstrate sound clinical and ethical judgement in the implementation of treatment
 - vii. Appropriately evaluate intervention outcomes
 2. Skilful application of intervention processes:
 - i. Understands intervention processes (e.g. engagement, maintenance, termination, etc)
 - ii. Forms a positive working alliance with a wide variety of clients, with a broad range of presenting problems
 - iii. Understands the relational processes involved in the therapeutic relationship
 - iv. Able to utilise evidence-based therapeutic modalities with individuals, couples, families and groups
 - v. Able to adapt treatment in response to the individual client's needs and responses
 - vi. Provide consultative services to other professionals and carers regarding clinical psychological problems
 3. Engagement in reflective practise:
 - i. Understands the impact of their own personal style, values and approach on the therapeutic relationship,
 - ii. Able to apply knowledge and therapeutic approaches with consideration for the client's history, current life circumstances and personality style,

- iii. Uses supervision to reflect on the processes of therapy and their personal contributions to these.
- e) research and evaluation **including** the systematic identification, critical appraisal and application of relevant research evidence to clinical psychology
- i. Ability to develop research and **evaluate** and report outcomes
 - ii. Capacity to understand **and critically evaluate** evidence and appropriately handle data
 - iii. Ability to synthesise research literature and apply to **clinical** practice
- f) communication and interpersonal relationships, **including** the ability to communicate in written and oral format from a psychological perspective in a style appropriate to a variety of different audiences, and to interact professionally with a wide range of client groups and other professionals. **More specifically:**
- i. Ability to communicate adequately with clients, within the profession, with other professionals, and with the general public, **both orally and in written formats,**
 - ii. Capacity to appear as an expert witness, including knowledge of Court systems, presentation in Court, and relevant policies and practices
 - iii. Ability to write adequate **clinical and psychometric reports that clearly communicate the findings to a range of audiences**
 - iv. Ability to write adequate **clinical and psychometric** reports for the legal system
 - v. Ability to keep appropriate records and case notes in accordance with the requirements of the professional setting
- g) working within a cross-cultural context, **including** demonstrating core competencies to adequately practise with clients from cultures different from the psychologist's own
- h) practice across the lifespan, **including** demonstrating the core competencies with clients in childhood, adolescence, adulthood and late adulthood.

Thank you again for this opportunity to contribute to the definition of the scope of practice for clinical psychologist.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Judy Hyde

ACPA President