

4 March 2016

Psychology Board of Australia
GPO Box 9958
Melbourne VIC 3001
psychconsultation@ahpra.gov.au

Re: Public consultation paper 26: Area of practice endorsements

Dear Board members,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input on the definition of counselling psychology. I wish to give my support for the revised competency statements provided to you by the *Association of Counselling Psychologists* and the *APS College of Counselling Psychologists*.

Having read their updated description and list of competency statements (see attached document: Competencies required for counselling psychology endorsement) it is my opinion that this revision more accurately reflects the nature of our training, research, and practice in the specialised domain of counselling psychology.

I have worked as a counselling psychologist for over 10 years and a clinical psychologist for about 6 years. I completed two masters in psychology – counselling and clinical. As a counselling psychologist I have worked with individuals with anxiety, mood and psychotic disorders in various clinical settings including a private hospital, federal (Department of Veterans Affairs) and state (Child and Adolescent Mental Health in regional WA and Child Protection) government agencies, and community health organisations. My work experience has mainly been with children, youth, adults and families presenting with complex psychological and behavioural issues. As a counselling psychologist I also conducted couple therapy.

My experience with infant-parent mental health, child psychology and trauma became known amongst colleagues and I was asked on several occasions by clinical managers to apply for positions at separate state health agencies. However, on each occasion and to the dismay of these managers it was not possible for me to apply for these jobs as I did not hold a clinical psychology masters. They instead offered short-term contract work, which I declined as I had a full-time position at a private hospital in an infant-parent mental health unit. My colleagues included psychiatrists, clinical nurses and psychologists. It was at this point that I returned to university and completed a clinical psychology masters as it was clear that not having such a qualification was going to prejudice future employment opportunities despite already receiving the training through the counselling psychology masters programme.

The inclusion of competency statements relating to mental health assessment, case-formulation, and appropriate evidence-based care (including couple therapy), is a far better reflection of both the postgraduate training I received and the clinical reality of my work.

Please feel free to contact me via email at christianholyoak@inet.net.au if you have any questions.

Yours truly,



Christian Holyoak

Clinical and Counselling Psychologist

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Attachment: Competencies required for counselling psychology endorsement