

TASK GROUP FOR COUNSELLOR REGULATION

IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

PRESENTATION TO

**THE B.C. MINISTER OF HEALTH
SERVICES**

SUPPORT FOR THE REGULATION OF COUNSELLING THERAPY IN B.C.

February 13, 2009

Table of Contents

Introduction

As noted in the accompanying Options Paper, as a result of a November 6, 2008 meeting with the Hon. George Abbott, Minister of Health Services, the Task Group for Counsellor Regulation (the Task Group)¹ was asked to undertake a series of tasks, the first one being: “to document that the membership of the Task Group

organizations and other counselling associations continue to support the regulation of the profession and, in particular, understand that creating a College would likely result in new costs which would have to be paid for in annual registration fees.”

This paper presents the results of the Task Group’s survey of its various memberships.

Methodology

The representatives of the different member organizations of the Task Group recognized that, while their organizations would need to put the same, general question to their membership to thus ascertain the degree of support for the regulation of the profession, because of the different number of members and how their executives communicated with their memberships, each organization was going to have to undertake its own, unique survey method.

For the larger organizations, like the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors, it used an on-line survey instrument (called a Survey Monkey) that its members were asked to complete by way of broadcast emails sent to their full membership, or by individual letters where a member did not have a registered email address. The smaller organizations sent out the survey by email and followed-up by phone.

Regardless of the method used, each organization tried to make sure that it received only one response from each member to the survey question, and that all members had an equal opportunity to respond.

The Survey Question

The following was the template document that the Task Group

developed to survey the memberships of the different organizations:

Dear Colleague,

As many of you are aware, our Association has been working with the *Task Group for Counsellor Regulation* since 1998 to have a College of Counselling Therapists established under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA). In order to proceed to the next stage, we need to confirm for government that we have the support of our membership.

The purpose of establishing a professional College is to move from the voluntary professional regulation that we currently have through our Association, to the stronger professional identity that would be established by the full force of a new and separate professional College (similar to the BC College of Physicians and Surgeons, College of Psychologists, etc.).

Although your voluntary membership in a professional association is a demonstration of your commitment to the highest standards of ethical practice, provincial and federal governments do not officially recognize voluntary self-regulation. The establishment of a College of Counselling Therapists is a necessary next step in creating this level of official recognition.

Projected yearly registration fees for a College of Counselling Therapists are likely to range from \$350-\$500 per year based on comparison with existing professional Colleges under the HPA.

Official status as a health profession increases the public's access to professional counselling services by creating a clearly identifiable profession, with a clear and protected title, a defined scope of practice and more formal mechanisms for public accountability. We expect that this will result in increased credibility for the profession and also make your services eligible for inclusion in employer extended health plans and tax-deductible for your clients as medical expense.

To respond to the Minister's request for confirmation of member support, and to help our profession take the next step in establishing credibility in the public eye, we need to hear from you. We need to hear from as many

members as possible to indicate the profession's support for the formation of a new College.

Do you support the formation of a new College of Counselling Therapists, established under the Health Professions Act, to regulate the profession of Counselling in BC?

Please send us your YES or NO response by return e-mail by TIME and DATE. For more information please contact NAME OF CONTACT (EMAIL / PHONE).

Results

The surveying of the members of the Task Group organizations began in mid-December, with most organizations giving a deadline of mid-January 2009.

The results from each organization were recorded by its contact, and then compiled by the Task Group's coordinator. The following table summarizes the results:

Organization	Number of Members Surveyed	Number of Surveys Received	Response Rate	"Yes" Answers	Percent "Yes"	"No" Answers
BCACC	1,780	1,035	58.1%	1,009	97.5%	
BCAMFT	117	72	61.5%	70	97.2%	
CAPPE	21	18	85.7%	16	88.9%	
CCA(BC)	800	310	38.8%	300	96.8%	
BCATA	108	67	62.0%	65	97.0%	
MTABC	96	44	45.8%	41	93.2%	
TOTALS	2,92	1,54	52.9%	1,50	97.1	45
	2	6		1	%	

Discussion

With a response rate of over 50%, the statistical validity of the resulting answers to the survey question is extremely high. The Task Group is very pleased with the degree of commitment of counsellors that is demonstrated by the many hundreds of therapists who responded to the survey, whether in the affirmative or the negative.

With just under 1,550 counsellors responding to the survey, the almost unanimous support illustrated by the 97% affirmative answer to the question is definitive proof that counselling therapists within the Task Group remain committed to moving forward with regulating the profession and, in particular, and are also prepared to fund the cost of creating a new College. (These results parallel the outcome of less formal surveys that the Task Group organizations conducted over a decade ago.)

The Task Group is pleased to report to the Minister that there is clear and over-whelming support among the almost 3,000 counsellors represented by the different counselling organizations to the creation of a new College.

¹ The Task Group member organizations are: the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (BC Chapter), the BC Art Therapy Association, the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors, the BC Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, the Canadian Association of Pastoral Practice and Education (BC Chapter), the Canadian Counselling Association (BC Chapter) and the Music Therapy Association of BC.