

# COLLEGE CONVERSATION

## REPORT FROM THE REGISTRAR

### Ann Joseph

As we wrap up yet another year and get ready to move into a new one, I am honored and delighted to share my thoughts with you as the new registrar, through this issue of College Conversations.

Winter, to me, is always a time for reflection. Much has happened in the year that has gone by, all around the world and I am certain every one of you have enough to pause and reflect on. Despite all the suffering and heartache we see around us, I am also grateful to see hope, resilience and amazing social workers who strive to serve the communities in need around them.

Reflecting on the work of the College, we are at the end of the third year of our journey of commitment to the strategic priorities identified for 2021-2025 and the goals therein, and as we gear up for the next year, we remain steadfast to our commitments. There has been work ongoing in relation to revisions of the bylaws, more information on which we hope to share during the next year.

Board members and myself, along with members of the Indigenous Council, had opportunity to participate in a powerful blanket ceremony towards the end of the year. To me, it was at the same time an honour and a humbling experience to be invited to be a part of the ceremony. As someone who is relatively new to the deeply traumatic consequences of colonization that impacted and continue to impact the communities that we live and work in, I was grateful for the opportunity to learn and to take my learning forward in my own commitment to reconciliation and healing.

We continued in our work to strengthen public protection, through the regulation of social work, some of this work included reviewing our complaints process and moving a large number of complaints the College had received, through the various stages of investigation. As you continue reading this issue of College Conversations, further on, you will find a section on practice learnings from the complaint process. The hope is to share some examples of the complaints that the College receives, to illustrate to registrants what does or does not constitute professional misconduct or a practice standard violation.



## Contents

Report from the Registrar.....	1
Practice Corner.....	3
Practice Learnings From the Complaints Process.....	4
Committee Chronicles - Updates and Insights.....	6
Quality Assurance Committee.....	7
Registration Committee.....	8
Discipline Committee.....	9
Date Reminders.....	10
Board and Staff.....	11
Happy Holidays.....	12

# REPORT FROM THE REGISTRAR CONT...

Through this section, we hope that registrants would have an opportunity to reflect on their own practice and gain an understanding about the College's standards of practice and professional behaviour, as regulated social workers.

During this past year, we received a number of queries from registrants relating to private practice, some of these were similar in nature. Hence, through the newsletter, we would like to share information about your obligations as a registrant as you engage in social work practice as a private practitioner, through a series of articles on private practice. You will find the first of these as you keep reading on, under Practice Corner, focusing this time on considerations for private practitioner registrants especially during this renewal period.

The work of the College would not be complete without the contributions of our committee members. The College is currently inviting expressions of interest from registrants to apply for positions on various committees. This is your opportunity to contribute your expertise and experience to the work of the College in protecting the public.

Blanket Ceremony



As the year ends and a new one begins, I would like to welcome new and returning board members for 2024 and share my profound appreciation for the time and effort that board members, committee members and staff have put in this past year to take the College forward.

I extend my warmest wishes to all of you this holiday season, and hope that the past year has been a fulfilling one for you. May the coming year be filled with new opportunities, personal and professional growth, and success. A heartfelt thank you for all the work that you do!

## Practice Corner

# Ensuring Compliance and up to date Information: A Renewal Reminder for Private Practice Registrants

BY ANISA HUSSEIN, MANAGER REGISTRATION SERVICES

## Renewal Reminder for Private Practice Registrants

As registrants embark on the renewal process, it is crucial to be mindful of the significant obligations outlined in the College bylaws. These obligations not only contribute to the maintenance of professional standards but also play a pivotal role in safeguarding both practitioners and the public.

### Professional Liability Insurance:

Under [Section 71](#) of the College bylaws, private practice registrants are mandated to have liability insurance covering negligence, with a minimum amount of \$1,000,000 per occurrence. This requirement extends beyond individual practitioners to encompass their employees. It is imperative for registrants to meticulously review and confirm that their insurance coverage aligns with these stipulations, ensuring comprehensive protection and compliance with regulatory standards.

For registrants holding multiple designations, a proactive step involves verifying that their insurance adequately covers each designation, including the Registered Social Worker (RSW) designation. This additional measure guarantees comprehensive protection and aligns with the specific requirements set forth by the College.

### Timely Notification of Changes ([Section 56](#)):

Registrants are required to notify the College in writing of any changes to their registration information. This includes changes in practice addresses and residential addresses. In instances where a registrant ceases to have a separate practice address, it is crucial to inform the College promptly of the registrant's residential address upon return to practice, employment, or other business.

### Employment Information Update:

During the renewal period, registrants are encouraged to update their employment information through the online portal. Maintaining current information is essential for accurate record-keeping and effective communication between registrants and the College.

If you are engaged in private practice and wish to update your information, please send an email to [info@bccsw.ca](mailto:info@bccsw.ca) with the following details:

Organization name

Worksite (if applicable)

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Is this your primary place of practice? (Yes or No)

Would you like the phone number and the address of your practice location to be visible on our public registry?

(Yes or No)

Start Date:

# Practice Learnings from the Complaints Process

BY MAE BEJOSANO, INVESTIGATOR, INQUIRY DEPARTMENT

“By diving into these actual scenarios, the College aims to collectively strengthen social work practice and deepen the understanding of the ethical considerations that guide social work practice”



Seasons greetings to all registered social workers committed to the noble cause of enhancing the well-being of our communities. As we navigate the evolving landscape of social work, it is incumbent upon us to foster a culture of continuous learning and self-reflection. In this spirit, the BC College of Social Workers provides a dedicated section that delves into actual scenarios, highlighting its commitment to protecting the public and fortifying the ethical frame of the social work profession.

We invite you to explore two recent complaints received by the College, each serving as a valuable opportunity for collective introspection. This is in line with the Social Workers Act, SBC 2008, c.31 which directs the College to receive and investigate complaints against registered social workers and former registrants. The goal of the College’s investigation process is to be fair to all parties involved, to measure the conduct or competence of a registrant against minimum levels of practice for public protection, and to ensure that registrants practice social work within the professional standards that are required of them.

This section is more than a chronicle of incidents. By diving into these actual scenarios, the College aims to collectively strengthen social work practice and deepen the understanding of the ethical considerations that guide social work practice. More importantly, this sets a platform of learning opportunities for social workers to reflect on their practices, reinforce ethical behavior, and stay updated on professional standards; thereby, contributing to a collective commitment to maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct in the field of social work.

## **A Social Worker’s Action Sparks Reflection on Professional Boundaries**

The College received allegations that a registrant (i) acted beyond the professional scope of practice; (ii) failed to verify the information provided to her by a client; and (iii) breached confidentiality. The parties involved in this matter are the registrant, a former couple, and their child. The former husband or father of the child is the complainant.

The complaint specifically relates to when a registrant made a recommendation letter to the court that the mother should have sole custody of the child. The content of the letter stressed the observations of the registrant which formed the basis for her recommendation. First was that the child exhibited disturbing behavior after spending time with the father. Second was that the child’s behavior improved when he stayed with his mother for a month.

A review of the information and documentation gathered during the investigation established that the registrant provided a one-time counselling service to the former couple. The counselling lasted for an hour. The registrant had known the mother of the child years before she met the complainant. She provided one-on-one counselling to the mother subsequently. There were no further details nor documentation provided in the recommendation letter to support the registrant’s statements that led her to conclude that the child’s behavior was disturbing when he was with the father, warranting sole custody to the mother.



# Practice Learnings from the Complaints Process continued...

# L

In addition, the registrant did not have further engagements or communications with the complainant regarding her observed behavior of the child. The registrant also disclosed that the complainant was her client in the recommendation letter without the complainant's consent.

Based on the information gathered from the investigation, the Inquiry Committee was concerned that Sections 2.1, 7, and 8 of the Child Custody Access and Sections 2.1, 5.3, and 5.5 of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice were implicated.

# E

In relation to the resolution of this complaint, the registrant agreed to undertake

1. to not repeat the conduct complained of and in particular to (a) cease providing opinions or recommendations on child custody when acting in the role of a therapist; (b) not disclose the identity of a client without their express consent or as required by law;
2. to complete required hours of continuing professional development with a focus on client confidentiality and disclosure and conflict of interest; and
3. to undergo required hours of clinical supervision.

## **Documenting Accountability: Understanding Measures for Record-Keeping in Social Work**

# A

A registrant was put under investigation when her employer had concerns about her record-keeping practices. The allegations comprised of her failure to (i) maintain adequate records; (ii) maintain systematic, dated, and legible records; (iii) record client information promptly; and (iv) maintain an adequate understanding of the employer's policies and practices in relation to the management of client information, despite training and supervision received. There was also an allegation that the registrant continued working while knowingly suffering from an illness which may have an adverse impact on how she conducts her practice.

Specifically, the registrant, after three months of being employed, had built the habit of recording information about clients using post-it-notes. The information was either incomplete, missing, or was not transferred to the official files of the employer.

# R

Further information and documentation obtained for this matter established that while the registrant responded well in her documentation practices initially, there were noted lapses in her record-keeping past the probationary stage, which the registrant acknowledged. In addition, the registrant was found to have a medical condition which became severe in her third-month mark at work, leading to a correlation in her documentation lapses. The investigation also noted that accuracy in client documentation is not only significant for the employer but is also fundamental in responding appropriately to client needs.

Based on the information gathered from the investigation, the Inquiry Committee was concerned that Sections 1.7, 2.5, 2.13, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.8, 4.10, 4.11 of the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice were implicated.

# N

Towards the resolution of this complaint, the registrant agreed to undertake specific actions to address the concerns of the Committee, such as (i) completing required hours of continuing professional development with focus on purpose of documentation, record maintenance in accordance with the Standards of Practice, and ethical termination of the professional relationship with clients; (ii) fulfilling several requirements prior to entering private practice, including but not limited to, providing type of client population to be served and establishing a back-up plan in the event of inability to return to practice for defined period, including potential referrals; and (iii) submitting a written report to the Inquiry Committee to confirm adherence to professional standards while engaged in social work or any activities related to it which should be furnished by a senior member in the current employment.

# COMMITTEE CHRONICLES – UPDATES AND INSIGHTS

## Inviting expressions of interest to serve on BCCSW Committees Are you interested in contributing to the work of the College through our Committees?

Membership on the College Committees are a great opportunity for registrants to contribute their expertise to the regulation of the social work profession in British Columbia, in the best interest of the public. The College is anticipating possible vacancies on the following committees in 2024:

- Quality Assurance Committee
- Registrations Committee
- Discipline Committee

To apply for a committee position, you will need to submit an expression of interest that outlines your qualifications, experience, and interest in the specific committee. It is important to highlight your relevant skills and knowledge, as well as any previous experience working in a similar capacity. You may also want to include any additional information that you believe would be helpful in demonstrating your suitability for the role.

Committee members are expected to:

- act in ways to ensure the full protection of the public, and the efficient and effective achievement of the mandate of the College;
- attend all meetings and be well prepared and conversant with the background materials and the agenda;
- listen to other committee members' perspectives, ask questions, and participate in the discussions and decision-making;
- act and make decisions on behalf of the whole public and the whole social work profession, while bringing different perspectives into the committee's or task force's discussions and decision-making;
- support well-informed, consistent, timely, quality, transparent, and efficient decision making;
- act strictly within the board's policies regarding confidentiality and conflict of interest;
- treat other committee or task force members with respect, fairness, honesty, and inclusiveness.

When preparing your expression of interest, it is important to keep in mind the responsibilities of the committee and the College as a regulator of the social work profession. Please review the information provided on each Committee to understand the mandate of each committee. More information on individual committees can also be found through the College bylaws, available on our website.

Please submit your expressions of interest via email to [registrar@bccsw.ca](mailto:registrar@bccsw.ca) by 5PM on 5 January 2024.

# The Quality Assurance Committee



**“The QAC exists for the purpose of enhancing the quality of social work practice and to reduce incompetent, impaired, or unethical practice among registrants”**

The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) is responsible for the BCCSW Standards of Practice and for our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program. The QAC exists for the purpose of enhancing the quality of social work practice and to reduce incompetent, impaired, or unethical practice among registrants.

Over the past year, the QAC has taken a close look at the CPD program, making several recommendations for improvement to the online CPD submission module to facilitate greater clarity for registrants. Part of the QAC's work involves auditing a random selection of CPD submissions to monitor the quality of professional development activities and ensure compliance with the program. Going forward, we will continue to review and refine aspects of the CPD program so that it may continue to meet its objectives in an evolving social work landscape.

Do you want to contribute to the work of the QAC? We are seeking members who are committed to improving social work practice. Prospective members should be prepared to attend an evening meeting every 4-6 weeks. Meetings are 1.5 hours long and held virtually. We aim for a collaborative and collegial atmosphere in which members' individual strengths and perspectives are valued. In addition to meetings, QAC members are also expected to contribute approximately 1-2 hours per month on project assignments as they arise throughout the year.

The QAC is committed to its membership being reflective of the diversity of social workers in our province, with seats reserved for members who identify as belonging to equity-seeking groups. At the present time, the committee is lacking representation from registrants who identify as Indigenous. Please consider joining the QAC and contributing to better social work practice in BC!

# The Registration Committee



**“The Registration Committee is accountable to the Board and is responsible for ensuring the Registration policies outlined in the Social Workers Act and the Bylaws are being followed to develop recommendations for registration policies for approval by the board”**

The Registration Committee is accountable to the Board and is responsible for ensuring the Registration policies outlined in the Social Workers Act and the Bylaws are being followed to develop recommendations for registration policies for approval by the board.

The activities and scope of the Registration Committee are outlined in the Social Workers Act and Bylaws of the BC College of Social Workers. Specific activities referred to in the Social Workers Act and Bylaws include:

- Conducting reviews/holding hearings, as per section 14 of the Act, requested by applicants regarding registrar’s decisions under section 13(2), refusing registration,
- Reaching decisions regarding such applications within the options outlined in section 14(5) of the Act
- Providing written reasons to applicants for the decisions made regarding registration, as per section 14(6) of the Act.
- Responding by way of a review to the registrar’s delivery of applications where the registrar is not satisfied that the applicant is qualified to be a registrant as per sections 49.1(3) and 49.1(4) of the Bylaws.
- Directing the form of application for reinstatement following nonpayment of fees (section 51 of Bylaws).

Registration Committee Members are appointed by the Board for a period of one year and may be re-appointed to a maximum of six years. Over the past year, the registration committee has reviewed bylaws relating to registration requirements for the different classes of registration.

The Committee is inviting expressions of interest from registrants who are committed to contributing to the work of social work regulation to ensure public protection. Prospective members would need to be able to commit to an evening virtual meeting of 2 hours every 4 to 6 weeks and additional time needed for any preparation for the meetings.



# The Discipline Committee



**“The mandate of the Discipline Committee is to hear and determine matters set for hearing by citation issued at the direction of the Inquiry Committee in accordance with Division 3 of the Social Workers Act. Hence the Committee only meets for the purpose of conducting hearings as required”**

The mandate of the Discipline Committee is to hear and determine matters set for hearing by citation issued at the direction of the Inquiry Committee in accordance with Division 3 of the Social Workers Act. Hence the Committee only meets for the purpose of conducting hearings as required.

Members are appointed by the Board for a period of one year and may be re-appointed. The Chair of the Discipline appoints a panel of three to five members for each hearing, and also appoints a chair for each panel constituted.

A quorum at any hearing of the panel shall be 100% of the panel members; hence registrants expressing interest in being a member of the Discipline committee need to be able to commit to availability and time to participate in hearings.

# CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DEADLINES

# REMININDER

## Important Dates – CPD and Registration Renewal Deadlines

### Registration Renewal Period (Dec. 1 – Jan. 31)

December 1 is the first day the College begins accepting renewal fees for the next registration cycle (Feb. 1 – Jan. 31).

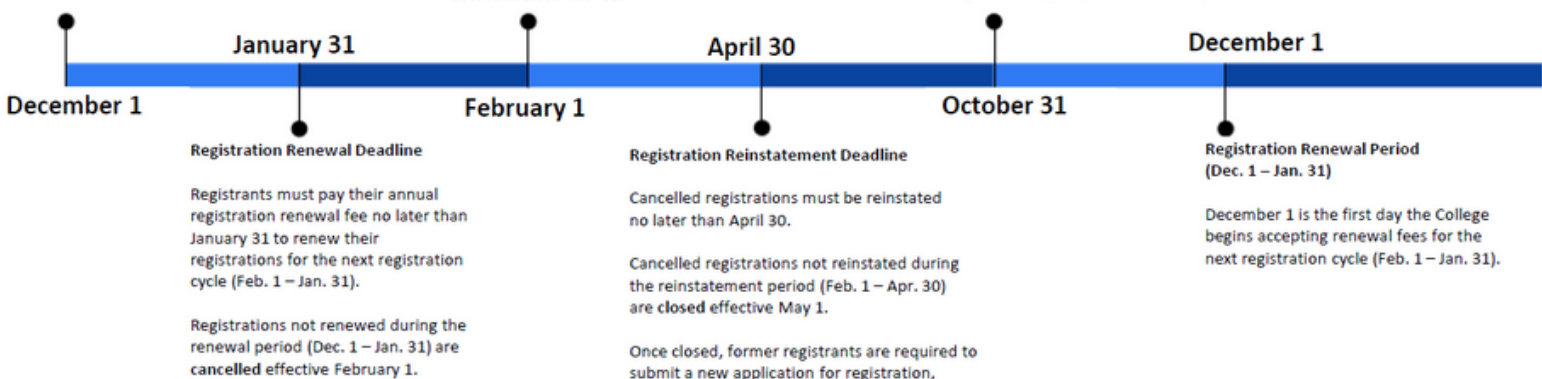
### Registration Reinstatement Period (Feb. 1 – Apr. 30)

Former Registrants whose registrations have been cancelled effective February 1 can reinstate their registrations during the reinstatement period by paying an additional 35% reinstatement fee.

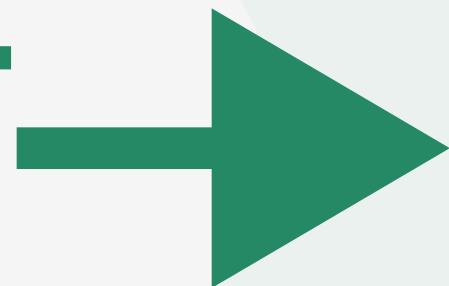
### CPD Deadline

October 31 is the deadline for Registrants to submit their 40 hours of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

In completing their CPD, Registrants must only use those CPD activities completed during the CPD cycle (Nov. 1 – Oct. 31).



# SUBMIT



## BOARD

**Chair** – Jason Lam, RCSW

**Vice Chair** – Christina Rodrigues, RSW

### Social Work Members

Sonia Andhi Bilkhu, RSW

Denise Armstrong, RSW

David Chiang, Public Member

Denese Espeut-Post, Public Member

Patsy Greyeyes, Public Member

Declan Harrison, RSW

Melanie Lansall, RSW

Trevor Moyah, RSW

Amy Rosborough, RSW

Sherri Wright, Public Member

## STAFF

### Registrar & CEO

Ann Joseph

### Executive Assistant to Registrar & CEO

Tracy Singh, BA Candidate

### Director, Registration Services

Hoon Kim, BMath, BBA, JD

### Manager, Registration Services

Anisa Hussein, MD

### Registration Coordinator

Daniel Nguyen, B.Sc.

### Registration Assistant

Shabnam Khan

### Registration Assistant

Naadiya Rauf, BA Candidate  
(on maternity leave)

### Office Administrator, Professional Practice

Anita Truong, MOA, BA Candidate

### Senior Inquiry Investigator

Rob Craig, BA, CIP

### Inquiry Investigator

Mae Bejosano

### Inquiry Program Coordinator

Talita Kallie, BA

© British Columbia College of Social Workers, 2023

Other publications may republish parts of this newsletter without formal permission as long as the British Columbia College of Social Workers is acknowledged.

## CONTACT US

British Columbia College of Social Workers  
1420 - 1200 West 73rd Ave.  
Vancouver, BC V6P 6G5

Telephone: (604) 737-4916  
Toll Free: 1-977-576-6740  
Email: [info@bccsw.ca](mailto:info@bccsw.ca)

HAPPY  
HOLIDAYS  
AND



HAPPY  
NEW YEAR!

