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Psychology Board of Australia
AHPRA
GPO Box 9958
Melbourne
VIC 3001

3 March 2016

Dear Board Members,

In response to the Psychology Board of Australia's Public Consultation Paper on the Guidelines on Area of Practice Endorsement, I am writing to request amendments. The following amendments are requested so the new description of the competencies of Counselling Psychologists adequately covers the full range of relevant skills fundamental to our profession and delivery of services.

While we specialise in therapeutic interventions for a wide range of mental health conditions with people from across the lifespan, our interventions are only possible after a comprehensive assessment of the client. The training, skills and competencies of Counselling Psychologists in assessment and diagnosis is commonly overlooked. Effective therapeutic interventions, however, are not possible without advanced assessment being a fundamental skill applied in determining the most appropriate form of therapeutic intervention for clients. Advanced skills in psychological assessment, diagnosis and treatment formulation are core skills in our training and competencies.

Counselling Psychologists also work in contexts where clients present with the full spectrum of mental health conditions including those who are acutely unwell. Our: assessment and crisis management skills; comprehensive knowledge of psychological conditions, therapeutic approaches and services; integrative practices; and respect for other disciplines, allows us to ensure optimum care is provided for clients, irrespective of the severity of their presentation or the nature of their condition. The current competencies do not reflect the broad spectrum of mental health conditions and disorders for which we currently provide assessment and therapeutic interventions.

Also often overlooked is that, as psychologists with higher endorsement with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, we have the same level of training as other Colleges and advanced skills in assessment, diagnosis, case formulation and therapy. The attached recommendations will assist in addressing the misperceptions about the skills of Counselling Psychologists.

While all psychologists are expected to provide evidence-based assessment and therapeutic interventions, Counselling Psychologists have advanced training.

Please find attached the College of Counselling Psychologists recommendations with regard to amendments required to the current competencies for our College. I understand the National College Executive will be making a submission on behalf of the College but would like to support these changes on behalf of the NSW State Committee for the College of Counselling Psychologists.

We would be very appreciative if PsyBA would make these changes so that our members are appropriately represented by the new competencies.

Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,



Dean Harrison

Counselling Psychologist

NSW Chair of the College of Counselling Psychologists