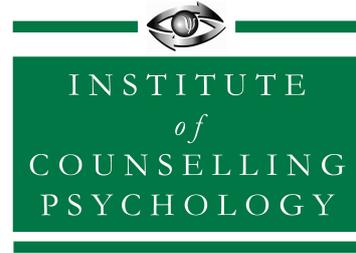




The New Zealand  
Psychological Society

*Te Rōpū Mātai Hinengaro o Aotearoa*



The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency  
The Psychology Board of Australia  
Level 7  
111 Bourke Street  
Melbourne  
VIC 3000

To whom it may concern:

The New Zealand Psychological Society Institute of Counselling Psychology would like to submit our support of the APS College of Counselling Psychologists recently submitted revised definition of Counselling Psychology. Specifically we support their proposal that:

**1. Assessment and diagnosis of mental health disorders is a key area of competency for Counselling Psychology worldwide**

The New Zealand Psychologists' Board approved core competencies for Counselling Psychologists in New Zealand were developed in collaboration with the Institute committee members as well Auckland University of Technology, who provides the only accredited programme for Counselling Psychologists in New Zealand. The British Psychological Society required competencies for Counselling Psychologists were also consulted in this process.

The specific core competency that specifies that assessment and diagnosis are key areas of competencies for Counselling Psychologists - **Framing, measuring and planning: Assessment and Case Formulation** is defined as follows:

*“For counselling psychologists, meaning-making through collaborative dialogue is central to assessment and case formulation. This dialogue identifies needs, resources and contextual elements relevant to achieving therapeutic outcomes and desired change. Problem description/understanding, goal identification and solutions are typically explored, defined and initiated through conversation. Case formulation within counselling psychology is likely to be less structured and more organic than within traditional clinical models as it emerges within the dynamics of psychologist-client interaction. Although traditional forms of diagnosis and assessment are based on the notion of objective reality, counselling psychologists remain open to the possibility that a problem or a goal may not be defined totally by any one definition, because dialogue or conversation is generative and new meanings or perspectives may arise. Assessment in counselling psychology involves the systematic collection of relevant information in the context of a therapeutic alliance for the purpose of mutual understanding by the client and counselling psychologist towards identifying needs, desired goals and directions for productive change. Procedures may include the use of formal and informal interviews, identifying collateral information, the application of systematic observation and measurement of behaviour, and*

*the use of psychometric instruments. Assessment and case formulation is an ongoing process, with the ongoing element ensuring openness to potential changes in intervention initiatives” (p29 – see attached document on Core Competencies)*

## **2. Couple therapy is a core domain of competency of Counselling Psychology**

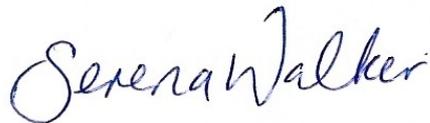
Counselling Psychologists are uniquely placed to work relationally and systemically on all levels of a system – ranging from the individual to communities. Two Core Competencies for Counselling Psychologists working in New Zealand support this:

**Discipline, Knowledge: Scientific Foundations and Research:** *“Knowledge of the theories of mental health and well-being, life-span development, family systems, ecological approaches and the application of these in counselling and therapeutic settings;*

**Intervention, Therapeutic Relationship and Working Alliance:** *“The practice of counselling psychology may be based on a range of theoretical perspectives (including, for example, Cognitive-Behavioural, Narrative, Humanistic, Psychodynamic, Family and Systemic, and Integrative theories). Interventions may engage individuals, couples, families, groups and communities. The purpose of interventions may involve development, prevention or remediation)*

I have attached the New Zealand Psychologists’ Board Core Competencies for the practice of psychology in New Zealand for your perusal.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Serena Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Serena Walker

Chair: Institute of Counselling Psychology  
NZ Psychological Society.