



Canadian Centre
on Substance Abuse
Centre canadien de lutte
contre les toxicomanies

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Report in Short

Competencies for Canada's Substance Abuse Workforce

The goal of *Competencies for Canada's Substance Abuse Workforce* is to enhance professionalism and excellence in the substance abuse treatment workforce by identifying the Technical and Behavioural Competencies required to perform effectively in the field. The *Competencies* meet a critical need for standards for the substance abuse workforce.

What Are Competencies and Why Are They Important?

Competencies are the measurable knowledge, skills and values needed to perform effectively in a specific function.

Competencies for Canada's Substance Abuse Workforce is an evidence-informed framework that sets out the specific abilities required by the substance abuse treatment workforce to help individuals and organizations ensure consistently high-quality service and care. This resource provides information and tools to:

- Identify knowledge and skills for the substance abuse treatment workforce and allied professionals;
- Support employers in hiring, retaining and developing staff;
- Assist educators and trainers in developing strategies for learning; and
- Provide Canadians with a more consistent quality of service from the workforce.

Who Are They For?

Developed for the specialized substance abuse treatment workforce in Canada, *Competencies for Canada's Substance Abuse Workforce* identifies specific abilities and behaviours for seven common job clusters:

- Administrative support
- Health promotion
- Supervision
- Withdrawal management
- Counselling
- Senior management
- Support and outreach

The *Competencies* is also relevant to allied professionals and volunteers who are not in the substance abuse field, but who must respond effectively to substance abuse issues presented by individuals they come in contact with through their work. These allied professionals include primary healthcare providers, social workers, enforcement officials and school guidance counsellors; Elders, sport coaches and youth group leaders; and research, education, training, and policy and program development staff whose efforts have an impact on substance-using populations.

What Research Is Behind the Competencies?

Competencies for Canada's Substance Abuse Workforce is based on the best available evidence and more than eight years of research, including cross-Canada consultations, expert reviews, focus group discussions, literature reviews and key informant interviews. The *Competencies* will continue to evolve and reflect changes in the field.



What's New in the Competencies?

The research has culminated in two sets of competencies. The Behavioural Competencies Report was released in 2010 and the revised Technical Competencies Report in late 2014. The Technical Competencies Guide to Working with First Nations Clients has just been released. The Guide provides a First Nations context for the Technical Competencies and reflects cultural principles derived from Indigenous knowledge.

Technical Competencies (v. 2)	Behavioural Competencies (v. 1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Substance Use • Understanding Concurrent Disorders • Case Management • Client Referral • Community Development • Counselling • Crisis Intervention • Family and Social Support • Group Facilitation • Medications • Outreach • Prevention and Health Promotion • Program Development, Implementation and Evaluation • Record Keeping and Documentation • Screening and Assessment • Trauma-specific Care • Treatment Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptability/Flexibility • Analytical Thinking and Decision Making • Client-centred Change • Client Service Orientation • Collaboration and Network Building • Continuous Learning • Creativity and Innovation • Developing Others • Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness • Effective Communication • Ethical Conduct and Professionalism • Interpersonal Rapport/Savvy • Leadership • Planning and Organizing • Self Care • Self Management • Self Motivation and Drive • Teamwork and Cooperation

What Else Is in the Competencies?

Competencies for Canada's Substance Abuse Workforce also contains:

- Competency definitions;
- Sample behaviour indicators for each competency, with four levels of proficiency, from Introductory to Advanced;
- Seven common job clusters and the competency profiles identified as most likely needed by people in those jobs;
- How-to guide on adapting the competency profiles;
- Interview tools for all seven job clusters for use with the Behavioural Competencies;
- How-to guide on conducting competency-based interviews;
- Performance management tools for all seven job clusters for use with the Behavioural Competencies;
- How-to guide on managing competency-based performance; and
- Sample interview questions for each level of proficiency for all Technical and Behavioural Competencies.

How Can You Get Your Copy of the Competencies?

Competencies for Canada's Substance Abuse Workforce is available online at www.ccsa.ca. There are also seven videos about the application of the *Competencies*, such as using the *Competencies*, interviewing, ease of use and improving the hiring process.

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The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse changes lives by bringing people and knowledge together to reduce the harm of alcohol and other drugs on society. We partner with public, private and non-governmental organizations to improve the health and safety of Canadians.

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