

Terms of Reference

Indigenous Committee

1. Preamble

The College recognizes the need to not only acknowledge the harm that has occurred within Indigenous populations throughout Canada because of colonization, but we also understand the need to deeply embed the knowledge of this history into the social work profession, so that it never again plays such a role in the future. For this to happen, strong relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities must be established so that Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and values are inherent within the work of the College and the social work profession in BC.

We acknowledge that the office of the BC College of Social Workers is located on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam people). Further, this acknowledgment, gratitude and respect extends to all the First Nations communities on whose traditional territories the BCCSW builds relationships and where the BCCSW Indigenous Committee members reside and work.

2. Functions and Responsibilities

The Indigenous Committee seeks to reflect Indigenous values and Indigenous ways of working to provide a framework for engaging in College affairs. In line with the 2017 signing of the 'Declaration of Commitment', this committee demonstrates the BCCSW's long-term commitment to the regulation of health professionals to promote and advance cultural safety and humility for First Nations and Indigenous peoples in British Columbia and to championing the process required to achieve this position.

The Committee acts in an advisory capacity to the BC College of Social Workers offering Indigenous cultural perspectives and knowledge as a way to culturally inform the development of: regulation, College policies, initiatives, projects and programs, communications and relationship building with Indigenous persons and communities. Where appropriate, the Committee is able to provide the Board with clear recommendations including background information, perspectives considered, options considered and rationales. The Committee will also develop its own initiatives in order to reflect Indigenous values and Indigenous ways of working in College affairs. The meetings are closed to the public.

3. Group Membership

The Indigenous Committee is established consisting of a minimum of 3 members appointed by the Board in accordance with section 21 of the BCCSW, the majority of which must self-identify as Indigenous. The Indigenous Committee must include at least one board member.

The membership base should reflect diverse expertise and experience in Indigenous social work practice and ideally hold a mix of urban, rural and northern perspectives. One staff person will be made available as a liaison to the committee.

Guests may be invited by the Chairperson to attend a meeting. Guests hold speaking privileges but cannot vote. Guests are not permitted to retain any documents disseminated during the meeting and cannot use audio or visual recording in the meeting.

In keeping with the value of inclusiveness and to continue strengthening relationships, the committee will strive to have an Elder and/or youth at each meeting to participate in discussions and provide cultural wisdom and guidance in decision making. The Elder and/or youth is not required to be a Registered Social Worker but should be a respected wisdom keeper that is knowledgeable in the provision of human services in the province of BC and Indigenous customs and rituals.

Elder and/or Youth Participation

The BCCSW Indigenous Committee recognises that the definition of “Elder” is not a simple task; “Elder” is a complex concept that is integrally tied to important issues relating to leadership, traditional knowledge, life experiences, intergenerational societal teaching, change, and recent history. It may be emotionally charged because “Elder” represents many things to people – families, the past, strength, experiences, survival, language, communities, and Indigenous societies. Although chronological age is not a factor in defining an “Elder” they are typically seen as a respected older member of their communities*.

Equally, the Committee invites the valuable contributions of self-identified Indigenous Youth (16 to 30 years old) to their meetings for their unique perspective, current knowledge and input. The Committee recognizes young people’s right to participate in the decision making processes that inform the work of the Committee today, and will be carried forward by, and impact, the youth of the future.

The Purpose of the BCCSW Indigenous Committee respectfully inviting Indigenous Elders and Youth to their meetings would include, but is not limited to:

- Helping to guide the Committee to decision making by providing input of their knowledge, wisdom and differing world views
- Help to ‘ground’ the committee as a listener and witness, which is, of itself, transformative to the outcomes of the meetings

The Elder/Youth can:

- Participate in in-person and teleconference meetings and, at the request of the committee, provide consultation between meetings.
- Collaborate with the committee to develop ideas that the committee can action
- Add to the discussion at any time to offer guidance or insights
- Disagree with committee members and offer alternative views
- Expect an honorarium for participating in a meeting or collaborating between meetings

The Elder/Youth is not responsible for:

- Facilitating a meeting, mediating a discussion, disagreement or any aspect of the meeting

- Outcomes of the decisions made by the BCCSW Indigenous Committee

Expectations:

- The Chair of the committee will contact the Elder/Youth prior to each meeting to brief them on the agenda and ask them to think about topics of interest they may wish to speak to
- The Elder/Youth will be offered the opportunity to open each meeting with a prayer or blessing, but can always decline and pass to other committee members
- The Elder/Youth may fully participate in the Indigenous Committee meetings, but does not have the same voting rights as a BCCSW appointed committee member
- Discussion at the BCCSW Indigenous Committee meetings is of a confidential nature and the Elder/Youth will use discretion when discussing the meeting with third parties – the Committee reserves the right to excuse the Elder/Youth should they feel it necessary
- The Elder and/or youth will receive a gift of appreciation for each meeting attended in the form of an honorarium in the amount of \$100 or other form of gift as deemed appropriate by the Committee. An honorarium may also be offered to an Elder/Youth who the Committee ask to collaborate or consult outside of the meetings, the amount is at the discretion of the Committee and will be appropriate for the task(s) undertaken.

The Elder and/or youth will make every attempt to inform the Chair of the Indigenous Committee in a timely manner should they be unable to attend a meeting.

Interested Elders and Youth should contact the BCCSW to express their interest. Staff will pass contact information to the Chair of the Indigenous Committee.

4. Appointment of Members

Group members may be nominated or self-nominated and must possess knowledge of Indigenous social work practice in British Columbia. It is preferable that members represent diverse fields of practice.

Interested persons may submit their resume to the Chair along with a brief letter outlining the interested party's strengths, knowledge, contributions and ties to Indigenous communities. The selection of group members will be decided upon by the Chair and the Committee, by majority vote based on suitability.

Membership on the Committee will be for a 1 year term with a yearly option to renew. If at any time during the course of the year appointment, a member wishes to resign from the committee, a written notice of resignation will be given to the Chairperson.

5. Meetings

It is anticipated that the meetings will be held both in-person and via teleconference. The meetings will be held during daytime hours on weekdays, where possible. Quorum consists of 50% of the group members. The meeting frequency will be determined on an ongoing basis.

The preferred form of decision making within the group is by consensus. Dissenting opinions are to be expressed and discussed. Agreement and collaboration will be sought. Where this is not possible to achieve, a decision will be made by majority vote.

6. Record Keeping

College staff will record and retain minutes from each meeting. The minutes are not required to be approved at subsequent meetings. All minutes, records or reports are maintained at the College office.

Confidential information held by Committee members must be maintained in a locked, secure setting consistent with the *Standards of Practice* and legislative requirements.

7. Responsibilities of Members

Committee members are required to comply with the following principles:

- Promote Indigenous perspectives, values and knowledge at all times and put forward suggestions and recommendations
- Act in ways that ensure the full protection of the public in compliance with the Social Workers Act and, if registered, must uphold the *Standards of Practice*
- Members do not speak officially for their employing organization, the College or Indigenous community but may represent the perspectives of their organizations and/or communities during deliberations
- Members are expected to attend all of the meetings throughout the year and be well prepared and conversant for meetings
- Listen respectfully, ask questions and participate in the discussions
- Respect that the work of the Committee is confidential in nature and do not share or disclose discussions or documents without explicit consent from College staff or Board
- Treat other members, staff and consultants with respect, fairness, honesty and inclusiveness
- Be accountable to other group members and hold them accountable

8. Responsibility of College

The College will provide financial reimbursement for expenditures incurred related to Committee work for members such as travel accommodation and out-of-pocket expenses in accordance with BCCSW and provincial expense guidelines.

9. Responsibility of Chairperson

The Chairperson of the Committee will be a Board member and will be appointed by the Board. The term of office will be one year with a yearly option to renew.

The responsibilities of the Chairperson of the Committee are to:

- provide the overall leadership to the group
- represent the group in public forums, as needed
- brief the Elder and/or Youth prior to each meeting
- facilitate open and respectful discussions at meetings that allow new ideas to be raised without judgment
- evaluates meeting effectiveness and how it could be improved
- prepare the meeting agendas in consultation with the relevant staff person
- communicate with the relevant staff person regarding meeting schedules, agendas, notes and follow up work
- review meeting notes and request Committee feedback at subsequent meetings
- provide leadership to ensure that the work of the group or task is done effectively and in a timely manner
- report back to the Board on the activities of the Committee and seek Board approval as appropriate

10. Role of College Staff

The role of staff is to provide professional advice to the Committee based on their knowledge of regulatory issues, legislation, registrants' concerns, and the interrelationship with external stakeholders and issues. The staff person responsibilities are to:

- Assist the Chairperson with preparation of the agenda and distribution of background materials
- Coordinate all meeting requirements including: room, food and teleconference equipment
- Prepare the meeting minutes
- Provide information and advice to the Committee on relevant issues, including background research and data gathering
- Participate in preparation of meetings along with the Registrar and Chairperson
- Prepare draft reports on recommendation of the Committee and an annual report

11. Terms of Reference Review

The terms of reference are subject to review from time to time as deemed appropriate by the Board or Committee members.