



## **Definition of Counselling Psychology**

Counselling psychology is a broad specialization within professional psychology concerned with using psychological principles to enhance and promote the positive growth, well-being, and mental health of individuals, families, groups, and the broader community. Counselling psychologists bring a collaborative, developmental, multicultural, and wellness perspective to their research and practice. They work with many types of individuals, including those experiencing distress and difficulties associated with life events and transitions, decision-making, work/career/education, family and social relationships, and mental health and physical health concerns. In addition to remediation, counselling psychologists engage in prevention, psycho-education and advocacy. The research and professional domain of counselling psychology overlaps with that of other professions such as clinical psychology, industrial/organizational psychology, and mental health counselling.

Counselling psychology adheres to an integrated set of core values: (a) counselling psychologists view individuals as agents of their own change and regard an individual's pre-existing strengths and resourcefulness and the therapeutic relationship as central mechanisms of change; (b) the counselling psychology approach to assessment, diagnosis, and case conceptualization is holistic and client-centred; and it directs attention to social context and culture when considering internal factors, individual differences, and familial/systemic influences; and (c) the counselling process is pursued with sensitivity to diverse sociocultural factors unique to each individual.

Counselling psychologists practice in diverse settings and employ a variety of evidence-based and theoretical approaches grounded in psychological knowledge. In public agencies, independent practices, schools, universities, health care settings, and corporations, counselling psychologists work in collaboration with individuals to ameliorate distress, facilitate well-being, and maximize effective life functioning.

Research and practice are viewed as mutually informative and counselling psychologists conduct research in a wide range of areas, including those of the counselling relationship and other psychotherapeutic processes, the multicultural dimensions of psychology, and the roles of work and mental health in optimal functioning. Canadian counselling psychologists are especially concerned with culturally appropriate methods suitable for investigating both emic and etic perspectives on human behaviour, and promote the use of research methods drawn from diverse epistemological perspectives, including innovative developments in qualitative and quantitative research.