

ACCT Scope of Practice

December 23, 2025

The Association of Cooperative Counselling Therapists of Canada is a voluntary regulatory body for counsellors and therapists. Members are regulated by the ACCT Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. Registered Therapeutic Counsellors (which includes Accredited Counsellors, Master Therapeutic Counsellors and Registered Counselling Supervisors) are dedicated to providing the highest standard of competent professional assessing, counselling, consulting, and training services. Members of the cooperative are committed to improving mental health through promoting the professional development of competent counsellors, advancing the practice of competency-based counselling and nourishing respect for human dignity and diversity. Registered Therapeutic Counsellors are supported in providing ethical, accountable and compassionate counselling to individuals, couples, groups and families.

Scope of Practice for ACCT

The Association of Cooperative Counselling Therapists of Canada (ACCT) is a self-regulated professional association for counsellors and therapists incorporated under the Cooperative Associations Act of British Columbia. Members are regulated by the Code of Ethics and Practice Standards for ACCT. In this scope of practice, each time Registered Therapeutic Counsellor (RTC) is used it is understood to also include Accredited Counsellor, Master Therapeutic Counsellor and Registered Counselling Supervisor and Registered Therapeutic Counsellor Candidate. RTCs are dedicated to providing the highest standard of competent professional assessment, counselling, consulting, and training services. Members of the cooperative are committed to improving mental health through promoting the professional development of competent counsellors, advancing the practice of competency-based counselling and nourishing respect for human dignity and diversity. RTCs provide ethical, accountable and compassionate counselling to individuals, couples, groups and families.

RTCs assist clients through the experienced and ethical use of the therapeutic relationship to increase self-knowledge, emotional acceptance and growth. The overall aim of counsellors is to provide an opportunity for people to explore possible solutions to personal and interpersonal problems, resolve conflicts, define goals, make decisions and move toward living a more satisfying and resourceful life. Counselling relationships are unique to the individuals involved and counselling may be concerned with, but not limited to the following: developmental issues, addressing and resolving specific problems, understanding of strengths and weaknesses, making decisions, coping with crisis, developing personal insights and knowledge, working through feelings of inner conflict, restructuring feelings, beliefs and concepts or improving relationships with others. Counselling treatment includes, but is not limited to counselling, psychotherapy, behaviour modification, hypnotherapy, sex therapy, consultation, coaching, mediation, client advocacy, crisis intervention, and providing needed information and education to clients.

Counselling Services refers to one or more of the following:

1. assessment, evaluation and treatment of individuals, couples, families and groups in a variety of settings using a wide variety of methods;
2. interventions to facilitate optimum growth and functioning in client's lives;
3. consultation and/or referral to appropriate client services which lie beyond the RTC's areas of expertise;
4. provision of supervision and/or consultation to RTCs (and other) professional practitioners, students and supervisees;
5. program development, research, teaching and writing;
6. testing, consulting, conflict resolution, mediation and coaching practices.

Each RTC has personal competencies within the ACCT's scope of practice, which are determined by their education, training and practice as defined in the Code of Ethics and Practice Standards (2.4.9 Boundaries of Competence) for ACCT. RTCs are aware of their strengths and areas of competence. They communicate professionally, are sensitive to diversity and use an ethical decision-making process. They evaluate and strive to improve

their professional performance, remain current and consistently grow as counsellors. They confer with professional colleagues or ACCT to assist them when needed in order to provide the best quality of service to their clients. Counsellors refer clients to specialists as required when issues are outside of their realm of competence or expertise.

Duty to Advise

re: Psychedelic Integration / Assisted Therapy

ACCT has begun to see an emerging trend of therapists advertising themselves as Psychedelic Integration Therapists. Psychedelic drugs/medicines are currently illegal in Canada, and as a therapist registered with ACCT, your scope of practice needs to be within a legal framework.

ACCT has a duty to advise on the legalities and ethics involved when a Member includes this modality in their practice. This is in an effort to keep the public safe, keep you safe, keep the Association safe, and lower the risk for potential harm to all involved. **As a member of ACCT, you can in no way be viewed as contributing to the client's decision to take illegal substances. Please see Section 2.4.16 (Professional Misconduct) in the ACCT Standards of Practice.**

As a co-operative Association, we are sensitive to the impact this will have on some of our members. And we also need to be cognizant of our obligation to “do no harm”. We are not taking a stand on the efficacy of particular types of psychedelic therapies. We are, however, relying on organizations like M.A.P.S (Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies), TheraPsil, and others (who are either government sanctioned for clinical trials of psychedelic drugs/medicines, and/or are assisting clients and therapists to obtain exemptions to Section 56 of the Controlled Drug Act) to do the research and prep work around making advances towards the legalization of psychedelics.

Guidelines:

In the meantime, as long as psychedelics remain illegal in Canada, if you are not part of a government sanctioned clinical trial, or you and your client have not been granted an exemption from Section 56 of the Controlled Drug Act by the Health Minister, ACCT will consider Psychedelic Integration/Assisted Therapy to be outside the scope of practice of an ACCT therapist. If you are calling yourself a Psychedelic Integration/Assisted Therapist, you could be viewed as condoning the use of illegal substances, which also means that your liability insurance would not cover you. Additionally, you may not be under clinical supervision when practicing this modality.

ACCT advises the following:

- 1 - As per Sections 2.4.16 and 2.6.2 (Accurate Advertising) of the ACCT Standards of Practice and section 5.15 (To maintain healthy boundaries with clients) in the ACCT Code of Ethics, do not advertise yourself as a Psychedelic Integration/Assisted Therapist and/or as being involved in the use of psychedelic plant medicines, as this is outside of current Canadian legal boundaries.
- 2 – If a client approaches you for Psychedelic Integration/Assisted Therapy: indicate the potential risks involved; remove yourself from any legal/ethical issues (i.e. no referring/guiding/pre-counselling/prescribing/recommending/advising clients where to find the psychedelics, etc.).
- 3 – You are not authorized to recommend, prescribe, or administer psychedelics.
- 4 – There are circumstances when an ACCT therapist is permitted to assist a client to integrate a psychedelic experience, after the fact. You would need to determine if counselling the client is within your scope of practice (i.e. Are you clinically trained and supervised to do this integration piece, or do you need to refer out? If the client had a difficult psychedelic experience, are you trauma trained and supervised, or do you need to refer out to a trauma specialist?)

If, on the other hand, you are part of a government sanctioned clinical trial with psychedelics, and/or you and your client have been granted an exemption from Section 56 of the Controlled Drug Act by the Health Minister, you still must have specific recognized training as a Psychedelic Integration Therapist from an accredited source, before this modality could be considered to be within your Scope of Practice with ACCT.