

The information provided in this Practice Support checklist is intended to provide general guidance to assist registrants in identifying issues and options that should be considered, and implementing strategies to address issues, resolve problems and improve practice, with respect to a particular aspect of psychology practice. No checklist can anticipate all variables that might be relevant to a specific professional decision or circumstance, but the checklist can provide general guidance to registrants dealing with the identified practice issue. Registrants are also invited to contact the Practice Support Service with any questions.

Readers are advised that documents provided by the Practice Support Service are not legal advice, and do not supplant any applicable legislation, the College's Code of Conduct, or any other official College communications. While an effort has been made to be comprehensive, the information in this checklist is not exhaustive, and the College makes no warranty or representation as to its currency, completeness or accuracy. The College accepts no responsibility for any errors or omissions, and expressly disclaims any such responsibility.

This checklist does not establish standards, limits or conditions for registrants' practice for the purposes of the Health Professions Act, and it is not intended to impose mandatory requirements to the extent that such requirements are not established under the Code of Conduct. In the case of any inconsistency between this checklist and any Code standard, the Code standard governs. The final decision on the course of action to be taken in any practice situation is made by the registrant, and checklists are not intended as a substitute for the professional judgment and responsibility of the registrant. Exclusive reliance on checklists is imprudent, as every practice decision depends on its own particular circumstances.

This document may not be copied in part. Registrants wishing to copy it in its entirety must keep this disclaimer attached and must identify it as a College of Psychologists of B.C. Practice Support document. For ease of reference, select Code standards are indicated in brackets following checklist items. Registrants are obligated to consider any other Code standards and legislation that may be relevant to a specific practice situation. All references to the Code of Conduct and other legislation is current to the date indicated at the beginning of each checklist.

Use of Social Media Checklist

This document is intended to be of assistance to registrants with respect to the use of social media. Relevant Code standards are indicated in brackets following the checklist items.

The increasing use of social media for personal and professional activities by a broad range of individuals, including registrants, raises a variety of ethical considerations. The term social media is intended to capture any and all currently existing modalities such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Linked In, YouTube, blog sites, etc., and any and all future modalities that allow the use and exchange of user-generated content. The Code of Conduct contains a number of standards that should be considered when contemplating whether and how one might best consider using social media professionally and/or personally. General considerations include: what kinds of professional and personal information might appropriately be posted; intended and unintended viewers who may access professional and personal information on social media sites; and both registrant and client privacy issues. The following checklist is intended to assist registrants in ensuring that any use by them of any social media is consistent with Code of Conduct requirements. Code Standards are provided for reference in brackets following checklist items.

Use of social media for professional activities:

Advertising

Regardless of the medium on which one posts advertising, including social media, relevant Code provisions apply.

- I have ensured that any postings or other activities intended to advertise my services comply with all Code requirements related to advertising, including but not limited to ensuring:
 - appropriate identification of myself as a registrant. (9.1)
 - avoidance of specialty designation. (9.3)
 - specification of any restrictions, limitations, or conditions on my registration required by the College. (9.7)
 - any modifiers to my title that have been assigned by the College have been placed adjacent to the title Psychologist and to the designation R. Psych., as appropriate. (9.7)
 - appropriate presentation of my degree and professional title. (9.7)
 - no misleading reference to professional affiliations or memberships. (9.4, 10.2, 10.16)
 - no exaggeration or misrepresentation of my qualifications. (9.2, 10.16)
 - no exaggeration or misrepresentation of my services. (10.1, 10.16, 18.4)
 - no use of testimonials from clients or former clients. (10.8)

Professional Services

Any and all professional services, including those provided via social media, must meet Code of Conduct and other legislated requirements. I have carefully considered differences between disseminating psychology information for public consideration and providing advice or otherwise entering into a professional relationship with a client or clients.

- I have established a separate personal profile if I wish to use social media personally with family, friends, or acquaintances. (5.1, 5.10, 5.12, 8.1)

- When disseminating psychological information I have:
 - ensured that information is accurate and fairly presented. **(3.13, 10.14, 10.15)**
 - not plagiarized or otherwise misrepresented my role in authoring the information, in whatever form it is presented. **(17.1, 17.2, 17.3)**
 - not presented as original, any data previously published elsewhere. **(17.7)**
- When posting something to my professional social media account I have:
 - considered its relevance to my professional practice. **(7.8, 10.7)**
 - considered whether the posting is revealing any personal information about me and whether that personal disclosure has potential to:
 - alter the terms of my existing professional relationship with any client(s) such that a dual role is created. **(5.10)**
 - impact my current clients' welfare. **(5.1)**
 - impact my therapeutic alliance with each of my clients. **(5.33)**
 - taken precautions to ensure that the recipients of the information are not encouraged to infer that a professional relationship has been established with them personally. **(10.15)**
- I carefully consider all of my professional postings to ensure they will not bring the profession of psychology into disrepute, including by ensuring that I am not:
 - providing any information about or commenting on clients or potential clients, or on my work with these individuals. **(6.2, 7.8)**
 - providing any information about or commenting on colleagues, coworkers, supervisees, subordinates, or any other persons with whom I work. **(7.4, 7.8)**
 - providing any information about or commenting on my employer or work setting. **(7.8)**
 - posting disparaging, discriminatory, harassing, disrespectful, or otherwise unprofessional comments of any kind. **(5.14, 7.8)**
 - proactively removing any postings that could be considered unprofessional. **(7.8)**

Client rights to privacy

- I respect my clients' privacy by not viewing their websites or online profiles without first seeking their consent to access those sites. **(4.1, 4.2)**
- I do not include information obtained from collateral sources such as online sites in clients' records without their knowledge. **(4.1, 4.2)**

Use of social media for personal purposes:

- I have established a separate professional profile if I wish to use social media professionally with clients or the general public. **(5.1, 5.10, 5.12, 8.1)**
- I have appropriately taken into account the fact that everyone with access to the Internet potentially has access to information I am posting, including current and potential future clients, and that even with strict privacy settings in place privacy breaches on social media sites are possible. I have asked myself, "If I wouldn't share the information (including my private opinions, beliefs, interests, and activities), video, or image with clients during a professional encounter, should it be available to them on line?" **(5.1, 7.8)**
- I have established appropriately strict privacy settings on all of my social media sites to ensure that my personal information is protected to the extent possible, and I monitor and review my settings on a regular basis to ensure my privacy is maintained. **(5.1, 7.8)**
- I have established appropriate measures to ensure that my links to any personal relationships are not publicly accessible. **(5.1, 7.8)**
- I accept connections with clients or potential clients, or those close to them, for professional purposes only, and do not accept or seek out personal connections with such individuals. **(5.1, 5.10, 5.12, 8.1)**
- I carefully consider all of my personal postings to ensure they will not bring the profession of psychology into disrepute, including by ensuring that I am not:
 - providing any information about or commenting on clients or potential clients, or on my work with these individuals. **(6.2, 7.8)**
 - providing any information about or commenting on colleagues, coworkers, supervisees, subordinates, or any other persons with whom I work. **(7.4, 7.8)**
 - providing any information about or commenting on my employer or work setting. **(7.8)**
 - posting disparaging, discriminatory, harassing, disrespectful, or otherwise unprofessional comments of any kind. **(5.14, 7.8)**
 - proactively removing any postings that could be considered unprofessional. **(7.8)**