

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE POLICY #37

Association of Cooperative Counselling Therapists (the “Association”)

This policy was originally prepared and adopted by the board in 2013.

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Approved by the board on September 2025

This version has been revised with inputs from all areas of the ACCT community including:

- The Board of Directors
- The ACCT Staff
- The Ethics Committee
- The Membership Committee
- The Supervision Committee
- Legal Counsel - Elliot Bridgewater

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1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy establishes a fair, transparent, and progressive discipline framework for members of the Association. It ensures that allegations of misconduct, professional incompetence, or ethical breaches are investigated independently and addressed in accordance with principles of natural justice.
- 1.2. This policy is enacted pursuant to the British Columbia Cooperative Association Act (the “Act”) and aligns with the Association’s Rules and ethical standards.
- 1.3. In many Canadian provinces, the counselling profession is not regulated by provincial law. At the time of this writing, BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the three territories are unregulated. The majority of ACCT counsellors work or live in these unregulated provinces.
- 1.4. The Association of Cooperative Counselling Therapists of Canada, ACCT, has been incorporated since August 14, 2013, under the British Columbia Cooperative Association Act, 1999 - 2023. ACCT is dedicated to cooperatively supporting excellence in competency based counselling therapy. In this way, our primary focus is to protect the public by establishing and regulating the ACCT Code of Ethics and ACCT Standards of Practice for its members. The Association grants the use of these designations:
 - 1.4.1. Registered Therapeutic Counsellor Candidate, (RTCc);
 - 1.4.2. Registered Therapeutic Counsellor, (RTC);
 - 1.4.3. Accredited Counsellor, (AC);
 - 1.4.4. Master Therapeutic Counsellor, (MTC);
 - 1.4.5. Registered Counselling Supervisor, (RCS);
- 1.5. ACCT members with the designations: RTC, AC, MTC and RCS, are counsellors who have satisfied rigorous standards and successfully completed comprehensive supervision.
- 1.6. The purpose of these policies and procedures is motivated by the following goals, in order of priority:
 - 1.6.1. Protect the public.
 - 1.6.2. Protect the ACCT community, the membership as a whole including staff and volunteers, and its brand and property such as designations and logos.

1.6.3. Protect and accommodate the needs of individual ACCT members.

1.7. Counsellors registered with ACCT are accountable to the Association and to the public through the ACCT Code of Ethics and the ACCT Standards of Practice, as well as through its complaint, investigation, fitness to practice and discipline procedures. Protecting the public is initially satisfied through a rigorous registration process and, when a complaint is lodged, through an inquiry and progressive disciplinary process.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to all members of the Association and governs complaints and disciplinary matters related to breaches of:

2.1.1. The Association's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice;

2.1.2. Applicable laws and regulations governing psychological counselling;

2.1.3. Membership obligations set out in the Association's Rules and policies; and

2.1.4. Membership obligations set out in any Agreement between the Member and the Association

2.2. ACCT receives and investigates complaints against its members. Generally, four internal groups are responsible for decisions within the complaint resolution process:

2.2.1. The Ethics Committee (See Section 10 - Appendix A)

2.2.2. The Fitness to Practice Committee (See Fitness To Practice Terms of Reference)

2.2.3. The Appeals Committee (See Section 12 - Appendix C)

2.2.4. The Board of Directors

2.2.5. It is also important to note that the ACCT membership itself can make decisions regarding ethics complaints at General Meetings of the members. (See BC Cooperative Association Act)

2.3. To the extent that resources permit, complaints are investigated in a timely fashion. However, since parts of the complaint resolution process depend on the efforts of volunteers, the investigation and resolution of a given complaint may

take up to a year or longer. Other factors affecting the complaint resolution process are related to the severity and complexity of the case.

2.4. During the complaint process, ACCT works with the counsellor to ensure accountability to the ACCT Code of Ethics and ACCT Standards of Practice. In some cases involving an ACCT supervisor, the ACCT Supervisors Standards of Practice will be referenced. In other cases, the complaint may be more appropriately addressed by following the Fitness to Practice Guidelines outlined in Fitness To Practice Terms of Reference.

2.5. ACCT has defined two possible paths for resolution of a complaint: Informal and Formal

2.5.1. Complaints are initially assessed to determine severity and complexity. Based on this initial assessment which occurs in the Preliminary Review (see section 4.2), the Ethics Committee will decide if the complaint will be handled in a formal manner or informal manner.

2.5.2. The majority of complaints are of a nature that can be best resolved through an informal process that may involve a variety of tasks and steps such as: education, training, report writing, apologies, assessments, interviews and focused ongoing supervision. This progressive approach is meant to address the seriousness of a breach while helping the counsellor learn and improve their professionalism. The focus is on healthy generative actions rather than punishments, deterrents and public shaming. Complaints in this informal category will be dealt with according to the guidelines described in Section 11 - Appendix B, (the Informal Dispute Resolution) relating to competence to practice.

2.5.3. Some complaints describe a possible breach that may be more severe or complex. In these cases, it may be necessary to consider membership termination or suspension. These complaints would require a more structured approach to resolution. In these cases, the formal steps outlined in section 4.3 will be followed. In following the formal steps in section 4.3, ACCT considers the possibility that a serious breach may have occurred but does not assume that a breach occurred until after an investigation report is reviewed by the Ethics Committee. This formal process is meant to ensure the counsellor is given a fair and reasonable opportunity to respond to the complaint.

2.6. Complaints that fall within ACCT's jurisdiction must meet the following criteria:

2.6.1. The complaint involves concerns about a current member of ACCT; or

- 2.6.2. The complaint is about possible conduct detrimental to the association, or a potential breach of the Code of Ethics or Standards of Practice; or
- 2.6.3. The concern(s) are expressed on behalf of the complainant or a minor for whom the guardian acts as the complainant, and either the guardian or the minor were clients of the ACCT member and/or received counselling services from him or her.
- 2.7. ACCT will not attempt to resolve a complaint if:
 - 2.7.1. There are current legal proceedings involved; or
 - 2.7.2. The complaint concerns a healthcare facility, institution or agency; or
 - 2.7.3. The complaint is about business practices outside the ACCT Code of Ethics and ACCT Standards of Practice; or
 - 2.7.4. The complaint is submitted more than two years after the alleged breach took place.
- 2.8. The ACCT cannot:
 - 2.8.1. Negotiate any financial restitution;
 - 2.8.2. Investigate allegations of criminal behaviour;
 - 2.8.3. Make rulings on matters that are currently undergoing legal proceedings.
- 2.9. Examples of concerns ACCT can address involving a complaint about its members, volunteers or staff can be viewed in Section 12 - Appendix D
- 2.10. Examples of Conduct Detrimental to the association can be viewed in Section 13 - Appendix E

3. Principles of Progressive Discipline

- 3.1. Disciplinary measures shall be:
 - 3.1.1. Fair and Proportionate – Responses to misconduct shall be proportionate to the severity of the breach;
 - 3.1.1.1. Escalation -Disciplinary measures become more serious if:
 - 3.1.1.1.1. The member does not change their behavior.
 - 3.1.1.1.2. There are repeated or escalating breaches

- 3.1.1.1.3. The individual shows disregard for prior warning or agreements.
- 3.1.2. Transparent and Consistent – Procedures shall be clearly defined and applied uniformly;
- 3.1.3. Educational – Discipline aims to correct conduct through education and remedial actions before punitive measures are considered; and
- 3.1.4. Independent and Impartial – Whenever possible, investigations shall be conducted by neutral parties to ensure fairness. In cases where perceived or real conflict of interest exists within any of the groups involved in complaint procedures, said group will be guided by Conflict of Interest policy to assess the seriousness of the conflict of interest and its approach in minimizing and mitigating it.

4. Disciplinary Process

4.1. Receipt of Complaint

- 4.1.1. Complaints must be submitted in writing to the Association’s Ethics Committee via email in care of the Executive Director.
- 4.1.2. The complaint must include the name of the complainant, details of the alleged misconduct, and supporting evidence.
- 4.1.3. Anonymous complaints may only be considered if sufficient independent evidence is provided.

4.2. Preliminary Review

- 4.2.1. The Ethics Committee will attempt to resolve the complaint at this preliminary stage prior to advancing to either the informal path (Section 11 Appendix B) or formal resolution path (Section 4.3).
 - 4.2.1.1. The Ethics Committee may dismiss complaints that are frivolous, vexatious, or outside the Association’s jurisdiction.
 - 4.2.1.2. The Ethics Committee shall assess whether the complaint falls within the jurisdiction of the Association and whether it warrants further investigation.

- 4.2.2. The Ethics Committee may expand the review to explore the Member's fitness to practice as well as possible breaches of the ACCT Code of Ethics or Standards of Practice.
- 4.2.3. If 4.2.1 cannot resolve the matter, the Ethics Committee will determine whether the matter advances to the Formal (Section 4.3) or Informal (Section 11 Appendix B) path to resolution.
- 4.2.4. If the complaint proceeds, the respondent (the accused member who is a counsellor) shall be notified in writing and given an opportunity to respond. Respondents must reply within 30 days of notice.

4.3. The Formal Resolution Process (Independent Investigation Process)

- 4.3.1. To ensure procedural fairness, all investigations shall be conducted in a transparent, unbiased, and thorough manner. The following steps shall be followed:
 - 4.3.2. Step 1: Appointment of an Independent Investigator
 - 4.3.2.1. If the Ethics Committee determines that a complaint warrants a formal investigation, an independent investigator shall be appointed. The investigator must:
 - 4.3.2.1.1. Have no prior involvement in the case or relationship with either the respondent or complainant;
 - 4.3.2.1.2. Possess relevant expertise in professional misconduct investigations; and
 - 4.3.2.1.3. Be impartial and free from conflicts of interest. (Link to conflict of interest policy).
 - 4.3.2.2. The investigator's role is fact-finding; they shall not make disciplinary decisions but shall provide findings and recommendations to the Committee.
 - 4.3.3. Step 2: Notification of Investigation
 - 4.3.3.1. The respondent (accused member who is a member of ACCT) shall receive written notice that an investigation has been initiated. The notice must include:
 - 4.3.3.1.1. A summary of the allegations;

- 4.3.3.1.2. A copy of the complaint (where possible);
 - 4.3.3.1.3. The investigator's name and contact details;
 - 4.3.3.1.4. Information about the investigation process and potential disciplinary outcomes; and
 - 4.3.3.1.5. The respondent's right to legal representation or support.
- 4.3.3.2. The complainant shall also be informed about the investigation process, expected timelines, and their rights during the proceedings.
- 4.3.4. Step 3: Collection of Evidence
- 4.3.4.1. The investigator shall collect all relevant evidence, which may include:
 - 4.3.4.1.1. Written statements from the complainant, respondent, and witnesses;
 - 4.3.4.1.2. Client records or professional documentation (with appropriate privacy safeguards);
 - 4.3.4.1.3. Audio, video, or electronic communications relevant to the complaint; and
 - 4.3.4.1.4. Any other material evidence that may clarify the facts.
 - 4.3.4.2. The investigator shall ensure confidentiality and handle sensitive information in compliance with applicable privacy laws.
- 4.3.5. Step 4: Interviews
- 4.3.5.1. The investigator shall conduct interviews with relevant parties, including:
 - 4.3.5.1.1. The complainant;
 - 4.3.5.1.2. The respondent; and
 - 4.3.5.1.3. Witnesses with direct knowledge of the alleged conduct.
 - 4.3.5.2. All interviews shall:
 - 4.3.5.2.1. Be conducted in a neutral and respectful manner;

- 4.3.5.2.2. Be documented, either through written summaries or recorded with consent; and
 - 4.3.5.2.3. Allow the interviewee to review and confirm the accuracy of their statements.
- 4.3.6. Step 5: Opportunity for Response
- 4.3.6.1. Before finalizing the investigation, the respondent shall be given a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegations and the evidence collected.
 - 4.3.6.2. The respondent may submit:
 - 4.3.6.2.1. A written statement addressing the allegations;
 - 4.3.6.2.2. Supporting evidence, such as records, communications, or expert opinions; and
 - 4.3.6.2.3. Witness testimony or character references.
 - 4.3.6.3. If new evidence arises after the respondent's initial response, they must be given a chance to respond to that evidence before the investigation concludes.
- 4.3.7. Step 6: Investigator's Report
- 4.3.7.1. The investigator shall prepare a written report containing:
 - 4.3.7.1.1. A summary of the complaint and allegations;
 - 4.3.7.1.2. The investigation methodology;
 - 4.3.7.1.3. A factual analysis of the evidence;
 - 4.3.7.1.4. The respondent's response and any mitigating factors; and
 - 4.3.7.1.5. Findings and recommendations regarding potential disciplinary actions.
 - 4.3.7.2. The investigator shall not determine guilt or impose penalties but may provide recommendations based on the evidence.
 - 4.3.7.3. The report shall be submitted to the Ethics Committee for review.
- 4.3.8. Step 7: Review by the Ethics Committee

- 4.3.8.1. The Ethics Committee shall review the investigator’s report and determine that a breach occurred and the appropriate disciplinary action, if any.
- 4.3.8.2. The Ethics Committee may consider the counsellors fitness to practice.
 - 4.3.8.2.1. Fitness to practice guidelines can be viewed in Fitness to Practice Terms of Reference.
- 4.3.8.3. The Committee shall ensure that:
 - 4.3.8.3.1. Decisions are based on evidence, not speculation or bias;
 - 4.3.8.3.2. Members of the Committee with conflicts of interest recuse themselves (link to conflict of interest); and
 - 4.3.8.3.3. The respondent is provided with the opportunity to attend a disciplinary hearing, if required.
 - 4.3.8.3.4. Please see Section 10 - Appendix A for more information about the Ethics Committee.
- 4.3.9. Step 8: Notification of Decision
 - 4.3.9.1. The respondent shall receive a written decision detailing:
 - 4.3.9.1.1. The outcome of the investigation;
 - 4.3.9.1.2. Any disciplinary measures imposed;
 - 4.3.9.1.3. Reasons for the decision; and
 - 4.3.9.1.4. The right to appeal and the procedure for doing so.
 - 4.3.9.2. The complainant shall be informed of the outcome in a manner that respects confidentiality and legal obligations.
- 4.3.10. Step 9: Appeal Process
 - 4.3.10.1. If the respondent chooses to appeal the decision, they must submit a written appeal within 14 days of receiving the decision. The appeal shall be reviewed by an independent Appeals Committee, which may:
 - 4.3.10.1.1. Uphold the decision;

- 4.3.10.1.2. Modify the disciplinary measures; or
- 4.3.10.1.3. Overturn the decision and order a new investigation.
- 4.3.10.2. The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final and binding.
- 4.3.10.3. For more information about the Appeals Committee see Section 12 - Appendix C
- 4.3.11. Step 10: Record Keeping and Confidentiality
 - 4.3.11.1. The Association shall securely maintain records of the investigation for a minimum of five years. All information obtained during the investigation shall remain confidential, except where disclosure is required to protect the public, the association, its members or by law.
 - 4.3.11.2. The Association may disclose decisions involving confirmed breaches, suspensions, or terminations to its membership subject to Board or Ethics Committee approval..
 - 4.3.11.3. ACCT has a duty to warn the public of safety concerns related to its members and is authorized with Board or Ethics Committee approval, to disclose some confidential information where necessary to protect client or public safety.
 - 4.3.11.3.1. Examples of disclosure may include (not exclusive):
 - 4.3.11.3.1.1. The members name and member number, province or region of activity, “not in good standing” status, suspensions.
 - 4.3.11.4. The Association may disclose those members who are not in good standing to its membership, insurance companies, benefits providers, other professional associations, professional colleges and the public.
 - 4.3.11.5. For more information about Good Standing, please see Section 15 - Appendix F

4.4. Disciplinary Measures

- 4.4.1. Disciplinary actions shall be applied progressively based on the severity and impact of the misconduct. The Committee shall consider the nature of the offence, intent, harm caused, and whether the member has a history of prior infractions.
- 4.4.2. A history of prior infraction(s) will result in an escalating disciplinary response.
- 4.4.3. Verbal Warning (Least Severe)
 - 4.4.3.1. A verbal warning may be issued for minor infractions that do not cause harm to clients, colleagues, or the reputation of the Association. Examples include:
 - 4.4.3.1.1. Failure to respond to administrative requests from the Association in a timely manner;
 - 4.4.3.1.2. Unintentional breach of minor ethical guidelines (e.g., improper use of professional titles due to misunderstanding of regulations);
 - 4.4.3.1.3. Isolated instances of minor unprofessional conduct, such as inappropriate but non-harmful comments in a professional setting.
- 4.4.4. Written Warning
 - 4.4.4.1. A written warning may be issued when misconduct is more serious or if a verbal warning has not been heeded. Examples include:
 - 4.4.4.1.1. Repeated failure to maintain proper client records as required by ethical guidelines;
 - 4.4.4.1.2. Breach of confidentiality in a manner that does not cause significant harm but is still inappropriate (e.g., discussing non-identifiable client details in an informal setting);
 - 4.4.4.1.3. Insubordination or refusal to comply with reasonable requests from the Association regarding membership obligations.
 - 4.4.4.1.4. Isolated instances of minor professional negligence or incompetence.

4.4.5. Probationary Period

4.4.5.1. A probationary period may be imposed for more serious violations where corrective action is necessary. Conditions may include additional supervision, required education, or compliance monitoring. Examples include:

- 4.4.5.1.1. Providing counselling services outside the scope of practice without significant harm occurring;
- 4.4.5.1.2. Minor conflicts of interest not appropriately disclosed but later corrected;
- 4.4.5.1.3. Persistent failure to adhere to professional development or continuing education requirements.
- 4.4.5.1.4. Repeated instances of minor professional negligence or incompetence.
- 4.4.5.1.5. Isolated instances of professional negligence likely to cause significant harm to counsellor-patient relationships.

4.4.6. Suspension

4.4.6.1. A suspension may be imposed when misconduct is serious, involves harm to clients or discredits the profession or the association, or repeated violations occur despite prior discipline.

4.4.6.2. A suspension refers to restrictions on the use of ACCT property including its designations, logos, brands. For more information about sanctions please see Appendix F (Definitions).

4.4.6.3. Examples of behaviour that may result in a suspension include:

- 4.4.6.3.1. Engaging in relationships with clients that create a conflict of interest and compromise professional boundaries;
- 4.4.6.3.2. Repeated breaches of confidentiality resulting in harm to clients;
- 4.4.6.3.3. Practicing without appropriate licensing or misrepresenting qualifications in a way that would probably deceive clients or the public.

- 4.4.6.3.4. Repeated instances of professional negligence or incompetence likely to cause significant harm to the counsellor-patient relationship.
 - 4.4.6.3.5. Persistent failure or refusal to comply with requests from the board;
 - 4.4.6.3.6. Failure or refusal to comply with disciplinary findings or conditions imposed by the Board or delegated authority of the Association.
- 4.4.7. Termination (Most Severe) (See Section 10.0 below)
- 4.4.7.1. Termination of Membership from the Association is the most severe penalty and may be applied in cases of extreme misconduct, including criminal acts, gross or repeated ethical violations, or actions that severely harm clients or the profession. Examples include:
 - 4.4.7.1.1. Engaging in fraudulent or deceptive business practices, including falsifying client records or misrepresenting services for financial gain;
 - 4.4.7.1.2. Criminal convictions or serious pending charges related to professional conduct, including but not limited to fraud, sexual misconduct, or assault.
 - 4.4.7.1.2.1. Pending charges may result in immediate temporary suspension where the alleged conduct poses a risk to the public or the reputation of the profession.
 - 4.4.7.1.3. Gross negligence or incompetence resulting in significant harm to clients (e.g., providing harmful treatment despite clear evidence of its dangers);
 - 4.4.7.1.4. Persistent, willful violations of the Association's ethical standards, even after multiple corrective measures.
 - 4.4.7.1.5. Practicing counselling under a suspended membership;
 - 4.4.7.2. Any of the above misconduct listed in this subsection (4.4.7), or other extreme or persistent misconduct, shall constitute a fundamental breach of material conditions for membership and

constitute grounds for termination of the membership agreement and membership in the Association.

- 4.4.7.3. See Section 5 below for information about the Termination process outlined in the BC Cooperative Associations Act.

4.5. Member-to-Member Disputes

- 4.5.1. The Association recognizes that disputes may arise between members regarding professional conduct, ethical obligations, or other matters related to their work within the profession. This section outlines the process for resolving member-to-member disputes, favouring mediation and collaborative resolution over formal disciplinary measures where appropriate.

4.5.2. Guiding Principles

- 4.5.2.1. The resolution of member-to-member disputes shall be guided by the following principles:

4.5.2.1.1. Early Resolution – Members should attempt to resolve disputes informally before escalating to formal complaints.

4.5.2.1.2. Mediation First Approach – Mediation is the preferred method of dispute resolution, encouraging constructive dialogue and reconciliation.

4.5.2.1.3. Fairness and Impartiality – The process shall be impartial and ensure that both parties have an opportunity to present their perspectives.

4.5.2.1.4. Confidentiality – Information shared during dispute resolution shall remain confidential, except where disclosure is required by law.

4.5.2.1.5. Professionalism – Members shall engage in dispute resolution in a respectful and professional manner.

4.5.3. Informal Resolution Process

- 4.5.3.1. Before filing a formal complaint, members are encouraged to:

4.5.3.1.1. Engage in Direct Communication – Where appropriate, members should attempt to resolve disputes through respectful, direct communication.

- 4.5.3.1.2. Seek Guidance – Members may consult with the Association’s Ethics for advice on how to approach the dispute.
 - 4.5.3.1.3. Request Mediation – If direct communication is unsuccessful, members may request voluntary mediation facilitated by a neutral third-party mediator appointed by the Association. Link to cost explanation (ACCT may approve covering 1/3 of the mediation costs on a case-by-case basis).
- 4.5.4. Formal Complaint Process
- 4.5.4.1. If a dispute cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint may be filed under the following process:
 - 4.5.4.2. Step 1: Submission of Complaint
 - 4.5.4.2.1. A complaint must be submitted in writing to the Association’s Ethics Committee.
 - 4.5.4.2.2. The complaint must include:
 - 4.5.4.2.2.1. The names of both parties involved;
 - 4.5.4.2.2.2. A detailed description of the dispute, including dates and relevant context;
 - 4.5.4.2.2.3. Any attempts made to resolve the matter informally; and
 - 4.5.4.2.2.4. Any supporting documents or evidence.
 - 4.5.4.3. Step 2: Preliminary Review
 - 4.5.4.3.1. The Ethics Committee shall review the complaint to determine if:
 - 4.5.4.3.1.1. The dispute falls within the Association’s jurisdiction;
 - 4.5.4.3.1.2. The complaint is frivolous, vexatious, or malicious (if so, it may be dismissed); and
 - 4.5.4.3.1.3. Mediation is an appropriate course of action.
 - 4.5.4.3.2. If the Committee determines that mediation is viable, both parties shall be invited to participate.

4.5.4.4. Step 3: Mediation Process

4.5.4.4.1. The parties involved in mediation shall agree in writing to the terms of the mediation process outlined by the mediator prior to commencing the mediation.

4.5.4.4.2. A trained mediator (either internal or external to the Association) shall be appointed.

4.5.4.4.3. The cost of mediation shall be shared equally between the parties. (one third by the complainant, one third by the respondent, one third by ACCT).

4.5.4.4.4. The mediator shall conduct structured discussions to facilitate resolution, which may include:

4.5.4.4.4.1. Individual sessions with each party;

4.5.4.4.4.2. Joint meetings to discuss concerns in a controlled environment; and

4.5.4.4.4.3. Development of a mutually agreed-upon resolution plan.

4.5.4.4.5. If mediation results in an agreement, the mediator shall document the terms, and both parties shall sign a Resolution Agreement.

4.5.4.4.6. If mediation is unsuccessful, the case may proceed to formal investigation if serious ethical or professional breaches are alleged.

4.5.4.5. Step 4: Investigation and Disciplinary Action (if required)

4.5.4.5.1. If the dispute involves allegations of serious misconduct, including harassment, discrimination, or unethical conduct, the matter may be escalated to a formal investigation under Section 4.3.

4.5.4.5.1.1. The Association shall appoint an independent investigator to examine the complaint.

4.5.4.5.1.2. The investigator shall follow the step-by-step investigation process outlined in Section 4.3.

4.5.4.5.1.3. Depending on the findings, disciplinary measures ranging from warnings to suspension or termination may be applied (see Section 4.4).

4.5.4.6. Record Keeping and Confidentiality

4.5.4.6.1. Mediation records shall remain confidential and shall not be used in disciplinary proceedings unless both parties agree.

4.5.4.6.2. The Association shall securely maintain records of the investigation for a minimum of five years. All information obtained during the investigation shall remain confidential, except where disclosure is required by law.

4.5.4.6.3. The Association may disclose decisions involving confirmed breaches, suspensions, or terminations to its membership subject to Board or Ethics Committee approval.

4.5.4.6.4. ACCT has a duty to warn the public of safety concerns related to its members and is authorized with Board or Ethics Committee approval, to disclose some confidential information where necessary to protect client or public safety.

4.5.4.6.4.1. Examples of disclosure may include (not exclusive):

4.5.4.6.4.1.1. The members name and member number, province or region of activity, “not in good standing” status, suspensions.

4.5.4.6.5. The Association may disclose those members who are not in good standing to its membership, insurance companies, benefits providers, other professional associations, professional colleges and the public.

4.5.4.6.6. For more information about Good Standing, please see Section 15 - Appendix F

4.6. Immediate Membership Suspension in Emergent or Hazardous Circumstances

4.6.1. The Association has the authority to impose an immediate temporary suspension of a member’s use of ACCT property, designations, logos and brand, if their continued practice poses a serious risk to public safety,

client welfare, or the reputation of the profession. This ensures that urgent concerns are addressed swiftly while maintaining procedural fairness.

4.6.2. The question of fitness to practice may be raised. See Fitness to Practice Terms of Reference for more information about fitness to practice.

4.6.3. Grounds for Immediate Suspension

4.6.3.1. A member may be subject to immediate temporary suspension if:

4.6.3.1.1. Client or Public Safety is at Risk – The member’s actions or omissions pose an immediate danger to clients or the public (e.g., serious ethical violations, harmful treatment practices, violent or threatening behavior).

4.6.3.1.2. Serious Criminal Charges – The member has been charged with a serious criminal offence (e.g., sexual misconduct, fraud, assault) without implying a finding of guilt in order to safe guard the public or the profession

4.6.3.1.3. Gross Professional Misconduct – The member has engaged in conduct that severely breaches ethical or professional standards (e.g., falsification of credentials, financial exploitation of clients).

4.6.3.1.4. Impairment Affecting Fitness to Practice – The member is suspected of practicing while impaired by substances or a medical/psychological condition that significantly affects their ability to provide competent care. (See Fitness to Practice Terms of Reference).

4.6.3.1.5. Other Hazardous Circumstances – Any other situation in which the Association has credible evidence that immediate action is necessary to prevent harm.

4.6.4. Suspension Process

4.6.4.1. Step 1: Preliminary Assessment and Decision to Suspend

4.6.4.1.1. If a complaint or report suggests an emergent risk, the Ethics Committee or Board of Directors may conduct an expedited review.

4.6.4.1.2. The Committee may issue an Interim Suspension Order if there is reasonable belief that allowing the member to

continue practicing poses a significant risk. The Committee may add a recommendation that the member temporarily suspend their counselling activities.

- 4.6.4.1.3. The member and their supervisor shall be notified in writing immediately, outlining:
 - 4.6.4.1.3.1. The reasons for the suspension;
 - 4.6.4.1.3.2. The evidence supporting the decision;
 - 4.6.4.1.3.3. Their right to respond and request an expedited review; and
 - 4.6.4.1.3.4. The next steps in the investigation process.
- 4.6.4.2. Step 2: Expedited Review of the Suspension
 - 4.6.4.2.1. The suspended member may submit a written response within seven (7) days of receiving the suspension notice.
 - 4.6.4.2.2. The Ethics Committee shall review the response and determine whether to:
 - 4.6.4.2.2.1. Maintain the suspension;
 - 4.6.4.2.2.2. Modify the suspension conditions (e.g., restricting specific practices rather than full suspension); or
 - 4.6.4.2.2.3. Lift the suspension if the risk is deemed minimal or mitigated.
 - 4.6.4.2.3. The member shall be informed of the decision in writing.
- 4.6.4.3. Step 3: Full Investigation and Final Decision
 - 4.6.4.3.1. The matter shall proceed to a full investigation under Section 4.3, following standard procedural fairness principles.
 - 4.6.4.3.2. If the investigation confirms serious misconduct, the case may result in further disciplinary actions, including termination.
 - 4.6.4.3.3. If the investigation finds no substantial risk, the suspension shall be lifted, and the member may resume practice.

4.6.5. Confidentiality and Public Notification

4.6.5.1. ACCT has a duty to warn the public of safety concerns related to its members and is authorized with Board or Ethics Committee approval, to disclose some confidential information where necessary to protect client or public safety.

4.6.5.1.1. Examples of disclosure may include:

4.6.5.1.1.1. The members name and member number, province or region of activity, “not in good standing” status, suspensions.

4.6.5.2. Immediate suspensions shall remain confidential, except where disclosure is necessary to protect public safety or required by law.

4.6.5.3. If a member’s suspension affects their ability to practice, the Association may notify regulatory bodies, employers, or affected clients, as permitted by applicable privacy laws.

5. Termination of Membership in Accordance with Section 34 of the BC Cooperative Associations Act

5.1. In accordance with the British Columbia Cooperative Associations Act, the Association may terminate a member's membership under the following conditions:

5.1.1. Conduct Detrimental to the Association – If a member has engaged in conduct detrimental to the Association (see Section 14 - Appendix E);

5.1.2. Non-Payment of Dues – If a member has not paid money due to the Association within a reasonable time after receiving written notice to do so;

5.1.3. Breach of Material Conditions – If, in the opinion of the directors, based on reasonable grounds, the member has breached a material condition of an agreement with the Association and has not rectified the breach within a reasonable time after receiving written notice to do so.

5.2. Termination of membership shall proceed as follows:

5.2.1. A resolution of the directors requiring a majority of at least 3/4 of all the directors must be passed at a meeting called to consider the resolution;

- 5.2.2. The member shall be given at least 7 days' notice of the meeting, along with a statement of the grounds for the proposed termination;
 - 5.2.3. The member may attend the meeting, either personally or with an agent or counsel, to make submissions;
 - 5.2.4. Within 7 days after the meeting, the directors must deliver written notice of the outcome to the member.
- 5.3. Members whose membership is terminated have the right to appeal the decision in accordance with Section 37 of the BC Cooperative Associations Act.

6. Appeals Process

- 6.1. Members subject to disciplinary action may appeal to the Appeals Committee within 14 days of receiving the decision. The Appeals Committee shall be composed of three Board members not previously involved in the disciplinary decision. The Appeals Committee shall conduct a review and may uphold, modify, or overturn the decision.
- 6.2. The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final and binding.
- 6.3. More information about the Appeals Process can be found in Section 12 - Appendix C.

7. Compliance with the British Columbia Cooperative Association Act

- 7.1. This policy is enacted in accordance with the authority granted to the Association under the British Columbia Cooperative Association Act. Any amendments to the Act that affect disciplinary processes shall be incorporated into this policy as required.

8. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

- 8.1. All disciplinary proceedings shall be confidential, except where disclosure is required by law.
- 8.2. The Association shall maintain records of disciplinary actions for a minimum of five years.

9. Review and Amendments

- 9.1. This policy shall be reviewed every three years or as needed to ensure compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements. Amendments must be approved by the Association's Board of Directors.

10. Appendix A - The Ethics Committee

- 10.1. Terms of Reference
- 10.2. The Ethics Committee is a subcommittee of the Board of Directors and is authorized to:
 - 10.2.1. Determine if a breach of its Code of Ethics or Standards of Practice has occurred;
 - 10.2.2. Determine an appropriate response to the breach including the possibility of membership termination.
 - 10.2.3. Determine if a members "good standing" status is maintained or changed to "not in good standing"
- 10.3. Purpose
 - 10.3.1. The Ethics Committee's purpose is to:
 - 10.3.1.1. Review complaints about ACCT members
 - 10.3.1.1.1. Determine if a breach of the ACCT Code of Ethics or Standards of Practice occurred.
 - 10.3.1.1.2. Determine an appropriate response to the breach,
 - 10.3.1.1.3. Provide a reason for their response,
 - 10.3.1.2. Review the Progressive Discipline Policy and recommend improvements for Board Approval.
- 10.4. Membership
 - 10.4.1. The Executive Director and Staff Administrators.
 - 10.4.2. Liaison Officer - Appointed by the ACCT Board of Directors
 - 10.4.3. Investigators
 - 10.4.4. Volunteer Committee Members - A minimum of 3, Appointed by the ACCT Board of Directors.
 - 10.4.5. The Ethics Committee volunteers are:
 - 10.4.5.1. Volunteer Committee Members (minimum of 3)
 - 10.4.5.1.1. Active and in good standing
 - 10.4.5.1.2. Have a minimum of three years experience as a counsellor
 - 10.4.5.1.3. Have a minimum two years experience as a member of ACCT

- 10.4.5.2. The Executive Director
 - 10.4.5.2.1. Oversees the Progressive Discipline Process
 - 10.4.5.2.2. Does not vote to determine breaches or responses.
 - 10.4.5.2.3. Chairs the Ethics Committee
- 10.4.5.3. The Liaison Officer is a board director or appointee.
 - 10.4.5.3.1. Does not vote to determine breaches or responses.
 - 10.4.5.3.2. They are an advisor to the Committee
 - 10.4.5.3.3. They are tasked with the update and management of the policy details, policy revisions and case history.
- 10.4.6. The Executive Director may expand the committee on a case by case basis to include:
 - 10.4.6.1. Specialists with experience in law, Ethics, Professional Standards, etc.
 - 10.4.6.2. Past committee members or experts from other associations and cooperatives.
- 10.5. Guiding Priorities:
 - 10.5.1. The ACCT Ethics Committee receives and investigates complaints against members.
 - 10.5.2. The Ethics Committee and its members adhere to the ACCT Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, Confidentiality Policies, Conflict of Interest Policies and the Progressive Discipline Policy.
- 10.6. Duties and Responsibilities of the Committee:
 - 10.6.1. Help protect the public from unethical practice of ACCT members
 - 10.6.2. Receive investigation reports (if investigation is conducted) about alleged violations of ACCT Code of Ethics or Standards of Practice
 - 10.6.3. Render decisions on complaints
 - 10.6.3.1. Determine if a breach of the ACCT Code of Ethics or Standards of practice occurred.
 - 10.6.3.2. Determine the severity of the breach.
 - 10.6.3.3. Determine an appropriate response to the complaint.
 - 10.6.3.4. Provide reasons for their decision.
 - 10.6.4. When possible, facilitate a mediated resolution amenable to both parties
 - 10.6.5. Set out sanctions for training, supervision and or other progressive requirements aimed at correcting behaviours and practices in order for the counsellor to practice in accordance with the ACCT Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice
 - 10.6.6. Refer the issue to the Membership Committee for oversight when sanctions have been imposed
 - 10.6.7. Participate in developing and improving the Ethics Committee process.
- 10.7. Ethics Committee Operations:

- 10.7.1. The Chair is responsible for organising meetings of the Committee
- 10.7.2. The Ethics Committee is responsible for drafting improvements to the progressive discipline policy and procedures for approval by the board
- 10.7.3. The Ethics Committee reports to the ACCT Board of Directors as needed.
- 10.7.4. Each Ethics Committee member must be familiar with all ACCT founding documents including:
 - 10.7.4.1. ACCT Code of Ethics,
 - 10.7.4.2. ACCT Standards of Practice,
 - 10.7.4.3. The ACCT Progressive Discipline Policy #37
 - 10.7.4.4. ACCT Scope of Practice,
 - 10.7.4.5. ACCT Philosophy,
 - 10.7.4.6. ACCT Rules.
- 10.8. The Ethics Committee cannot:
 - 10.8.1. Negotiate any financial restitution;
 - 10.8.2. Investigate allegations of criminal behaviour; and
 - 10.8.3. Make rulings on legal matters.
- 10.9. Sanction Agreements
 - 10.9.1. If the Ethics Committee determines a breach has occurred, the counsellor's status will change to "Not In Good Standing". The counsellor will need to comply with sanctions in order to regain "Good Standing". The Ethics Committee will lay out the terms of the Sanction Agreement. Typically a Sanction Agreement contains:
 - 10.9.1.1. Specific remedial activities that the counsellor agrees to undertake, at their own expense, in order to address the area(s) of concern identified by the Ethics Committee, for example coursework, clinical supervision, rewriting reports etc.;
 - 10.9.1.2. A possible reduction of their scope of practice; and
 - 10.9.1.3. A timeline for the completion of the sanctions.
 - 10.9.1.4. A letter will be sent to the complainant when all the items in a Sanction Agreement are completed and the complaint process is closed.
 - 10.9.1.5. If the Sanction Agreement is not completed as set out, then the counsellor will remain "Not In Good Standing" and an escalating response may result.
- 10.10. Termination of Membership
 - 10.10.1. The Ethics Committee may decide that a termination of a membership should be considered.
 - 10.10.2. If the termination of membership is to be considered, the Committee will act in accordance with Section 34, 36 and 37 of the BC Cooperative Associations Act.

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- 10.10.2.1. A report is sent to the Board with a recommendation to consider termination of a member.
 - 10.10.2.2. The Board will hold a special meeting to vote on a resolution to terminate the membership of the member.
 - 10.10.2.3. If the resolution passes, the member can appeal the Board's decision.
 - 10.10.2.4. If the resolution fails, the Board can refer the matter back to the Ethics Committee to determine a final response to the complaint.
 - 10.10.3. See Section 12.0 for more information regarding the BC Cooperative Associations Act.
 - 10.11. Disclosure of information
 - 10.11.1. The Ethics Committee may disclose decisions to its membership.
 - 10.11.2. The Ethics Committee may disclose those members who are not in good standing to its membership, insurance companies, benefits providers, other professional associations, professional colleges and the public.
 - 10.11.3. ACCT reserves the right to inform its membership of terminations due to a breach of its Code of Ethics or Standards of Practice. The Ethics Committee will decide if this decision is warranted.
 - 10.12. Timeliness
 - 10.12.1. Every effort is made to resolve complaints in a timely manner; in rare instances, it may take up to a year or more. The complainant and counsellor will receive a summary of the case outcome in writing. In situations where the respondent deems the Ethics Committee's decision as unsatisfactory, the counsellor has the right to appeal the decision to the Appeals Committee within 20 days of the decision.
 - 10.13. The following are excerpts from the BC Cooperative Associations Act
 - 10.13.1. *Section 34 - Termination of membership in an association other than a housing cooperative*
 - 10.13.1.1. *(1)This section applies only to an association other than a housing cooperative.*
 - 10.13.1.2. *(2)An association may provide in its rules for the termination of the membership of a member.*
 - 10.13.1.3. *(3)Rules referred to in subsection (2) are subject to this section and sections 36 to 39.*
 - 10.13.1.4. *(4)Subject to any rules of an association for termination of membership, and to subsections (5) and (6) of this section and sections 36 to 39, an association may terminate the membership of a member if*
 - 10.13.1.4.1. *(a)the member has engaged in conduct detrimental to the association,*

10.13.1.4.2. (b)the member has not paid money due by the member to the association within a reasonable time after receiving written notice to do so from the association, or

10.13.1.4.3. (c)in the opinion of the directors, based on reasonable grounds, the member

10.13.1.4.3.1. (i)has breached a material condition of an agreement with the association, and

10.13.1.4.3.2. (ii)has not rectified the breach within a reasonable time after receiving written notice to do so from the association.

10.13.1.5. (5)An association may exercise the powers under this section to terminate the membership of a member only by a resolution of the directors requiring a majority of at least 3/4 of all the directors and passed at a meeting of the directors called to consider the resolution.

10.13.1.6. (6)Sections 156 and 208 do not apply to termination of a membership in an association on the grounds described in subsection (4) (b) or (c).

10.14.

10.14.1. Section 36 - Notices respecting termination of membership

10.14.1.1. (1)A person whose membership in an association is proposed to be terminated by a resolution of the directors

10.14.1.1.1. (a)is entitled to at least 7 days' notice of the meeting at which the resolution is to be considered, together with a statement of the grounds on which the person's membership is proposed to be terminated, and

10.14.1.1.2. (b)may attend the meeting, either personally or by or with an agent or counsel, to make submissions.

10.14.1.2. (2)Within 7 days after the date on which a proposed resolution to terminate a membership referred to in subsection (1)

10.14.1.2.1. (a)is withdrawn,

10.14.1.2.2. (b)is defeated because it does not receive the required majority, or

10.14.1.2.3. (c)is passed by the required majority,

10.14.1.2.4. the directors must,

10.14.1.2.5. (d)subject to paragraph (e), deliver written notice of the outcome to the person, or

10.14.1.2.6. (e)serve written notice of the outcome on the person and cause the housing cooperative to comply with other prescribed conditions if

- 10.14.1.2.6.1. *(i)membership in a housing cooperative is being terminated for non-payment of rent, occupancy charges or other money due by the member to the housing cooperative in respect of residential premises, and*
- 10.14.1.2.6.2. *(ii)the resolution is passed by the required majority.*
- 10.14.1.3. *(3)The notice referred to in subsection (2) (e) must be accompanied by a notice in the prescribed form of the person's right to appeal the termination under section 37 (3).*
- 10.14.2.
- 10.14.3. *Section 37 - Appeal from termination of membership*
 - 10.14.3.1. *(1)If the directors of an association resolve under section 36 to terminate a person's membership in the association, the person may, unless the person is a member of a housing cooperative whose membership was terminated for non-payment of rent, occupancy charges or other money due by the member to the housing cooperative in respect of residential premises, appeal the termination at the next meeting of the association by delivering a notice of appeal to the association within 7 days after delivery of written notice referred to in section 36 (2) (d).*
 - 10.14.3.2. *(2)A person whose membership in an association is terminated and who, being entitled to do so under subsection (1), appeals the termination of the membership under and within the time limited by subsection (1), continues, despite the resolution of the directors terminating the membership, to be a member of the association unless the members at the general meeting to which the appeal is brought confirm the termination of the membership*
 - 10.14.3.2.1. *(a)in the case of a membership in an association other than a housing cooperative,*
 - 10.14.3.2.1.1. *(i)if the membership is terminated for any of the reasons referred to in section 34 (4) (b) or (c), by a resolution requiring a simple majority or, if provided by the association's rules, a greater majority, or*
 - 10.14.3.2.1.2. *(ii)if the membership is terminated for the reason referred to in section 34 (4) (a), by a special resolution, or*
 - 10.14.3.2.2. *(b)in the case of a membership in a housing cooperative,*
 - 10.14.3.2.2.1. *(i)if the membership is terminated for a reason referred to in section 35 (3) (b) (ii), by a resolution*

- 10.14.3.2.2.2. *requiring a simple majority or, if provided by the housing cooperative's rules, a greater majority, or (ii) if the membership is terminated for the reason referred to in section 35 (4), by a special resolution.*
- 10.15. The Ethics Committee Terms of Reference were originally created in 2013.
Updated: June 8, 2022. Updated: March 11, 2025

11. Appendix B - ACCT Informal Dispute Resolution GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

- 11.1.1. Initially prepared on February 27, 2025 by the Supervision Committee with contributions from Kristy Higgins, Sarah Lipsett, Blair McInnis and Staff.
- 11.1.2. Revised Sept 2025 by Blair McInnis and Satu Pesonen
- 11.2. Purpose
- 11.2.1. The purpose of the Informal Dispute Resolution Guidelines and Policies is to:
- 11.2.1.1. Provide an informal avenue to address complaints or issues of competency that are brought to ACCT's attention.
 - 11.2.1.2. Support member growth and learning through issues, rather than disciplinary action if possible
 - 11.2.1.3. Provide appropriate remediation for client/complainant.
 - 11.2.1.4. Provide appropriate competency education and growth for members.
- 11.3. Competent Practice Defined
- 11.3.1. Competent Practice is a critical concept that ensures professionals in the field of counselling and supervision meet the required standards for competence, ethical conduct, and overall professionalism. For ACCT counsellors and supervisors, this is about maintaining the ability to:
- 11.3.1.1. Adhere to ACCT's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice: Each member must follow the guidelines set by ACCT to ensure that their practice aligns with the highest ethical standards.
 - 11.3.1.2. Demonstrate Competence: Counsellors and supervisors need to consistently provide effective services, whether that be in therapy sessions or supervision, demonstrating both skill and expertise in their work.

- 11.3.1.3. **Maintain Health (Mental & Physical):** Professionals should maintain their mental and physical health to perform their roles safely and effectively. Any health-related issues must be addressed to ensure the well-being of clients and supervisees.
 - 11.3.1.4. **Uphold Professionalism:** All members must exhibit the highest standards of professionalism in their conduct, ensuring trust, safety, and respect in their interactions with clients, peers and the public.
- 11.4. **Role of the Supervisor**
- 11.4.1. Supervisors play a central role in the Informal Dispute Resolution Process. They are tasked with supporting their supervisees (counsellors) to develop a plan that helps them address any gaps in their competency that a complaint highlights, to not only meet professional and ethical standards but also continue to grow and develop in their practice. Supervisors: For detailed information on the role of the supervisor please reference the [Code of Ethics for Supervisors](#) documentation on the website.
- 11.5. **Key Elements of Competency for Counsellors and Supervisors**
- 11.5.1. The concept of Competency to Practice encompasses various elements that are essential to ensuring counsellors and supervisors can effectively provide safe, ethical, and competent care. These key elements help maintain public safety, uphold professional integrity, and ensure continuous growth and development within the field. For detailed information about competency standards please review the [Standards of Practice](#) and [Code of Ethics](#) on the ACCT website.
- 11.6. **Informally Addressing Client Issues, Conflicts, Fitness to Practice Concerns and Potential Complaints**
- 11.6.1. This comprehensive step-by-step process provides a clear framework for informally addressing Competency concerns for counsellors and supervisors within the ACCT (Association of Cooperative Counselling Therapists) Association, ensuring that any deficiencies in competence, behaviour, or health are addressed in a professional and supportive manner.

- 11.6.1.1. Step 1: Complaint is received by the ACCT staff and/ Ethics Committee as per section 4.2.3 of the Progressive Discipline Policy 37 and is directed to the Informal Path of Dispute Resolution(Appendix B) by the Ethics Committee.
- 11.6.1.2. Step 2: Contact Primary Supervisor
 - 11.6.1.2.1. Once a concern arises, the Ethics Committee will require the member to contact the member’s primary supervisor, who will play a key role in guiding the supervisee through addressing the issue. The member will be required to show proof of having included their supervisor on the issue within 10 days of receiving the complaint notification and giving the supervisor a release of information to co-ordinate or report to ACCT as required about the issue.
- 11.6.1.3. Step 3: Supervisor reviews with Supervisee
 - 11.6.1.3.1. The Supervisor and Supervisee meet to discuss the issue, provide feedback, and understand the situation. This helps ensure the supervisee can explain their actions. If the supervisee is unwilling to address the concern(s) with the supervisor, and/or if the supervisor has terminated the supervision contract, ACCT is to be contacted immediately.
 - 11.6.1.3.2. If a supervisor believes a supervisee’s fitness to practice is in question, the supervisor will recommend a fitness to practice review by the FTP committee.
- 11.6.1.4. Step 4: Supervisor contacts Client / Complainant
 - 11.6.1.4.1. The supervisor will work with the supervisee regarding appropriate next steps to be taken with the client/ complainant for resolution.
 - 11.6.1.4.2. If absolutely necessary, the supervisor will engage with the client or complainant to get their perspective and seek a resolution. The supervisor has the discretion to contact a qualified ACCT supervisor to assist in this process.
 - 11.6.1.4.3. The supervisor will use their discretion to determine if contact with the client/complainant is appropriate and as needed can contact the Ethics Committee for support in making this decision.
- 11.6.1.5. Step 5: Consultation with Supervisor and Resources
 - 11.6.1.5.1. The Supervisor reviews the concern with their own supervisor and/or other professionals to assess whether the issue is related to skill deficiencies or conduct, and to determine the best course of action (at the expense of the

- supervisee). If the supervisor is unable to support the supervisee through this process, they can contact ACCT for a referral to a qualified supervisor or guidance from the FTP Committee to assist in this process.
- 11.6.1.5.2. After a discussion with the supervisee, supervisor and staff, it may be determined that the issue is a Fitness to Practice issue and will be referred to the Fitness To Practice committee. For more information See Terms of Reference for Fitness to Practice Committee.
- 11.6.1.6. Step 6: Develop Remediation Plan
- 11.6.1.6.1. A tailored remediation plan is created to address the specific concerns, offering targeted support and defining goals and timelines for improvement. If the supervisee is unwilling to commit to addressing the concerns and engaging in the remediation process, the supervisor will contact ACCT to disclose the issues.
- 11.6.1.7. Step 7: Supervisor Re-engages with Client
- 11.6.1.7.1. The supervisor discusses the remediation plan with the client to address any emotional distress and ensure transparency in the process.
- 11.6.1.7.2. If the client is unwilling to work with the counsellor, the supervisor can develop a plan with the client to support the client. Ex. referrals to other therapists / resources.
- 11.6.1.8. Step 8: Support During the Remediation Process
- 11.6.1.8.1. Regular support and guidance are provided to the member, including supervision, training recommendations, and access to resources needed. The supervisor and supervisee will keep ACCT advised of the remediation plan and progress.
- 11.6.1.9. Step 9: Evaluate Progress
- 11.6.1.9.1. A review takes place to assess whether the remediation goals have been met. If progress is insufficient, further support or changes to the plan may be required.
- 11.6.1.10. Step 10: Follow-up and Prevention
- 11.6.1.10.1. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation are crucial to preventing future issues and ensuring the supervisee's long-term competence. The supervisor will continue to check in with the member as part of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation process. If the issue escalates and/or becomes a

recurring concern, the supervisor and supervisee are to report this to ACCT immediately.

11.6.1.11. Step 11: Option of Last Resort:

11.6.1.11.1. If all attempts to resolve the issue fail, a formal investigation may be initiated, which could result in suspension or removal from practice or membership.

11.6.1.11.2. The process emphasizes fairness, transparency, and the importance of creating a supportive environment for professional growth. The goal is to maintain high standards of practice while also providing the opportunity for improvement, ensuring the safety and well-being of both clients and practitioners.

12. Appendix C - Appeals (Formerly The Appeals Policy #39 Approved by the Board June 17, 2023)

12.1. Revised March 11, 2025

12.2. Purpose

12.2.1. Complaints are brought before the Ethics Committee which determines if a breach of the ACCT Code of Ethics or Standards of Practice occurred. If a breach occurred the Disciplinary Committee determines a response which may involve a sanction agreement directed at the counsellor as a condition for reinstatement of good standing. In extreme cases, termination of membership is required. These decisions may be appealed. The Appeals Committee will review the appeal and make a final decision regarding the appeal.

12.2.2. The following are the guidelines and policies to help the counsellor and the Appeals Committee through the appeals process.

12.3. Policy

12.3.1. The counsellor subjected to disciplinary action may appeal to an independent Appeals Committee within 14 days of receiving the disciplinary decision. The Appeals Committee shall be composed of three board members not previously involved in the disciplinary decision or ACCT volunteers who are not familiar with the disciplinary decision.

12.3.2. The Appeals Committee shall conduct a review and may uphold, modify, or overturn the decision.

12.3.3. The counsellor can appeal a decision once.

12.3.4. The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final and binding.

- 12.4. Requirements of the Counsellor
 - 12.4.1. The counsellor must submit a written statement describing their reasons for the appeal to the Appeals Committee in care of the Executive Director.
- 12.5. Requirements of the Appeal Committee
 - 12.5.1. The Appeal Committee will review the counsellors statement and determine a response to the appeal.
 - 12.5.2. The Executive Director and Liaison Officer will offer support to the Committee but will not vote on any decisions to be made by the Committee.
 - 12.5.3. The Appeals Committee will work in a timely manner individually and as a group to form a response as soon as possible.
 - 12.5.4. The Appeals Committee will form when an appeal is received so time will be needed to form the Committee, prepare the Committee and schedule meetings to form a response.
 - 12.5.5. It is the Appeals Committees responsibility to ensure that the response is shared with staff so that records can be updated when appropriate.

13. Appendix D - Examples of complaints the ACCT Ethics Committee may address

- 13.1. Any conduct that is detrimental to the association
- 13.2. Disrespectful behaviour towards clients
- 13.3. Disrespectful behaviour towards members of the ACCT community
- 13.4. Poor professional boundaries
- 13.5. Client exploitation
- 13.6. Confidentiality/disclosure issues
- 13.7. Incompetence
- 13.8. Improper termination of therapy
- 13.9. Privacy or confidentiality issues
- 13.10. Informed consent issues
- 13.11. Undeclared conflicts of interest
- 13.12. Failure to provide information about training and background
- 13.13. Misrepresentation and fraud
- 13.14. Demonstrated bias
- 13.15. Failure to release records at client request
- 13.16. Inadequate risk management
- 13.17. Bullying or harassment of ACCT members, staff or the public by an ACCT member or staff.

- 13.18. Complaints or concerns related to a member's Fitness to Practice.
- 13.19. Billing concerns (ACCT cannot negotiate or enforce financial restitution, fines or refunds).

14. Appendix E - Conduct detrimental to ACCT with examples

- 14.1. ACCT defines and clarifies what it considers to be detrimental conduct so that existing rules and policies can be interpreted more easily. Detrimental conduct is conduct that is detrimental to ACCT; or conduct that could negatively affect ACCT, its brand, its reputation or the safety of its staff, volunteers, members, board or the public.
- 14.2. ACCT understands that detrimental conduct exists within a range of severity or relevance. The Board and its delegates can determine the severity and relevance of the detrimental conduct when making decisions regarding the safety and well being of its staff, volunteers, members and the public.
- 14.3. Members and staff of ACCT are expected to conduct themselves with a professional level of care and respect for self and others at all times. Detrimental conduct should be avoided at all times and will be assessed beyond the confines of work environments including but not limited to activities related to teaching, training, studying, practicing, volunteering, mentoring, supervising, managing and of course counselling therapy.
- 14.4. The following are examples of detrimental conduct:
 - 14.4.1. Where a member is found to have breached or violated any of the ACCT Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, Board Code of Ethics, Supervisors Standards of Practice.
 - 14.4.2. Where a member is found to have committed an indictable offence;
 - 14.4.3. Where a member is deemed to have behaved in a way that involves any of the following: lying, cheating, forging, harassing, bullying, slandering, defaming, libeling, defrauding, misinforming, misrepresenting, embezzlement, theft, hacking, impersonating another, or vandalism; or any other conduct unbecoming a healthcare professional;
 - 14.4.4. Any bullying or harassment as defined by ACCT in its Policy #24
 - 14.4.5. Where a member deliberately and consistently neglects a fiduciary duty, policy or procedure;
 - 14.4.6. Where a member is found to have not disclosed a conflict of interest;
 - 14.4.7. Where a member has breached a confidentiality agreement;

- 14.4.8. Where a member has shared proprietary information or trade secrets without ACCT's permission;
- 14.4.9. Where a member is found to have tarnished the ACCT brand, reputation, property or other assets.
- 14.4.10. Where a member does not comply with an ACCT sanction directed at them.
- 14.4.11. Where a member has deliberately obstructed an ACCT procedure.
- 14.4.12. Where a member has deliberately destroyed documents, records or information that would normally be kept as part of their practice and is required by ACCT.
- 14.4.13. Where a member has deleted or destroyed ACCT property including digital messaging on its internal group chats without ACCT permission.

15. Appendix F - Definitions

15.1. Consent Agreement

- 15.1.1. Where the complainant and respondent come to an agreement in writing and agree that the respondent will comply with new behaviours and the complainant will tolerate the respondent under this new arrangement. The board or its designated officers may help to negotiate a consent agreement.

15.2. Member in Good Standing

- 15.2.1. A member in good standing is current and up to date with all ACCT membership requirements such as the payment of fees, the completion of annual continuous competency activities, holds active liability insurance and has complied with all outstanding sanctions set by the Board or its committees. The member has full use of the ACCT designations granted to them (i.e. RTC, AC, MTC, RCS).
- 15.2.2. The Board or its Ethics Committee can change the "good standing" status to "not in good standing" after determining a breach of its Code of Ethics or Standards of Practice by a member. The Board or its Ethics Committee can reinstate "good standing".
- 15.2.3. ACCT will on request prepare a "Letter of Good Standing" to endorse a membership for professional purposes such as insurance claims, applications for jobs or school etc. This is a courtesy provided by ACCT. It is not a requirement for ACCT to issue a letter of good standing. Each letter will be considered on a case by case basis by staff.

- 15.2.4. A member not in good standing is one who:
 - 15.2.4.1. Has not paid their annual membership fees or dues on time, or
 - 15.2.4.2. Has not completed their annual continuous competency requirements on time, or
 - 15.2.4.3. Has not purchased liability insurance, or
 - 15.2.4.4. Is in breach of the ACCT Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice or
 - 15.2.4.5. Is under suspension by ACCT, or
 - 15.2.4.6. Has been deregistered.

15.3. Suspension

- 15.3.1. ACCT can suspend the use of its designations (RTC, AC, MTC, RCS), and use of its property such as logos and information. A member under suspension will have clear instructions on what is suspended, the duration of the suspension and any conditions required to lift the suspension.

15.4. Sanctions

- 15.4.1. ACCT can apply sanctions against a member for a period of time based on the need for corrective or disciplinary actions.
- 15.4.2. Minor sanctions may include but are not restricted to the completion of training, education, additional supervision. Sanctions may also involve verbal or written warnings, restrictions on their scope of practice, and/or references to support their fitness to practice.
- 15.4.3. Major sanctions may include suspension of use of ACCT designations, logos, information, brand and property. It also includes suspension, deregistration, or termination of membership (see below).

15.5. Sanction Agreement

- 15.5.1. If the Ethics Committee or Board of Directors deems it necessary, a Sanction Agreement will be created. The Sanction Agreement can be offered as a condition of membership or good standing. Typically a Sanction Agreement contains:
 - 15.5.1.1. Specific remedial activities that the counsellor agrees to undertake, at their own expense in order to address the area(s) of concern identified by the complaint process. For example: coursework, clinical supervision, rewriting reports etc.;
 - 15.5.1.2. Responsibilities of the counsellor to comply with and complete the Sanction Agreement; and
 - 15.5.1.3. A timeline for completion of the remedial activities.
- 15.5.2. If the respondent does not agree with the sanction agreement, in some cases, they may be eligible to appeal the decision, as per the Appeals Process. If the decision is not eligible for appeal, and the respondent

refuses to sign the agreement, the respondent will continue to be not in good standing and not in compliance with ACCT membership requirements.

- 15.5.3. Non-compliance with a Sanction Agreement is considered a material breach of an agreement and will result in an escalated response including the possibility of termination of membership.
- 15.5.4. A letter will be sent by Staff, to the complainant when all the items in a Sanction Agreement are completed and the complaint process is closed.

15.6. Suspension or Deregistration or Termination of membership

- 15.6.1. If the ACCT Ethics Committee or Board of Directors deems it necessary, it may impose a suspension or deregister or terminate a membership as per Section 34 of the BC Cooperative Associations Act.
- 15.6.2. If a member is terminated from ACCT, then the Board will inform:
 - 15.6.3. The member involved via email or registered mail, and
 - 15.6.4. The professional liability insurance provider and may inform the ACCT membership and any other person or party it deems necessary for the purpose of protecting the public as a duty to report.