

THE COLLEGE OF PSYCHOLOGISTS OF ONTARIO
L'ORDRE DES PSYCHOLOGUES DE L'ONTARIO

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Psychological Services by Out of Province Practitioners to Clients Temporarily Relocated to Ontario

The College has had several inquiries from licensed psychological service providers from other North American jurisdictions whose clients have temporarily relocated to Ontario during the COVID-19 pandemic. In some cases, the clients may be experiencing considerable distress and are at increased risk because their psychological services have been interrupted.

As members know, the *Psychology Act, 1991* limits the provision of psychological services in Ontario to members of the College of Psychologists of Ontario. In the absence of legislative amendments, the College is not able to authorize anyone other than members of the College to provide telepsychology services to clients located in Ontario.

Under normal circumstances, the College views such activities by non-members as “unauthorized practice” and considers the need for appropriate action. The College has carefully considered the extreme circumstances in which we find ourselves. We recognize this must be taken into account with regard to duly registered/licensed practitioners from other jurisdictions who must provide telepsychology services into Ontario for their existing clients during the current emergency situation.

Therefore, in response to the urgent COVID-19 situation, the College will not initiate an “unauthorized practice” action against an out of province practitioner provided they:

1. Are registered/licensed in good standing in another jurisdiction at the time the services are provided;
2. Practice only within their areas of competence and in keeping with any terms, limits and conditions on their license/certificate of registration;
3. Provide the services to existing clients temporarily in Ontario due to the COVID-19 situation;
4. Determine it is clinically ill-advised to temporarily stop services and/or to transfer the service to a member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.

Out of province practitioners are asked to confirm their understanding and acceptance of the requirements listed above, by notifying the College of their intention to provide telepsychology service to existing clients in Ontario. Practitioners should email the College (cpo@cpo.on.ca) providing their name, the jurisdiction in which they are registered/licensed, and their registration/license number. While the College will endeavour to acknowledge receipt of this information, practitioners need not wait for confirmation before initiating service.

NOTE: The College of Psychologists of Ontario does not have the authority to authorize its members to practice in other jurisdictions. If members of the College have questions regarding the provision of telepsychology services into other jurisdictions based on their registration in Ontario, they must contact the jurisdiction in question. It is our understanding that the other Canadian jurisdictions are taking steps to make this possible but the requirements, e.g., notifying the College; time limits on such services, etc., may vary among jurisdictions. The information from the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) may be of assistance.

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.asppb.net/resource/resmgr/covid19/temporary_interjurisdictional.pdf