CRPO
College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario

Quality Assurance Program

– Peer and Practice Review Guide –

Step 1: Remote Interview

Revised May 2019

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INTRODUCTION

You have been selected to participate in the Peer and Practice Review (PPR), which is designed to assess your knowledge, skill and judgement in key areas of professional practice. A Peer Assessor will conduct the PPR, helping you identify your areas of strength and areas that may benefit from enhancement. Such assessments are a routine part of being a regulated health professional. In fact, the *Regulated Health Professions Act* (1991) requires that all health regulatory colleges implement peer and practice assessments for their members.

Peer Assessors are fellow members of CRPO who have been trained to conduct the PPR. They, and the College, are committed to working supportively and collaboratively with you to help you meet your professional obligations, many of which are laid out in the *Professional Practice Standards for Registered Psychotherapists*.

CRPO's PPR is a "two-step" process. Typically, a member selected for PPR will undergo Step 1, which mainly involves an interview conducted by phone or webinar. Members who are identified to require further assessment will move on to Step 2, which involves a more in-depth interview, usually at the Member's practice setting.

SELECTION PROCESS & NOTIFICATION

There are a number of ways in which a Registered Psychotherapist (RP) may be selected to participate in the PPR process:

- Random selection – If you are considered eligible for random selection, you are entered into a pool of eligible members, from which a computer algorithm draws a stratified random selection.
- Incomplete or inadequate Professional Development tool submission – If you haven't met one or more Professional Development requirements, you may be selected for Peer and Practice Review.
- As directed by the Quality Assurance (QA) Committee – Under certain circumstances the QA Committee may direct members to engage in PPR.

You will be notified of selection via a message in your CRPO account. This message will also explain how to access the Quality Assurance Portal, which is an online platform that will enable you to access the tools and other resources related to the PPR.

PPR STEP 1

Step 1 involves some preparation on your part and communication between you, the College and the Peer Assessor so that the Remote Interview can take place, including:

- identifying dates on which you are available for an interview;
- providing current contact information (e.g. a preferred phone number);
- determining whether you have an actual or perceived conflict of interest with one or more Peer Assessors who may be selected to conduct your interview;
- providing contextual information about your practice via the Prequestionnaire; and
- submitting your advertising or promotional materials.

The interview itself will be conducted over the phone using a secure, toll-free phone number provided by the Peer Assessor.

This interview generally lasts 1 to 1.5 hours. You will work together with the Peer Assessor to find a mutually agreeable date and time for the interview.

Step 1 of the PPR involves three tools: The Prequestionnaire, the Advertising Checklist, and the Remote Interview:

PREQUESTIONNAIRE

This online questionnaire must be completed several days prior to your Remote Interview. It will help the College to tailor your interview questions and will provide the Peer Assessor with important information regarding the nature of your practice, including whether or not you are providing or receiving clinical supervision. The Prequestionnaire also includes basic questions about your maintenance of clinical records. For example, you will be asked about how long you store clinical records and how you maintain security in storing your records.

ADVERTISING CHECKLIST

Prior to the interview, you will submit advertising and other materials where you or your services are represented. These materials will be reviewed using a checklist that is based on the criteria found in the *Professional Practice Standards*.

DID YOU KNOW?

Your advertising materials include:

- business cards
- pamphlets/brochures
- printed or online ads (e.g. your professional website, Google ads, Psychology Today, etc.); and
- links to professional social media pages, blogs or videos.

See the appendices of this guide to read about how you will upload these materials.

REMOTE INTERVIEW

During your scheduled phone call, the Peer Assessor will guide you through a series of questions, using an interview script that was designed to assess the knowledge, skill and judgment of practising members of the profession. The Assessor will encourage you to respond to the questions by recalling and reflecting on actual situations that have *recently* occurred in your practice. The interview questions are designed so that they are applicable no matter which theoretical orientation(s), approach(es) or technique(s) are used in your practice.

The Remote Interview relies on the behaviour-based interview method, which, when used appropriately, is a reliable method to assess a professional's knowledge, skill and judgment. The interview questions were developed using the Professional Practice Standards for Registered Psychotherapists and the Entry-to-Practice Competency Profile for Registered Psychotherapists. The following aspects of professional practice are assessed in the interview, among others: confidentiality, professional ethics, client safety and safe and effective use of self.

DUE DATES

As mentioned above, if you have been selected for PPR, you will receive a notification via your CRPO account. Within 30 days of the date recoded on the notification, you must have completed the Prequestionnaire, submitted your advertising materials, and either completed your Remote Interview or scheduled the date on which it will take place.

The entire Step 1 process must be completed within 60 days from the date recorded on the notification – this includes completing all aspects of the Remote Interview described in the paragraph above, in addition to the In-Person Interview (if the latter is required).

PREPARING FOR YOUR PEER AND PRACTICE REVIEW

This section includes some tips to help you complete Step 1 of the PPR. You may find it helpful to print a copy of this checklist for reference:

Peer and Practice Review Remote Interview

PREPARATION CHECKLIST

To prepare for your Remote Interview, follow the steps below:

- ☐ 1. Read the Peer & Practice Review Guide(s) carefully.
- ☐ 2. Print or retain a copy of this checklist to help you track your preparation.
- ☐ 3. Within 30 days of the date recorded on your notification letter, access the Quality Assurance Portal to complete steps a-d listed below:
    - ☐ a. arrange the Remote Interview date and time;
    - ☐ b. determine if there is a conflict of interest with any of the Peer Assessors who may be assigned to conduct your interview;
    - ☐ c. complete the Prequestionnaire; and
    - ☐ d. submit your advertising and marketing materials.
- ☐ 4. Participate in the Remote Interview.
- ☐ 5. Review a copy of the Remote Interview Report and accompanying letter, when these are available.
- ☐ 6. If required, participate in the In-Person Interview. If you are required to participate in the In-Person Interview, this will be identified in the letter that accompanies your Report. Any additional information and/or instructions will be included in the letter that accompanies your Report.

Please be advised that Members are required to complete all stages of Step 1 within 60 days of the date recorded on the letter of notification.

Date on letter of notification: __________

Date of Remote Interview: __________

If applicable, Date of In-Person Interview: __________

Other important dates (describe): __________

ARRANGING A SUITABLE INTERVIEW SPACE

Select a location where you will be able to speak on a phone uninterrupted for at least 1.5 hours. The location should be private enough that others cannot overhear the details of your conversation with the Peer Assessor. As you may want to take notes and have a beverage readily available, it may be helpful if you are seated at a desk or table. Public spaces, such as coffee shops, hotel lobbies, or workplace lunch rooms are generally not appropriate. For your own safety and the safety of others, Remote Interviews may not take place while you are driving.

DECLARING A CONFLICT OF INTEREST WITH A PEER ASSESSOR

A current or past relationship with a Peer Assessor, whether personal or professional, could have an actual or perceived impact on the objectivity of interview results. As such, you are required to indicate if you have an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest with any of the Peer Assessors who may be assigned to conduct the interview.

If you would like to discuss whether a conflict of interest exists between you and a potential Peer Assessor, please contact QA staff.

RESPONDING TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The Remote Interview questions are worded in such a way that you will be able to answer them by recalling and reflecting on situations that have recently occurred in your practice. See a sample question below.

The Peer Assessor will keep the discussion focused on one area of practice at a time, asking additional questions on an as-needed basis to draw out details that will help to clarify the situation and any actions you took. The Peer Assessor will use your responses to determine if you meet the competency being assessed in that portion of the interview.

DID YOU KNOW?

When you are responding to case- or situation-based questions, it is important that you identify a relevant situation that occurred recently – preferably within the past 6 to 12 months. The Peer Assessor will ask you questions, and you'll be expected to respond based on your recollection of what happened at that time. Be as specific as you can, even if your answers seem obvious or trivial to you.

If you begin to provide overly general responses, you can expect the Peer Assessor to redirect the discussion to ask that your responses remain connected to a specific situation.

Here are some examples of overly general responses:

"I usually do [X] when a client presents a risk to self or others."

"In these situations, I tend to contact my supervisor or an authority."

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU PREPARE

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTION

Below is an example of an interview question. Read the question and think back to a time in the past 6 to 12 months when you might have encountered such a situation. Then think through how you might answer.

> *Describe a time when you identified a safety risk with one of your clients and explain how you managed the situation.*

Additional questions the Peer Assessor may ask:

- What were the risks?
- Describe the steps you took to manage the situation.
- What key factors influenced your actions?
- How did the situation end?
- Would you do anything differently if you encountered a similar situation again?

OTHER RESOURCES

Visit the CRPO's website at www.crpo.ca, navigate to the "Resources" page and review the:

- Professional Practice Standards
- Competency Profile for RPs

REMOTE INTERVIEW RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

Once the Remote Interview is complete, the Peer Assessor will prepare a Step 1 Report, identifying which the competencies assessed in the Remote Interview have and have not been met.

Roughly 4-8 weeks after your Remote Interview you will receive a notification of results that:

- summarizes key findings from across all the tools;
- explains how to access your Step 1 Report; and
- identifies whether you will be required to engage in the next stage of the PPR process – PPR Step 2.

The QA Committee has established a scoring algorithm that is used to determine whether a member's results indicate a need for further practice review. A member will move on for further review if:

- issues appear across a significant number of tools used in PPR Step 1;
- the Member's Remote Interview results do not demonstrate what is recognized as the acceptable standard or are otherwise ambiguous; or
- the Member is not able to demonstrate that they meet the standard of knowledge, skill and judgment in identified high-risk competency areas.

PPR PROCESS OVERVIEW

Member recieves notificaton of selection.

Member must visit QA Portal to:

- determine conflict of interest
- complete Prequestionnaire
- submit promotional materials
- identify dates of availability

Using information above, Peer Assessor will contact Member re proposed interview dates.

Remote Interview takes place on scheduled date.

When available, notification of results is issued, which identifies whether In-Person Interview is required.

If In-Person Interview is required, a Peer Assessor will contact Member to schedule date/time.

Member must arrange a quiet, private meeting space and ensure clinical records are available for review.

In-Person Interview takes place on scheduled date.

When available, notification of results is issued.

Member may make a written submission in response to the report.

QA Committee reviews results, Member's submission and any other relevant info and determines one of the following:

- take no further action
- make a recommendation
- direct remediation
- direct Registrar to impose or remove a term, condition or limitation
- refer the Member's name and an allegation of misconduct to ICRC

PPR STEP 2: THE IN-PERSON INTERVIEW

PPR Step 2 is a more detailed, in-depth assessment which usually takes place in the Member's practice setting. It involves a more detailed behaviour-based interview, along with a review of clinical records, including client files.

For more details about PPR Step 2, please see the Step 2: *In-Person Interview Guide*.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information you share as a result of your participation in the PPR is confidential and, with limited exceptions described below, the information you provide can only be used for Quality Assurance purposes. With this in mind, you are encouraged to provide fulsome responses that are an accurate reflection of your current level of knowledge, skill and judgment.

QA AND THE WORKPLACE

The College does not inform your employer, coworkers, supervisors or clients about any aspect of your participation in the Quality Assurance Program. If, and how, you disclose this information is up to you. However, because you may be required to schedule time off for your PPR interview(s) and because you may need to make arrangements so that the Peer Assessor can access clinical records, it may be necessary for you to communicate with your employer or the person responsible for maintaining clinical records in order to facilitate the PPR process.

QA AND THE PUBLIC REGISTER

Information about your participation in the Quality Assurance Program is not displayed on the Public Register.

CLIENTS' PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

The College recognizes the importance of maintaining strict confidentiality and privacy of clients' personal health information. Moreover, the College understands that inappropriate disclosure is an egregious breach of trust that can damage the therapeutic relationship. To protect clients' personal health information the College takes the following precautions, among others:

- CRPO only collects information that is relevant to the assessment taking place, and does not collect unnecessary information;
- CRPO requests that members take reasonable measures to anonymize client information;
- CRPO anonymizes information shared with the QA Committee; and
- all Peer Assessors are held accountable by confidentiality and privacy agreements and are subject to monetary fines and professional misconduct processes if a breach occurs, as outlined in the *Regulated Health Professions Act* (RHPA).

You do not require client consent to allow the Peer Assessor or College to review records related to client care. The *Personal Health Information Protection Act* (PHIPA) and the RHPA authorize disclosure of personal health information without a client's consent when the disclosure is for Quality Assurance purposes.

DISCLOSING INFORMATION TO OTHER COLLEGE COMMITTEES

If the QA Committee believes that a member may have committed a serious act of professional misconduct, or may be incompetent or incapacitated, the Committee may disclose only the Member's name and the allegation against the Member to the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC). The ICRC may carry out an independent investigation, if it elects to do so. However, in cases where a member knowingly gives false information to the QA Committee or an Assessor, the QA Committee may disclose this information to the Committee that is dealing with the matter.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I need to tell my employer about the interview?
You are not obligated to tell your employer about your participation in the PPR, nor are you required to share feedback or results that come out of the PPR. If you continue to Step 2 (the In-Person Interview), you may find it is necessary to communicate with your employer about the PPR process in order to facilitate access to clinical records.

Will my employer pay me for the time I spent completing the interview?
Your employer is not required to compensate you for the time you spend on your QA obligations (e.g. by providing paid time off). As a regulated health professional, you are obligated to participate in the PPR process, and you must ensure that you are available to participate meaningfully.

How do I request a deferral?
If you are experiencing exceptional circumstances, you may request that the interview be delayed, using the PPR Deferral Request form. Please contact the Quality Assurance Manager at QA@crpo.ca for a copy of this form. Please be advised that the College may ask you to provide documentation to support your request, such as a note from a healthcare professional.

How do I request accommodation for my special needs?
If you have a disability (defined according to the Human Rights Code) and require accommodation to complete any aspect of the PPR process, you must make a request to the College in writing. The College will work with you to identify appropriate accommodations. Requests should be made through the PPR Portal email system within seven days of receiving the notification letter.

Who are the Peer Assessors?
The College's QA Committee appoints Peer Assessors who have received training in conducting Peer and Practice Reviews. Peer Assessors:

- are members of the College in good standing and have current experience in their area of practice;
- undergo a rigorous selection process, including careful application vetting and a lengthy interview that evaluates training and experience;
- receive extensive training on interviewing techniques, note-taking, scoring and formulating fair, objective reports;
- are required to adhere to a strict confidentiality agreement and conflict of interest policy; and
- have experienced the assessment themselves during a pre-test of the interview tools.

APPENDIX A - QA PORTAL INSTRUCTIONS

CRPO has implemented an online resource – the QA Portal – to help you meet the requirements of the Quality Assurance (QA) Program. For example, through the secure QA Portal you will be able to manage many aspects of your participation in the Peer and Practice Review (PPR), such as scheduling your interview(s) and providing information related to your practice.

Information on the QA Portal is confidential: access to this information is limited to designated CRPO staff and the Peer Assessor assigned to conduct your PPR. To learn more about the QA Program and confidentiality, please review the Peer and Practice Review Guide.

Through the QA Portal, you will be able to:

- Schedule your PPR interview(s), setting date, time and location.
- Communicate with QA staff and your assigned Peer Assessor using the QA Portal's Mailbox feature.
- Review the results of you interview in a report.
- Provide feedback on the PPR process.

The information that follows will help you find your way around the QA Portal.

ACCESSING THE PORTAL

The QA Portal can be accessed through your CRPO account, as described below.

1. Log into your CRPO account, as you usually do, or by clicking this link: https://www.terida.com/idms/login.seam.
2. Once in your CRPO account, click the "QA" tab. Review the information on the QA tab.
3. Click the "Enter the QA Portal" button, which will bring you into the QA Portal.
4. Click the "My QA Portal" tab to reveal the menu options.

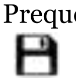
COMPLETING THE PREQUESTIONNAIRE

In order for the Remote Interview to take place, some advanced preparation is required on your part, including submitting the Prequestionnaire.

To access the Prequestionnaire:

1. Ensure you are in the QA Portal. See "Accessing the Portal," above.
2. Click on the "My QA Portal" tab to reveal the menu options, then select "Practice Review."
3. Review the information on the "Introduction to the Peer and Practice Review" page, and follow the instructions provided there.

Tips for navigating through the Prequestionnaire:

- Move to the next question by clicking the arrow button on the right side of the screen.
- Where a response to a question is required, you must enter some text into the applicable field(s) before you will be able to move on to the next question.
- If you have not yet completed the Prequestionnaire and wish to return to finish it at a later time:
    1. Click the "Save" icon, which looks like this: 
    2. Then click the "X," which appears in the green header box. This will bring you to the "Prequestionnaire Complete" page.
    3. Select "I would like to continue working on my Prequestionnaire at a later date."
    4. Click "Save".
- If you feel you have satisfactorily completed the Prequestionnaire and are ready to submit it:
    1. Click the "Save" icon, which looks like this: 
    2. Then click the "X," which appears in the green header box. This will bring you to the "Prequestionnaire Complete" page.
    3. Select "My Pre-Questionnaire is completed. I will NOT return later to update it."
    4. Click "Save".

PROVIDING YOUR SCHEDULING INFORMATION

It is also necessary for you to provide your scheduling information and identify any Peer Assessors with whom you might have a current or prior relationship, including personal and professional relationships. This information is used to pair you with a Peer Assessor who can be available on a mutually convenient date.

Once CRPO has received your scheduling information, it can take 5 to 10 days to confirm the interview date. You may be contacted to provide alternate availability in the event a Peer Assessor is not available on the dates you provided.

To provide your scheduling information:

1. Ensure you are in the QA Portal. See “Accessing the Portal,” above.
2. Click on the “My QA Portal” tab to reveal the menu options, then select “Practice Review.”
3. Click on the “Assignments” tab.
4. Click “Show Instructions” (if the instructions are not already revealed) and follow the steps provided.

Following the prompts on the page, be sure to:

- Identify any Peer Assessors with whom you may have a conflict of interest.
- Identify your preferred time of day for your interview.
- Provide at least three dates where you would be available for an interview.
- Provide a number where you can reliably be reached.
- Check the “My section is complete” box when you have finished.
- Click “Save” icon, which looks like this:

VIEWING YOUR PPR RESULTS

Once your results are available, you will be sent a notification that identifies how to view your PPR results.

MAKING A WRITTEN SUBMISSION (OPTIONAL)

Members are invited to make a written submission in cases where their PPR results will be considered by the QA Committee (you will be notified if your PPR results have been referred to the QA Committee to review.). Written submissions typically include information that will help the QA Committee in its considerations.

If you are providing a written submission, make sure you have received and reviewed your Report results first. The information you submit should be relevant to the results of your PPR report, and demonstrate understanding, competency related to the questions/answers contained within the report.

To make a written submission, write a message to the QA Coordinator using the Portal Mailbox system. To do so:

1. Ensure you are in the QA Portal. See “Accessing the Portal,” above.
2. Click on the “Portal Mailbox” icon ( ), which appears near the top right side of your screen. This will bring you to the “Portal Mailbox” page.
3. Click the “Portal Mail” tab and read the instructions there to learn how to compose a message.

Important note: As a security precaution, you will automatically be timed out of the Portal if you are not actively engaging with the system by clicking a link, tab or button in a span of 10 minutes – the system does not identify typing as active engagement. Unsent messages will be lost. Lost data cannot be retrieved. To prevent lost information, it is recommended that you first type your message in a word processing program (e.g. Word), and then copy and paste this into the message field.

PROVIDING FEEDBACK (OPTIONAL)

Once you have completed the PPR we invite you to provide feedback about your experience. To do this:

1. Ensure you are in the QA Portal. See “Accessing the Portal,” above.
2. Click on the “My QA Portal” tab to reveal the menu options, then select “Practice Review.”
3. Click the “Feedback” tab.
4. Follow the prompts to provide your feedback.
5. When you reach the final page and you consider your feedback complete, check the box beside “My feedback is complete,” and then click “Save/Exit.” This action will submit with feedback to the college and lock your responses (you will not be able to edit them further).

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