

INFORMATION FOR COMPLAINANTS

COLLEGE OF REGISTERED PSYCHOTHERAPISTS OF ONTARIO (CRPO)

The following information is being provided to you as a Complainant who has raised concerns about the conduct of a Registered Psychotherapist (RP). We understand this process can be stressful and we want to ensure you are feeling supported. The purpose of this document is to help you understand the investigation process and next steps, and direct you towards resources that may be of assistance.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is a way of sharing concerns with CRPO about the actions of an RP. In a complaint, the Complainant and the RP are both parties. This means they both receive status updates and the final decision. In a report, only the College and the RP are directly involved.

Who makes a decision about complaints?

The Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC) decides what action to take on complaints. The ICRC is made up of members of the profession and the public.



What if I file a complaint where I am not the client?

The complaints process will unfold as usual; however, information about the client will not be disclosed to you in order to maintain client confidentiality. To obtain client information/client records, you would be required to contact the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario (IPC).

Will I be interviewed by an investigator?

It is possible an investigator may contact you to see if you are interested in participating in an interview. In most investigations, the interview is optional. You will always be provided the opportunity to respond in writing to the complete investigation.

Interviews take place primarily by Zoom or Teams (usually audio only). The interviewer will ask you if they can make an audio recording of the interview. The recording ensures that your witness statement is accurate. If you refuse to be recorded, you can still agree to be interviewed. After an interview that is not recorded, your statement will be given to you so that you can review it and provide any changes or additions. Both versions (the original and edited version of your statement) will be provided to the ICRC as part of their review.

What remedies are unavailable through the complaints process?

The College's complaints process cannot:

- Be used in civil proceedings, such as family court, or to sue someone
- Order the Registrant to pay funds as a result of a financial loss experienced by you
- Resolve employment or labour relations difficulties that are not addressed by the professional standards governing the profession
- Direct the Registrant to change their professional opinion or a report
- Direct the Registrant to issue a formal apology

What if I am unsatisfied with the ICRC's decision?

Complainants and RPs can appeal complaint decisions to an independent tribunal called the [Health Professions Appeal and Review Board \(HPARB\)](#).

Discipline decisions can be reviewed by the [Divisional Court](#). If the RP files an appeal or judicial review, the College is required to share with the Court all of the information collected as part of the investigation.



How long will the process take?



Currently the average time for receiving the ICRC's written decision is around 270 days from receipt of the complaint. The time it takes the College to make a decision on a complaint varies from case to case and are affected by various factors including complexity of the issues and how quickly responses are provided when the College requests information. The College will ensure that Complainants are updated throughout this process.

What are the possible outcomes?

	Outcome	Risk	Public Register Posting?	Description
1.	Take No Action	None/minimal	No	Can include informal written advice embedded in Decision and Reasons.
2.	Issue Written Advice	Low	No	A letter of advice will be provided to the Registrant.
3.	Remedial Agreement	Low	No	Reflection paper. Registrant must agree or file is returned to panel to make different decision.
4.	Remedial Undertaking	Low-Medium	Yes but removed from public register following completion.	Clinical supervision and/or education/training. Registrant must agree or file is returned to panel to make different decision.
5.	SCERP	Medium	Yes	Specified continuing education or remediation program. Clinical supervision and/or education/training.
6.	In-Person Caution	Medium	Yes	Chair shares concerns and provides advice to registrant via videoconference (one-on-one). Staff present to take notes.
7.	Restrictive Undertaking	Medium-High	Duration of posting to be specified.	Practice restrictions (e.g., discontinue providing supervision). Registrant must agree.
8.	Referral to Discipline	High	Yes	Public hearing.
9.	Incapacity inquiries	n/a	No	Refer to Health Inquiries Panel (HIP) if concerns relate to incapacity.

What happens if ICRC refers the report to the Discipline Committee?

Discipline Committee hearings are held in cases where the allegations are sufficiently serious and there appears to be enough evidence for a finding of professional misconduct or incompetence. Discipline hearings are generally public; however, the Discipline Committee can ban the publication of identifying information in these cases.

Legislation requires the College to publish the results of discipline hearings. CRPO includes summaries of decisions and links to full-text versions on the website, under the RP's profile on the Public Register, and posted publicly on a website called CanLII.

What supports are available to me?

We recognize submitting a report can be distressing. We encourage you to seek support as needed, which could involve consulting the following resources:

- [Ontario Mental Health Helpline](#) at 1-866-531-2600
- [Ontario Health Care Options](#)
- [CAMH Crisis Resources](#)
- If at any time you feel you are in crisis, please contact your family doctor, go to your closest hospital, call the [Suicide Crisis Helpline](#) by dialing 988, or call 911.



Limits to confidentiality

Certain outcomes (i.e., Specified continuing education or remediation program (SCERP), In-person caution, Undertakings and Discipline referrals) involve a notation on the public register.

If the complaint decision is appealed, the College is required to release the complete record of investigation to HPARB. College staff can request that HPARB not disclose some information for reasons related to confidentiality or safety, however HPARB is independent from CRPO and can ultimately make their own decision about what to share with the complainant. Decisions made by HPARB are posted publicly on CanLII. Your initials would be posted as part of that decision.

How can I contact someone at the College to ask questions about the process?

Staff from the Professional Conduct team can help you with any questions that you may have about the complaint process. Please email complaints@crpo.ca and staff will respond to your message within three business days. Alternatively, you can call 416-479-4330, ext. 131 or 1-844-712-1364 ext. 131.

We are committed to communicating with you in an appropriate and professional manner, and appreciate the same courtesy from you. While we understand your circumstances may be difficult, for safety purposes, abusive behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated and may result in restricting communication.



Complaints Relating to Sexual Abuse

We recognize filing a complaint alleging [sexual abuse](#) can be particularly difficult. The College has implemented the following supports:

- When using a contract investigator, staff inform the client they will be contacted by an outside party regarding the investigation within the next few business days. This also provides an opportunity for the client to ask any questions of staff.
- Where possible, investigators ensure clients alleging sexual abuse have access to all documents which will be reviewed in the interview in advance.
- The investigator will accommodate the client's needs with regard to the format and pacing of interviews (e.g., if the investigator requires three hours' worth of interview time, the investigator will ask if the client is more comfortable booking two sittings).

Sexual Abuse Fund & Other Resources

- [Funding for Therapy and Counselling](#) - CRPO can provide therapy or counselling funding to clients who allege sexual abuse by a Registered Psychotherapist.
- [Sexual Assault Centres](#) – Help for survivors of recent sexual assault, past sexual assault, sexual harassment and childhood sexual abuse.
- [Helplines and Resources](#) – Helplines and support resources available to those who have experienced sexual abuse.
- [Sexual Harassment](#) – The Ontario Human Rights Commission also offers information and resources related to sexual harassment.

Our promise to you

The College fulfills its mandate to protect the public interest by addressing all complaints and reports. We pledge to carry out the complaints and reports processes in a fair, transparent, and responsive manner.

- All inquiries and feedback about the complaints and reports process sent to complaints@crpo.ca receive a response within three business days.
- You can have a support person with you at an interview and at a hearing.
- At your request, when disclosing difficult information, staff can provide you with advance notice about when you can expect to receive this information. For example, if we intend to send you the decision over the next week, we would let you know a few days in advance so that you have some time to put adequate supports in place, prior to the disclosure. Please let staff know if this is something you would like us to do for you. Staff will communicate with you in a way that feels most comfortable for you (e.g. phone or email).
- If you prefer the College direct its communication to your support person (e.g. new therapist) so you can process information from the College in a safe place, please let staff know. We will obtain your consent in writing to do so.
- Staff do not disclose sensitive information on Fridays because mental health supports (and staff/investigators) are less accessible over the weekend.
- Should you require any accommodation not listed here, please do not hesitate to reach out to staff and let us know how we can make this process easier for you.