

INFORMATION FOR REGISTRANTS—COMPLAINTS

COLLEGE OF REGISTERED PSYCHOTHERAPISTS OF ONTARIO (CRPO)

The following information is being provided to you as a Registered Psychotherapist (RP) that has received a complaint about your conduct. 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 are my obligations during the investigation?

RPs are required to fully cooperate with the College during an investigation. RPs are also required to reply appropriately and within 30 days to a written inquiry or request from the College (see 1.1., Responsibility toward the College, in the [Professional Practice Standards](#)).

Do I need a lawyer?

While RPs do not need a lawyer to respond to a complaint or report, we advise RPs to use a lawyer. This is because the outcome of the process can have a significant impact on the RP's practice and career.

You may wish to reach out to your Professional Liability Insurance (PLI) provider, who will connect you to a lawyer. This may be a service available through membership with a professional association.

Will my response be shared with the Complainant?

It is possible that your response, or parts of it, may be shared with the Complainant if their reply is required to conduct a thorough investigation. Please note if the Complainant is not the client, any personal health information about the client will not be disclosed to the Complainant.

?

Do not directly contact the Reporter or witness involved in the case. This could be seen as interfering with the investigation.

If you find yourself in the presence of these individuals (i.e., at your workplace), kindly refrain from discussing the matter.

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 you to pay funds as a result of a financial loss experienced by the Complainant
- Resolve employment or labour relations difficulties that are not addressed by the professional standards governing the profession
- Direct you to change your professional opinion or a report
- Direct you to issue a formal apology

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 matter. 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 Registrants 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 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.

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.

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.



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 the information. This would provide you with some time to put adequate supports in place, prior to the disclosure.
- Staff do not disclose sensitive information on Fridays because mental health supports (and staff/investigators) are less accessible over the weekend.
- Staff will communicate with you in a way that feels most comfortable for you (e.g. phone or email). If you obtain legal representation, staff will communicate with your lawyer directly.
- 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.