



# instep newsletter

Thursday, December 12, 2013

## From Yuck through Muck to Pluck

### *Navigating the ethical dimensions of practice*



Despite the stormy Saturday morning, over 60 occupational therapists attended this year's pre-AGM session where Kevin Reil, occupational therapist and ethicist, suggested ways in which we can navigate the ethical dimensions of practice and feel good about our work.

Participants explored the fundamentals of ethics itself and where we, as individuals, learn our values. Kevin suggests that occupational therapists are unsuspecting ethicists because the way in which we think is particularly ethical due to the core values we learn and adopt as we are socialized into the profession. That doesn't necessarily mean it's easy!

Pondering what is good and bad, or right and wrong, may uncover conflicting obligations because of the context of the issue. It may create moral distress, which Kevin refers to as the "yuck factor". Some of us are guided by a set of moral duties or laws, or we consider the various moral consequences or use principles to help us work through the "muck". Oftentimes all are needed, but eventually we have to sort through all the "coulds" and choose a course of action. The "pluck" is the moral fortitude to follow through on the decision. Evaluating the decision may help prevent moral residue, which happens when we continue to worry about a decision.

Listen to the podcast from the session to hear examples of the "yuck, muck and pluck" of everyday practice. In 2014, COTBC will be launching a Code of Ethics learning module. It's designed to help registrants increase their ethical awareness, challenge their thinking, and provide, for some, a road map on how to navigate ethical dimensions in everyday practice. Kevin believes that thinking ethically takes practice, and he encourages us to keep on striving to be that good person and keep on "plucking".

[Click here](#) to access the Ethics podcast.

## Holiday Hours

Our office closes on December 24 at 12 noon and re-opens Thursday, January 2 at 8:00 am.

COTBC Board and Staff wish everyone a very safe and happy holiday season.

## COTBC Office Moves in the New Year

On January 10, 2014 the COTBC office will be closed while staff relocate to their new offices in Victoria at: 402-3795 Carey Road Victoria, BC V8Z 6T8

Our phone numbers remain the same...  
250-386-6822  
Toll free in BC  
866-386-6822

Our fax number changes to...  
250-386-6824

The move was precipitated by the College of Dental Hygienists of BC's decision

## 2013 Board Election Results

Congratulations to our newly elected board members. Naz Chow from Richmond, Diane Graham from Kelowna and Tanya Boudier from Prince Rupert were all re-elected. Their terms of office begin on February 1, 2014. Many thanks to Brian Hall from Kelowna for putting his name forward to serve on the College Board.

And many thanks to everyone who voted. Responsible self-regulation is dependent upon the leadership and the commitment of the profession's members to take on the roles of governing the profession in the public interest. Next year, consider nominating or accepting a nomination to stand for election.

Not ready to sit on the Board? Start by volunteering on a committee. Complete the Expression of Interest form and return it to the Registrar. We'll keep your name available for when positions become available.

## Have you Seen the Bus Shelter Posters?

Colleges that regulate over 100,000 licensed health professionals in BC have come together to launch "our purpose, your safety," a campaign designed to raise awareness not only about the role Colleges play in patient and client safety, but also which professions are regulated, why it's important to choose a regulated health provider, and what can be done if patients have concerns about the care they receive.

Diane Graham, Chair of the COTBC Board, is pictured alongside a bus shelter ad in Kelowna. She fully supports the campaign, which will help her locally to reinforce the importance of using regulated health professionals.



The campaign launched September 16 and includes bus shelter and newspaper advertising, a website in ten languages ([www.bchealthregulators.ca](http://www.bchealthregulators.ca)) and select television spots. It is the first campaign of this nature ever carried out in British Columbia.

Campaign materials have been translated into Vietnamese, Spanish, Punjabi, Persian, Korean, Japanese, Filipino, English, and Chinese.

## You Asked! Do I Keep Rough Notes or Data Sheets?

***I use lots of outcome measures and standardized assessment forms in my practice. Should I keep my score sheets or raw data from these tools, or can I shred them?***

to re-locate and no longer share office space with COTBC. Since the decision was made in July, the College underwent a space analysis and viewed several properties. Although the College has enjoyed cost savings by sharing office space for over 12 years, the Board is satisfied that the new space will meet the operation's needs and is as cost-effective as possible. Since the Board approved the space in mid-November, staff have been preparing for the move to minimize the disruption to our registrants and the public.

We look forward to serving you in our new office space. Questions? Please call or email [info@cotbc.org](mailto:info@cotbc.org)

## Keep Your Contact Information Current

As the College relies more on email communication with its registrants, it is increasingly important that occupational therapists update their contact information. The following should be kept current in the College register.

- Name
- Home address
- Business address
- Business phone number
- Your preferred email address for college communication
- Employment changes

Recently both COTBC and the College of Physical Therapists of BC (CPTBC) have received questions regarding the need to retain rough notes, data sheets, or scoring pages for standardized assessment tools. While neither College has a regulation that specifically addresses the retention of raw data and score sheets, there are points to consider when making this decision in your practice. The information below was drafted jointly by CPTBC and COTBC.

In practice, physical therapists and occupational therapists regularly collect data and record results on score sheets when administering standardized assessment tools. The details from these notes are typically incorporated into the clinical record in the form of a report or detailed progress note, where the information is interpreted and related to the context of the assessment or referral purpose. The question then arises, should the score sheets themselves be retained as part of the clinical record?

It's important to consider a risk assessment when determining how to proceed. For example you may perceive more or less risk, based on:

- your specific patient context,
- the degree to which the information has been integrated into your clinical notes or a summary report, and
- whether the tool is being used as a clinical observation to monitor progress versus being used to make a high stakes decision.

If you determine that the relevant information from the score sheets or rough notes has been well integrated into a progress note or a report that will form part of the clinical record, and that the intent is to monitor progress, you might determine the risk of shredding the rough notes is minimal. If, however, you conduct comprehensive, complex testing and only record a final 'score' in the clinical record, and the results of the testing will impact a significant decision about a patient's ability to perform a job, or drive a car, you might determine that the detail in the rough notes should be retained as part of the clinical record. Once you determine the level of risk associated with destroying the rough notes, it will be easier to make a decision about whether the rough notes should be kept or not.

It is important to have a systematic and consistent approach to your practice, including your approach to records management. Whether you are a sole practitioner or a group practice, it can be helpful to draft a policy to ensure that practices are consistent with respect to the rationale for keeping or shredding various kinds of scoring sheets. For example, the policy could clarify that where detail is integrated thoroughly into the clinical record, score sheets and rough notes are not kept; or where a high stakes decision is made based on results of a certain test, that score sheets and rough notes will become part of the clinical record. Having a systematic approach will also ensure that there is a plan in place for where the rough notes will be kept, for how long, and with the same security as a patient's clinical record. Once you have determined that certain documents will be retained, those documents form part of the clinical record that you are obligated to ensure meets College standards for retention and access.

— COTBC Registrar Kathy Corbett and CPTBC Practice Advisor Susan Paul

**Do you or your colleagues have a practice question?** Please email the College. Frequently asked questions will be featured in the next issue of

with new business  
contact information

Update [online](#) or by contacting the College directly with the necessary changes.

Call (866) 386-6822 or email [info@cotbc.org](mailto:info@cotbc.org)

## Call for Volunteers

COTBC has vacancies on the Registration and Standards Committees and is also recruiting for the Quality Assurance Program's Exam Technical Panel. If you are interested in the committee opportunities, please email [info@cotbc.org](mailto:info@cotbc.org) and attach a completed [Expression of Interest form](#). For the panel please [email](#) the Quality Assurance Program for the Terms of Reference. We look forward to hearing from you.

## College Information Sessions

The registrar and other college staff are available to come and speak to small and large groups regarding practice issues such as informed consent, client records, the use of support personnel, or the Quality Assurance Program. Please email [info@cotbc.org](mailto:info@cotbc.org) for more information. We look forward to hearing from you.

InStep.

## Supporting Provisional Registrants by Providing General Supervision

— Deputy Registrar Cindy McLean

The fall is a very busy time for the College as it welcomes applicants who have recently graduated. New graduates meet most requirements for full registration with the College. For Canadian occupational therapy graduates, full registration is not possible until they successfully pass the National Occupational Therapy Certification Examination (NOTCE) which is held in November and July each year. This may also be the case for some internationally educated applicants.

However, provisional registration with COTBC is possible and encouraged. Once all requirements are met, provisional registrants are able to practice occupational therapy in BC under the general supervision of an occupational therapist. The supervising occupational therapist must have full registration with the College and have practiced for a minimum of one year full-time, of which 6 months were in BC.

Occupational therapists who, within their busy professional schedules and commitments, find the time to provide the support and general supervision for provisional registrants deserve the profession's appreciation. They help these registrants build upon and enhance their entry-level competence and professionalism to provide safe, ethical and quality occupational therapy services in British Columbia.

### What Does General Supervision Entail?

The supervising occupational therapist agrees to provide the degree and nature of supervision necessary for the provision of safe, ethical, and quality occupational therapy services. He or she completes and signs an Employer Acknowledgement Form, as does a management representative from the organization attesting to his or her knowledge of and agreement to General Supervision provision.

General supervision does not necessarily involve monitoring each specific step of practice of the provisional registrant. The supervising occupational therapist provides guidance and feedback commensurate with the provisional registrant's skills and experience. Examples of supervision activities include:

- Onsite, program and occupational therapy service-specific orientation.
- Familiarity with the caseload, being available and providing collegial consultation.
- Meetings as needed (may initially be daily/weekly) to discuss caseload, identify problem areas, and review documentation.
- Opportunities (at least two) to directly observe and provide feedback respecting the provisional registrant's client interactions.
- Support for department/service in-servicing as presenter and/or participant.

As occupational therapy practice evolves, in part reflective and responsive to changes in legislation, resources, and service delivery models, new graduates are exploring employment opportunities outside traditional areas of practice. This underlines the importance of the General Supervision requirement outlined in the College Bylaws. College staff provide clarification, suggestions, and advice to applicants as well as to occupational therapists considering providing General Supervision.

Many of our provisional registrants have recently received notification that they have passed the NOTCE and have now met all the requirements for full registration. *Congratulations!* We continue to process new applicants as provisional registrants meet the requirement to be granted full registration and new applicants applying for provisional registration are considered by the College. Last year there were 154 new



registrants.

## Quality Assurance Program Update

Development of the Quality Assurance Program (QAP) continues with close to 30 volunteers, staff and consultants working to ensure it reflects good practice and is true to the guiding principles originally laid out by the Continuing Competence Committee in 2008. As reported in the [2013 COTBC Annual Report](#), preliminary results from the Annual Competence Review (ACR) indicate that occupational therapists in BC are balancing several roles and transitions but also have access to several supports to maintain or enhance their competence. A final report regarding the first ACR will be submitted to the Board in January. Many thanks to everyone who completed the evaluation portion of the ACR. Your feedback is helping us to make improvements for next year's ACR.

### What's Happening in 2014

- Launch of the Code of Ethics Learning Module
- 2014 Annual Competence Review to be completed by May 31.
- Pilot Testing of the Continuing Competence Exam (CCE)
- Publishing QAP Manual to more fully inform registrants of the purposes of the three elements of the QAP, ways to benefit the most from the program and how to prepare for the CCE.
- Recruitment for the Exam Technical Panel. If you are interested, please [email](#) for the Terms of Reference.

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