



Informed Consent

Informed consent is an important ethical aspect when providing psychological services. It is a process through which a client receiving a proposed psychological service gives consent, following a process of decision-making, leading to informed consent. The aim is to promote client autonomy, self-determination, protect and respect client integrity, minimize risks of exploitation and harm, and foster rational decision-making (Synder and Barnett, 2006).

Requirements of valid Informed consent:

1. It must be voluntary
2. It must be informed
3. Individual must be capable of providing the informed consent

Informed consent is one of the three essential risk management strategies. An appropriately conducted informed consent process could reduce the risks of ethics complaints, licensure board complaints or malpractice suits (Knapp et al., 2013).

The Practice [Guidelines](#) (2019) on Informed Consent, issued by the College of Alberta Psychologists, states, "as established by the CPA Code of Ethics, the CAP Standards of Practice, and the College, following topics are to be addressed as part of obtaining informed consent"-

- 1) purpose and nature of the activity.
- 2) mutual responsibilities.
- 3) confidentiality protections and limitations including how information will be stored and who may have access.
- 4) how confidential information can be accessed.
- 5) how communication will happen between the psychologist and client(s), guardian(s) or third-parties;
- 6) likely benefits and risks.
- 7) alternative modalities of assessment/ treatment.
- 8) likely consequences of non-action.

9) option to refuse or withdraw at any time, without prejudice by the psychologist.

10) time period covered by the consent.

11) how to rescind consent if a decision to rescind consent is made.

12) fees and financial arrangements. Again, these are the 'minimum required' to meet professional standards. Other areas psychologists may wish to address during the informed consent process include logistics and/or business considerations (e.g., cancellation policy, social media policy).

Further, reviewing the Informed Consent for Services in the Standards of [Practice](#) (pp. 11-12, 3.1-3.10) by the College of Alberta Psychologists' would assist members with respect to obtaining appropriate informed consent and informed assent.

References:

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Snyder, T.A., & Barnett, J.E. (2006). Informed consent and the psychotherapy process. *Psychotherapy Bulletin*, 41, 37-42

Disclaimer

The information provided in this document is intended to provide general guidance to members in identifying and addressing issues, increasing self-efficacy and improve practice in the field of psychology. This document is not exhaustive and may not contain all legislation or information required to make an ethically informed decision. Members are

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