

Complaints Committee Report to the PAM AGM 2013

The work of the Complaints Committee fulfills one of the major functions of the regulatory mandate of the Psychological Association of Manitoba (PAM) in monitoring and investigating the professional practice of Psychologists and Psychological Providers based on Complaints that PAM receives.

The Complaints Committee of the Psychological Association of Manitoba is composed of the following PAM members: Drs. Geri Brousseau, Daryl Gill, Gail Robertson, Bruce Tefft, Gregg Tkachuk and, Ms. Sandra Hayhow, with myself as Chair, and Public Representatives, Dr. Neil Arnason, Mr. Herbert Thompson, and Ms. Val Stanowski.

Dr. Jule Henderson and Dr. Bill Leonhart retired from the Committee in 2012, and on behalf of the Committee and PAM, I offer them great thanks for their significant and thoughtful contributions over many years. Dr. Geri Brousseau and Dr. Gail Robertson are the new members of the Committee, and I would think them on behalf of PAM for their commitment here.

Mr. Blair Graham, Q.C. of Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP, is the legal counsel to the Committee, and Ms. Lorna Leader, Complaints Committee Administrative Assistant/Complaints Coordinator continue to provide the Committee with strong administrative and organizational support. Mr. Jeff Hirsch of Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP, had assisted the Committee as well on one particular matter. Thank you all for your contributions in ensuring that the Committee's work is efficient, is consistent with the parameters of the Committee's legal and legislative framework, and considers all administrative and legal issues.

All Committee members need to review very lengthy and complex professional practice, ethical, and competency issues and do so with care, diligence, thoughtfulness, and clear thinking. Their volunteer commitment to the professional practice of Psychology in Manitoba is noteworthy here, and on behalf of PAM, I think the Committee members for their very meaningful contribution.

As part of the investigation and review of Complaints, Psychologists play an important role as Investigators, Consultants, and Experts, and I would like to acknowledge and thank the following Psychologists who have assisted the Complaints Committee in the Committee's adjudication of complaints: Dr. Carrie Lionberg, Dr. Jennifer Laforce, Dr. Del Ducharme, and Dr. Kent Somers.

The Complaints Committee met 7 times during 2012, and reviewed significant documentation and reports between meetings and, had followed up with Investigators, Psychologists, and Complainants.

The Committee has been keenly aware of the costs of its operation and has worked on cost efficiencies and on cost-recovery. I have spoken to this issue last year and, we are at work implementing this. The Committee has had an increased emphasis on early mediated resolution of Complaints, where this is judged to be appropriate, and where this is agreed-upon by the Complainant and Psychologist, and has instituted a "Case Management Model" to manage each Complaint through its process. The description of the Complaint Process has been updated on the Website and, in brochure form.

Complaint Summary for 2012:

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Carried Forward (from previous year)	8	9	11	7
New Complaints	10	6	7	9
Total Reviewed	18	15	18	16
Outcome of Committee Review				
Closed	6	7	9	5
Carried Forward(to next year)	12	8	9	11
Total	18	15	18	16

Of the 8 complaints carried forward from 2011, one had been dismissed with comments to the Psychologist to consider, one had been investigated but was not proceeding, and 6 are in various stages of completion. Of the 6 complaints closed in 2012, 1 had been forwarded on to the Inquiry Committee, 3 were dismissed with comments made to the Psychologist to consider, and 2 were dismissed. Of the 10 new complaints, 5 have been dismissed, and 5 had been carried over to 2013 as investigative processes have not been complete.

Psychological Assessment in contested venue situations, particularly custody/access assessments, continues to be an area where many Complaints are generated. Other Complaint issues relate to assessments in highly specialized practice areas, fees charged, boundary issues, supervision of credentialed and un-credentialed Psychological Providers, interprofessional communication, report timeliness, partiality in counseling, bias on assessment, and possible impairment in functioning.

There is an increased trend for Complaints to be accompanied by a significant volume of written material and, careful review of this material does require time, energy, and consideration of many issues. The Committee has provided comments for the Psychologist to consider in situations where the Complaint situation and the Psychologist's practice did not reach the level of being unprofessional or, of unethical conduct.

The Complaints Committee heavily relies on the members of PAM to facilitate and assist the complaints process. This is directed to the member Psychologists who have had

complaints against them and who responded in a timely manner with information and to the Investigators, Experts and Consultants who the Committee relies on to fulfill its regulatory duty. I would urge all PAM members to consider the request that they may receive at times to function as Investigators, Experts, and Consultants to the Committee as participating this way in the regulation of the Profession is vital to the Committee's operation.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chair, Complaints Committee