



ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC POLICY IN CANADA...

A Government
Relations Guide
for Psychology

**NOVEMBER
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CANADIAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION



SOCIÉTÉ
CANADIENNE
DE PSYCHOLOGIE



THE CANADIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

141 Laurier Avenue West, Suite 702
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5J3
Tel: 613-237-2144
Toll free (in Canada): 1-888-472-0657
Fax: 613-237-1674
E-mail: cpa@cpa.ca

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ABOUT THE CPA

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) is the national association for psychologists and psychology professionals in the country representing practitioners, educators, researchers and students in universities, public and private health settings, as well as educational and correctional facilities across the country.

Psychology is the study of how people think, feel, and behave which makes the discipline relevant to any policy, legislation, regulation, program, or service impacting individuals, families, groups, workplaces and communities. Given psychologists are the country's largest group of regulated and specialized mental health providers, outnumbering psychiatrists about 4:1, psychology practitioners are a key mental health resource for Canada.

VISION

Advancing research, knowledge, and the application of psychology in the service of society through advocacy, support and collaboration.

MISSION

A society where the understanding of diverse human needs, behaviours and aspirations drive legislation, policies and program for individuals, organizations and communities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The CPA's guiding principles are as follows:

- Evidence-based practice, policy and decision-making.
- Respect our organizational mission in all things: support and promote the development of the discipline and profession and its contributions to the people and society in which we live and work.
- Deliver value to members and affiliates.

- Respect, integrity, diversity and inclusion guides all our activity.
- Model the principles of the CPA's *Canadian Code of Ethics* in all we do.
- Collaborate meaningfully and constructively with the CPA's and psychology's partners and stakeholders.

For more information on the CPA, visit our website at: www.cpa.ca.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document has been updated by Mr. Glenn Brimacombe (CPA Director, Policy and Public Affairs). Mr. Brimacombe has been a registered lobbyist for the past twenty years and has worked in health policy within and around the federal government since 1991. His knowledge, experience and perspective when it comes to matters of advocacy and government relations have been invaluable in revising this guide. Members of the Very Involved Psychologist (VIP)/Psychologist Researcher (VIPR) program and senior CPA staff have also provided insightful comments and editorial suggestions that have improved the user-friendliness of the guide for members. All comments on the document, which will be updated on a regular basis, should be sent to PublicAffairs@cpa.ca.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The top 10 steps to being an effective advocate:

1. This guide is about giving practitioners, educators, researchers and students of psychology the tactics, strategies, tools and approaches to effectively engage elected representatives (e.g., Members of Parliament) to contribute to, and shape, public policy.
2. Advocacy is an essential component of the public policy decision-making process in Canada and is welcomed by governments.
3. Issues that are top of mind for psychology and the federal government include: improved access to mental health and substance use programs and services; medical assistance in dying; funding for psychological science; in addition to managing the impact of the pandemic. The voice of psychology is exceedingly relevant to all these issues and needs to be heard.
4. Developing relationships with elected representatives, their political staff and bureaucrats can facilitate a sharing of knowledge and perspective to and from government, which can lead to productive conversations about potential solution(s) to an issue(s).
5. Meeting with elected representatives, their political staff and bureaucrats is not only an opportunity to present solutions to a specific issue(s), but also to build deeper relationships and gain intelligence as to the challenges and opportunities before government and where psychology can make a contribution.
6. The CPA's leaders meet with elected representatives, their political staff and bureaucrats on a regular basis to discuss a wide range of policy issues relevant to the health, well being and functioning of individuals, families, workplaces and communities. Select CPA staff are registered lobbyists.
7. When considering a meeting with an elected representative, ask yourself:
 - What is the issue that is most important to you (priority-setting)?
 - How familiar are you with the issue (do your homework)? Make sure you fully understand the issue you are bringing to them from multiple vantage points (e.g., health provider or researcher, client or student, public, decision makers or funders).
 - What are your key messages (effective communications)? Speak clearly, using user-friendly language that is easy to understand. Know what your colleagues and/or professional association has to say about your issue. Advocacy is less successful when a single profession doesn't agree with itself.
 - Contacting your elected representative (who should you meet with)? Make sure you meet with the right representative. Understand the difference between federal, provincial/territorial and municipal scope and authority.
8. When you are ready to make contact with an elected representative, keep the following in mind:
 - Introduce yourself as a constituent (if applicable).
 - Be clear, factual and pithy, using user-friendly language about the issue you want to discuss, including your recommendations for action (if applicable).
 - While relying on fact, you can cite examples from your own personal/professional perspective to make the issue "real".
 - Be aware of the political context in which you are raising your issue.

- Be courteous and respectful. This is about opening a dialogue and building a relationship.
 - Be constructive and available to meet, and/or provide additional information, if needed.
9. Building on the previous point, you generally don't get a second chance to make a first face-to-face impression. When you meet:
- Be on time and don't be surprised if they are late.
 - Know in advance how you want to present the issue(s) for discussion. Meetings are often no more than 30 minutes.
 - If there are more than 2 of you, arrange in advance who will speak to what issue.
 - Introduce yourself and explain why you are there – succinctly.
 - Be brief and clear in delivering your message, don't waste time.
 - Be informative and adjust your message to your audience – some representatives will be more informed about your message and some less so.
 - Be aware and interested in what matters to your audience – listen, ask questions, be helpful if you can, ask for advice.
- Be repetitive: advocacy is often about saying the same thing over and again.
 - Don't forget the "so what" – your message should include some recommendations and/or an ask.
 - Thank the elected representative for meeting with you.
 - Follow up on anything you promise, and
 - Be patient (and persistent). Successful advocacy often takes time. It is about building networks and taking opportunities to both listen to what matters to others and share what matters to you.
10. In addition to meeting with an elected representative, there are other ways in which you can ensure your voice is heard:
- Write a letter to your local/national newspaper.
 - Invite your elected representative to an event.
 - Invite your elected representative to your work.
 - Participate in the electoral process.
 - Appear as a committee witness. The House of Commons and Senate Standing Committees frequently undertake studies of issues about which they invite expert witness to submit presentations.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Advocacy – is the process of informing, educating, influencing, and assisting government in making public policy decisions.

An Ask – is the act of “asking” the government to consider a (specific) solution(s)/ recommendation(s).

Bill – is a proposed piece of legislation that if successful goes through the following steps: tabled in the House of Commons (first and second reading); referred to a Standing Committee for study; discussed debated in the House of Commons (third reading); review/ approved by The Senate and receives royal ascent.

Bureaucrats – are also known as government officials or civil servants and are employed by the federal government.

Caucus – is a group of elected representatives (e.g., Members of Parliament or Senators) that are affiliated in some way (e.g., political party [Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Bloc Québécois, Green]), or a specific issue [mental health, research]) and meet.

Civil Servants – are also known as bureaucrats or government officials and are employed by the federal government.

Constituents – are those who live in a defined geographic area (i.e., a riding) that has elected a Member of Parliament who represents the interests of that riding in the House of Commons.

Decision-makers – are elected representatives (e.g., Minister of Health, Cabinet) who make the decisions on behalf of the federal government.

Elected Representative – also known as politicians. At the federal level they are Members of Parliament. At the provincial/territorial level they are Members of the Legislative Assembly or their equivalent.

Government Officials – are also known as bureaucrats or civil servants and are employed by the federal government.

Government Relations – also known as advocacy or lobbying is the process of informing, educating, influencing, and assisting government in making public policy decisions.

Key Messages – are a concise set of statements/ points that you want to clearly communicate to government so they understand the issue you are speaking to, and the solutions you are proposing.

Leave Behind – is usually a brief document (e.g., 1-2 pages) that summarizes the issue(s) you have discussed, why it is important to the profession, solution(s) offered, and who it benefits (e.g., public, patients).

Legislation – refers to written laws, often referred to as Acts or statutes, which are enacted by Parliament, the legislative arm of government.

Lobbying – also known as advocacy or government relations is the process of informing, educating, influencing, and assisting government in making public policy decisions.

Mandate Letter – is a letter from the Prime Minister to each Minister of the Crown. It usually articulates the areas of focus and specific deliverables for which the Minister is responsible.

Parliamentarians – are Members of Parliament (elected representatives) as well as Senators (who are appointed by the Prime Minister).

Platform – in lead-up to an election, usually, each political party will identify a series of promises they will deliver on if they are elected. These promises, taken together, are identified as a platform.

Policy Paralysis – where a government feels that it cannot move a policy forward because of inability or lack of commitment, often resulting from irreconcilable divergent views on an issue.

Political Inertia – where a government feels that it cannot make a decision because there is no consensus (i.e., cognitive dissonance; it is hearing at least two divergent views on the issue).

Regulations – are a form of law, sometimes referred to as subordinate legislation, which define the application and enforcement of legislation. Regulations are not laws; to change a regulation you need not go through the legislative process.

Stakeholder – is an organization that has an interest in participating in the advocacy process.

Strategic Alliance/Partnership – are those that are developed between at least two organizations who share the same outcome(s) on a specific issue.

Tri-Councils – are the three federally-funded research-based Granting Councils (i.e., the Canadian Institutes of Health Research [CIHR], the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council [NSERC], and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council [SSHRC]).

ABBREVIATIONS/ **ACRONYMS**

- ADM** – Assistant Deputy Minister
- CAMIMH** – Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health
- CCR** – Canadian Consortium for Research
- CCSA** – Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction
- CIHI** – Canadian Institute for Health Information
- CIHR** – Canadian Institutes of Health Research
- CHT** – Canada Health Transfer
- CST** – Canada Social Transfer
- CPA** – Canadian Psychological Association
- DG** – Director-General
- DM** – Deputy Minister
- HEAL** – Organizations for Health Action
- HoC** – House of Commons
- MHCC** – Mental Health Commission of Canada
- MoH** – Minister of Health
- NSERC** – Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council
- PHAC** – Public Health Agency of Canada
- SFT** – Speech From the Throne
- SSHRC** – Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
- VIP** – Very Involved Psychologist
- VIPR** – Very Involved Psychologist/Researcher

INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) is pleased to provide members with the 3rd edition of ***Advocacy and Public Policy in Canada...A Government Relations Guide for Psychology*** (previously known as *Psychology and Public Policy: A Government Relations Guide for Psychologists*).

The guide is designed to provide psychologists and psychology professionals (i.e., practitioners, educators, researchers and students) with the basic knowledge, strategies and tools to effectively engage and contribute to the political process as it relates to the development of public policy in Canada (also known as “advocacy”, “lobbying” or “government relations”). More specifically, it is about *deepening* the presence, voice and influence of psychology so that it plays a larger role in the identification of solutions that can shape the public policy decision-making process to improve both the health and well-being of the people of Canada, as well as the profession and discipline of psychology.

For purposes of the guide, *public policy* refers to any decision that a government will take that leads to the introduction of, and/or changes in: (1) legislation¹ and/or regulation(s); (2) policy that impact how they administer programs and services, and/or (3) raise public revenue or decrease public expenditure. In the context of the CPA, the focus is on contributing to those decisions taken by government that affect the professional lives of psychologists and psychology professionals, as well as the care they provide to the people of Canada, the research they conduct, and the education they provide to the people of Canada.

The guide should be most useful to those who are new and about to contribute to the public policy process in Canada. That said, the guide should also provide incremental value, or at a minimum, re-assurance to those who have

participated in advocacy, lobbying or government relations activities.

While this guide will provide a useful foundation for members who are participating in the CPA’s recently launched ***Very Involved Psychologist (VIP)*** and ***Very Involved Psychologist Researcher (VIPR)*** advocacy program in 2019 (<https://cpa.ca/advocacy/#6>), it is also intended to be accessible to a wider member audience.

In addition to the guide, additional background information will be placed in the members’ only section.² Both programs are designed to engage CPA members with an interest in the intersection between policy and politics and want to become an advocate for mental health, psychological science, and/or psychological education. For CPA members who are interested in participating in these programs, please contact the Director of Policy and Public Affairs at PublicAffairs@cpa.ca.

Given the predominant strategic focus of the CPA, the guide is largely situated in the context of the association’s relationship to the federal government. However, almost all of the tactics, strategies, tools and approaches can be adapted for advocacy at the provincial, territorial, regional and local levels (as well engaging other organizations across the public, not-for-profit, and private sector).

To be as practical as possible, there are several Appendices that provide illustrated examples of the tools that can be used to advance your public policy issue(s) with elected representatives (who are also known as decision-makers/policy-makers); that is, politicians (e.g., Ministers, Members of Parliament and Senators [as a group known as *Parliamentarians*] and their political staff (e.g., Director of Policy, Director of Communications, Senior Policy Analyst, Legislative Assistant), and government officials (also known as bureaucrats or civil servants).³

¹ There are several steps that are followed when it comes to passing a new piece of legislation, they are as follows: (1) notice and placement on the order paper of the House of Commons; (2) introduction and first reading of the Bill; (3) second reading of the Bill and referral to a committee for study; (4) committee report; (5) third reading of the Bill and adoption by the House of Commons; (6) consideration and passage by The Senate; (7) Royal Assent; and (8) when does the Bill become law.

² This section is under development and will include other publicly available articles, etc. that speak to the advocacy process.

³ It is important to note that politicians will make capital “P” political policy decisions, while the role of government officials is to provide their “best advice” to politicians. Government officials will, usually, but not always, have responsibility for operating/administrative issues.

In addition to building or refining your advocacy skill set, we know that working with (social) media can be an integral part of advocating for the profession. By keeping the public informed about the issues relevant to psychology, we can raise awareness and identify potential champions from the public and amongst elected representatives (politicians) at all levels of government.⁴ Public awareness through the (social) media can also motivate governments to act on a specific policy issue(s).

Working with (social) media and obtaining news coverage can be critical in advancing the mental health needs of Canadians and the views of psychology. For additional tips

on how to gain media traction, and tips on what to do and not to do when dealing with (social) media, please see our companion guide for psychologists entitled *Interviews, Hashtags and Op-Eds. A Psychologist's Guide to Working with the Media* [<https://secure.cpa.ca/CDN/tenant/cpa/docs/Advocacy/CPA-MediaGuide-Dec2021-EN.pdf>].

Finally, as with many CPA publications, this is a *living* document that will continue to evolve over time, and we welcome any comments, perspectives and insights you have that will strengthen the value it provides to members and affiliates. Please feel free to forward your comments to PublicAffairs@cpa.ca.



⁴ Politicians who “champion” an issue may do so publicly, or they may be a “quiet champion” working behind the scenes and meeting with other parliamentarians (possibly across political parties, particularly in a minority government) to see if there is interest in moving an issue forward. In this context, they should be seen as helpful “connectors” who are trying to identify and/or develop political consensus to move the issue in question forward.

WHY ADVOCACY?

Advocacy is the process of informing, educating, influencing, and assisting government in making public policy decisions. Only with reliable information, which can come from a variety of sources within (e.g., Health Canada, Finance Canada, Justice Canada, Prime Minister's Office) and outside of government (e.g., Canadian Psychological Association, Public Opinion Polling data, Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health [CAMIMH], Public Health Agency of Canada [PHAC], Canadian Institute for Health Information [CIHI], Mental Health Commission of Canada [MHCC], Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction [CCSA]),⁵ can good public policy decisions be made.

Advocacy is an *essential* component of the political process and development of public policy in Canada. While advocacy can be perceived as intimidating or a murky part of the political process, the reality is that advocacy is a well-accepted and necessary process of dialogue between government and society at-large.

Advocacy provides a formal opportunity for a community of interest, like psychology, to provide its views, analysis, recommendations, questions, concerns, etc., in a way that facilitates a meaningful dialogue and exchange of views with government.

By their very nature, government is, generally, risk averse and is not known for making quick decisions.⁶ The decision-making process in most democracies is, almost by definition, a slow and deliberative one. This is often because before any policy is implemented, a process of due diligence/public consultation

will take place to carefully weigh the risks and benefits of acting on an issue. This presents an opportunity for stakeholders⁷, like psychology, to play an active role in the advocacy process.

Depending on the policy issue in play, psychology can be an important, expert resource to inform, contribute to and/or shape a public policy issue or debate in Canada.⁸ Establishing a credible presence with government – which often means speaking thoughtfully or authoritatively on a specific issue – will raise the likelihood that the voice of psychology will continue to be heard today and into the future.

Underpinning the process of advocacy is the importance of identifying, developing, and strengthening your *relationships* within and around government, which can occur at different levels. For example, at the federal political level, relationships can be built with a Minister and/or political staff, and other Members of Parliament and Senators. At the bureaucratic level, invaluable relationships can be built with (senior) government officials at a number of different levels (e.g., Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Minister, Director-General, Director, Policy Analyst).

Generally speaking, the stronger the relationship(s) you have, the better the quality of the interaction. Keep in mind that while governments have a responsibility to maintain and improve the health and well-being and overall quality of life of the people of Canada, it does not mean that they have all the answers to the issues on which they are focused.

⁵ It should be noted that the last four organizations are federally-funded agencies that are at arms length from the government in terms of its governance.

⁶ While there will be unanticipated events that governments will need to respond to (e.g., public health emergency, financial crisis, terrorist activity), there is a decided preference to thoroughly consider an issue, weigh the options, consult, and then make a decision.

⁷ Stakeholders refers to external organizations that will provide input via the public consultation process to government.

⁸ Think of the weight of the CPA when it comes to federal legislation such as: medical assistance in dying (MAID); conversion therapy; or the need for a Mental Health Parity Act; funding for psychological science; amending the Criminal Code of Canada to perform fitness assessments to stand trial or criminal responsibility assessments; or the federal role in improving access to psychological services.

Outside of government, there may be opportunities to identify and form relationships with similar-minded organizations (called a strategic alliance or partnership) who share a common policy outcome.⁹

While a government will make a number of high-level policy commitments about what they want to achieve on behalf of Canadians,¹⁰ the (legislative, regulatory, tax, funding, operational/administrative) details as to how they will get there are where the important strategic policy decisions will be made. Different policy roads can lead to the same or a similar policy outcome(s).

This is where the *process of advocacy* can be very powerful and where a community of interest or stakeholder, like psychology, can provide significant value to a government in thinking through a specific policy issue(s).¹¹

Also keep in mind that advocacy is not an all or nothing experience. As is true of most relationships, it benefits from the frequency, quality and longevity of contacts that you make and maintain (noting that while politicians may come and go, government officials can stay for extended periods of time).¹² The development of these relationships can also give you a deeper appreciation of the issue government is trying to address, the viable opportunities they see for concrete action, as well as the challenges and/or limitations (i.e., internal dynamics) of certain policy options.

Combined, this intelligence can be invaluable when thinking through a policy solution that you would like to propose that meets your needs...and those of government, as well as the public and possibly others (i.e., a multiple-win proposal).¹³



⁹ The CPA has a number of strategic alliances including the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health to government. For more information on the CPA's strategic partnerships visit our website at: <https://cpa.ca/partnerships/>.

¹⁰ For example, see the September 23, 2020 Speech From the Throne, which outlines a high-level policy roadmap for the government of the day, but little in terms of how their objectives will be accomplished.

¹¹ An important contribution to health leadership, of which building and maintaining alliances is important is contained in Chapter 8 (Developing Coalitions) of *Bringing Leadership to Life: LEADS in a Caring Environment* by Graham Dickson and Bill Tholl.

¹² Often, bureaucrats are the "power behind the throne", and often play a significant role in the formulation of policy. Given their corporate and professional knowledge they can play a critical role in listening to your issue and the solutions you are advancing (and may also offer some nuanced advice on how to position the issue). They can also have a "long memory" so it pays to treat them with the respect they deserve.

¹³ For the most part, when government announces a policy, it is not uncommon that they are looking to meet the needs of a number of constituencies (e.g., business community, manufacturing sector, nurses, general public), and, if possible, achieve as much broad-based (public) support as possible.

A GOVERNMENT'S RELATIONSHIP TO **ADVOCACY**

All political parties that come to power and form a government have a public policy agenda (also known as a “platform”); which contains a series of public (and not so public) policy commitments (promises) that they have committed to in forming a government.¹⁴

Once elected, the government will be working closely with government officials to identify ways in which their agenda can be implemented. This can be through the tabling of new legislation, amendments to existing legislation, or the introduction of new policies, programs and/or services that require (new) funding. Depending on the political environment (minority versus a majority government, or the mood of the electorate) the government might delay the timing of implementing a promise (e.g., national universal pharmacare by the Trudeau government¹⁵) or shelving a commitment altogether (e.g., think of Justin Trudeau’s promise of electoral reform). As with many things in life, *timing* can play a crucial role in government decision-making.

In basic terms, a government has four essential functions to fulfill: (1) **tax** its citizens at

reasonable levels so as to raise sufficient public revenue; (2) **spend** public revenue efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of its electorate; (3) **inform** the public about the (policy) decisions it makes; and (4) **regulate** a number of different sectors (e.g., health, transportation, privacy, finance, mining, information technology, oil and gas) to protect the public interest.

In all these instances there will be opportunities for an organization or individual to exercise its voice and provide input into the public policy decision-making process.

While some governments might prefer to operate in a vacuum or tightly controlled political environment where all of their proposed policies would be implemented with little or no opposition, the reality is that effective advocacy provides organizations and individuals with the opportunity to go on-record and speak “truth to power”; which could: (a) improve/amend a policy that has been proposed by government; (b) propose a different way to achieve an identified policy outcome; or (c) recommend that the policy not move ahead all together.



¹⁴ Go to any of the federal political parties’ websites and you will find information (often a document) that summarizes their election policies/commitments (i.e., promises) they will fulfill if they come to power.

¹⁵ Which was originally promised – along with a national home care program – by the Chretien government in the mid 1990s. Sometimes, it takes *time* to move from a proposal to implementation! Persistence and patience can sometimes pay off...

YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO ADVOCACY

Over time, psychology's voice and presence has grown at the federal level, but it needs to be stronger. That is why the profession and discipline needs your help; it is essential that we continue to strengthen our voice in the public policy development process to benefit the health and well being of individuals and the contexts in which they live and work.

Personal contact with your elected representative as a constituent can be a vital component of that program by amplifying the CPA's key messages at the local level. Moreover, your professional training and expertise uniquely qualifies you to contribute to the development of public policy as it relates to the people it serves and in particular, the public benefits brought about by supporting practice, education and research in psychology.

Why get involved?

1. To advocate for constructive solutions on behalf of the public and the profession.
2. To build effective and lasting relationships with decision-makers.
3. To be seen as a credible voice that governments will want to hear from and listen to.
4. To identify and develop strategic alliances/partnerships with other similar-minded organizations of practitioners, researchers and educators (and others).
5. To communicate the value and impact of timely access to psychological treatments and services, psychological research, and the training of future psychologists.
6. To influence the organization, management, delivery and funding of mental health services.
7. To ensure appropriate and sustainable funding for quality mental health care, the advancement of science, and higher education systems.

There are several ways in which you can help ensure psychology is on the political agenda in your riding, and ultimately on the federal, provincial and territorial stage:

1. You can reach out to your Member of Parliament (or provincial-territorial member of your Legislative Assembly/Legislature) and begin the process of relationship-building and educating them about the issue(s) of concern to you.¹⁶
2. You can take an active role in local nomination meetings and election campaigns.
3. Prior to, and during, election campaigns you can raise psychology-related issues at public debates, work for a candidate that shares your views, or even run for office to give psychology a stronger voice at a political table.



THE CPA'S APPROACH TO ADVOCACY

As part of its strategic focus to promote the practice, science, and education of psychology, the CPA maintains a vigorous and effective advocacy program.

The CPA is involved in a number of advocacy/government relations activities at the federal level on behalf of its members and student affiliates, and of psychology as a profession and discipline. These activities include producing submissions to government, participating in the annual pre-budget consultation process (which at a minimum includes submitting a written Brief), presenting at standing committees, working closely and in partnership with other stakeholder groups (like the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health [CAMIMH]), and launching strategic communications and (social) media campaigns (e.g., 2020 World Mental Health Day).

On a regular basis, CPA representatives meet with Members of Parliament and Senators, and senior government officials to discuss issues of concern and interest to the profession and share our unique perspective.¹⁷ For more information on the CPA's activities please go to the advocacy section of the website [cpa.ca/advocacy/]. Of note, it would be important to review the CPA's recent submission to the 2021 pre-budget consultation process [cpa.ca/docs/File/Advocacy/Final_Submission_August_2020.pdf] which will give you a clear rationale for each of our "asks" to the federal government.

Select CPA staff are registered lobbyists who regularly meet and speak with the federal government on a variety of public policy issues (e.g., medical assistance in dying, conversion therapy, funding for mental health and research) using different vehicles to get our message(s) across (e.g., letters, [virtual] meetings, news releases, reports, Briefs, media interviews).

The CPA advocates on behalf of psychology at the federal level because programs developed and funded by the federal government have an impact on every CPA member and every Canadian. This includes:

- A. The federal role in funding research** – the federal government plays a dominant role in determining the type, direction, and level of funding for psychological research in Canada through the three granting councils (i.e., the Canadian Institutes of Health Research [CIHR], the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council [SSHRC], and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council [NSERC]).
- B. Providing health funding to the provinces and territories** – the federal government also provides an annual cash contribution to the funding of health and social services provided by the provinces and territories via the *Canada Health Transfer* (CHT) and the *Canada Social Transfer* (CST).¹⁸
- C. Direct responsibility for specific groups/population** – the federal government is the fifth largest provider of health care services in the country, having direct responsibility for specific populations (i.e., Indigenous peoples, military, veteran's affairs, the criminal justice system, and immigrants and refugees).
- D. The federal government as an employer** – Finally, as one of the country's largest employers (almost 290,000), the federal government can do more when it comes to psychological health in the workplace and provide meaningful coverage for psychological care when needed.¹⁹

¹⁷ A good example of this is every year at the time of Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) which is in October, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) – of which CPA is a founding member – meet with Members of Parliament to discuss the federal role in supporting/investing in mental health. In 2020, CAMIMH's recommendations were outlined in its Mental Health Action Plan [https://4fd10ef8-cd4e-4952-9d3e-5f87fdb378b7.filesusr.com/ugd/b625ef_9ab63c77c25c4908939a82ac0052c1b2.pdf].

¹⁸ In 2019/20, the CHT (which accounts for roughly 22% of total provincial/territorial public spending on health) and CST were valued at \$40.4 billion and \$14.6 billion, respectively.

The CPA is increasingly consulted by governments and other federal parties to provide perspective and/or offer advice in sensitive policy areas that affect the ways in which psychologists work and the functioning of Canada's many public systems (e.g., health, education, corrections). For example, the CPA has provided input into such diverse areas as: tax policy; criminal justice matters (assessment and treatment); military and veteran mental health; basic, applied and health system research, health policy, and government information systems (e.g., Statistics Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information).

On its own and through its alliances with other research organizations and associations, the CPA increasingly looks for opportunities to meet with the federal government to discuss the need for investment(s) that maintain and enhance the health and wellbeing of the people of Canada.

With the creation of the **Very Involved Psychologist (VIP)/Very Involved Psychologist Researcher (VIPR)** program, we hope that an increasing number of members will become more comfortable and have the tools, tactics and strategies to engage elected representatives on matters of mental health policy.



¹⁹ In 2015, the federal government and the Public Service Alliance of Canada (the union representing more 100,000 federal government employees) agreed to create a task force to examine all policies, practices and working conditions that could be contributing to the stress and mental health claims (led by depression and anxiety) that account for about half of all disability claims.

GETTING STARTED

Now that you have a general feel for what advocacy can be, it is time for you to think about how you would like to participate by reflecting on the following questions:

A. Priority-setting: What is the issue(s) that is most important to you?

The most difficult step after deciding to become politically active is to identify and prioritize what issue(s) you are going to bring to the attention of your elected representative. When meeting with an elected representative it is very tempting to want to talk about every issue facing psychology and provide too much information in an effort to fully educate them on a number of subjects.

This, however, is likely to overwhelm them and detract attention from the issue that you want to focus on. To put it bluntly, politicians have limited time (usually 15-30 minute meetings); they deal with a large number of policy issues; and meet with a wide variety of interest groups and stakeholders, so you need to be pithy and get to the point. Attempting to discuss too many issues in a letter or at one face-to-face meeting will only result in confusion and little or no commitment from them.

To start with, we would suggest that you prioritize no more than two issues, and preferably, begin with one. Note that decision-makers will be more interested in an issue that is already identified/aligned with the governments' agenda (e.g., improving timely access to mental health services).²⁰ That doesn't mean you can't raise a new issue, but

to capture their attention and support you will have to make a compelling/persuasive case.

B. Do your homework: how familiar are you with the issue?

Before you arrange to meet with an elected representative, government official or make a written representation, it is important that you do the necessary information-gathering and background research so that you have a clear handle on the issue you have identified. In other words, do your homework.

In addition to having a clear grasp on the **content** of an issue, it is also important to understand the (political) **context** in which the issue is being discussed.²¹ Often, the political **context** will influence how you want to present your **content**; that is, the issue itself and your solution(s).²²

Before embarking on any advocacy activity, it is also important to understand the current political environment and whether there are any jurisdictional issues (i.e., federal versus provincial-territorial versus local²³) that might impact your issue, in addition to how your issue fits in the larger political and economic context.

An important part of your preparation for any meeting is understanding what is important to the elected official and what public comments or position they have taken on your issue or related ones. There is value in undertaking an internet search on the elected representative as it relates to your issue and read their biography before engaging. Note that almost all politicians have their own website.²⁴

²⁰ All elected representatives are in favour of this policy objective, the critical question though, is how to get from where we are to where we want to go.

²¹ Is the issue a highly divisive one, or, is it one where in principle, there is strong public/political support to do something, but it is not yet clear what that "something" is? The more divisive an issue is, the harder it can be for a government to move (i.e., political inertia), unless they are ideologically driven, or understand that there may be a political price to be paid in terms of public support.

²² For example, when the issue of safe injection sites was emerging at the federal level, the Harper government was not supportive of opening more sites but wanted additional treatment capacity. The Liberal party, however, supported the opening of more injection sites.

²³ There is nothing easier for a politician to say "this issue is out of my jurisdiction, I can't help you"; make sure the issue can be addressed/solved by the appropriate level of government.

C. Effective communications: What are your key messages?

In order to communicate effectively you will need to focus, identify and refine your *key messages*.²⁵ Frame the issue using simple language (most politicians will not be conversant or comfortable with mental health or highly scientific jargon), explaining why it is important to psychology, the challenges that currently exist, and the solutions you are presenting (known as an “ask”; you are *asking* the government to implement a solution).²⁶ It is also essential that you prepare for questions and opposing points of view (i.e., some push back on your view of the world).

To assist you in thinking about the key messages, you may want to consider the following questions:

- **Issue** – what is the issue you want to speak to and why is it important to you?
- **Challenges** – what are the challenges currently facing the issue you want to speak to?
- **Options** – is there more than one option that could be considered as a solution?
- **Solutions** – do you have a preferred solution, and why (rationale)?²⁷
- **Implementation** – do you have any specific views as to how your solution could be implemented?
- **Public Support** – is there public support, or support from other organizations for your solution?

- **Government Needs** – how does your solution assist the government in meeting its own objectives, and possibly others?

Appendix A provides the key messages the CPA has developed to address psychological expertise in performing fitness-to-stand trial and criminal responsibility assessments.

D. Contacting your elected representative: With whom should you meet?

Contacting the appropriate elected representative will largely depend on what level of government has primary responsibility to address your issue of concern. For example, if you want to see increased research funding, you would want to focus on the federal government, who, through the annual budgetary process determine how much funding the Tri-Councils²⁸ will receive.²⁹

If it is about improving local access to psychological services, you could focus on your provincial/territorial elected representative given that the provinces and territories have direct responsibility for their health care and education systems. However, you could also focus on your Member of Parliament given that the federal government has an indirect role in terms of providing annual funding to the provinces and territories via the Canada Health Transfer (CHT) so that they can provide timely access to quality mental health care. However, in 2017, the federal government earmarked \$5 billion over 10 years to the provinces and territories for mental health and addiction services.

To initiate a meeting, the CPA recommends that you contact your own elected representative at the appropriate government level. Your elected representative is the person who represents you in the House of Commons/Provincial-Territorial

²⁴ All Members of Parliament and Senator can be found using this link: www.parl.ca.

²⁵ Often, key messages are framed in terms of what is the issue you speaking to, what is the problem, what are your solutions, how does this benefit government and others? They can be your speaking points, or, converted into a brief one or two-page document to be left with those you are meeting with (known as a “leave behind”).

²⁶ While one can just have a discussion with an elected representative without a specific solution being tabled, however, it is unlikely that the meeting will lead to change in a direction you want. The purpose of engagement is to offer them solutions – and at times a “push” to make a needed change.

²⁷ Known as an “ask”, this is a very important part of a meeting in that you are asking the government to consider a (specific) solution. Be as clear and concise as possible in terms of your solution. Having a leave behind with additional detail to your proposal can be very valuable not only in terms of advancing government thinking while building credibility (political capital) with government that you know what you are talking about. Governments from time to time, will quietly seek out knowledgeable individuals/experts to discuss/assess policy options.

²⁸ They are the Canada Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).

²⁹ There are other important federal agencies and programs that play a crucial role in supporting research including: Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIFAR), Research Support Fund, and Brain Canada.

legislature/legislative assembly and who will most likely be sensitive/receptive to your views. You can identify and locate your federal, provincial, and territorial elected representative on the official government websites.³⁰

Elected representatives maintain an office at the House of Commons/Provincial-Territorial legislature and a local office in their riding. When you contact your elected representative by email, letter or phone make sure to state that you are a constituent at the beginning of the correspondence/conversation. In other instances, there may be occasions when it is appropriate and helpful to contact other elected representatives. For example, when the chair of a committee wishes to consult the public at a critical point in the legislative process, or where you would like to provide your expertise in a specific area in which a committee is developing policy; your communication with those elected, representatives can be important.

Feel free to contact the CPA if you are interested in developing communications with your own elected representative at the federal level (PublicAffairs@cpa.ca). If your issue or activity is more provincially or territorially focused, you might want to reach out to the provincial or territorial association of psychology in your jurisdiction.

E. What should your approach be? Deciding on tactics

Once you have identified your issue, undertaken some background research and refined your key messages, and decided who you are going to contact, it is time to start thinking about the approach you will use to communicate your issue, such as: (a) writing an email or letter; (b) requesting a face-to-face meeting with an elected representative; (c) requesting to appear as a committee witness; and/or (d) submitting letters to your local newspaper and/or use of (social) media. There are many approaches and methods to reach your target audience, some of which will be discussed in the following sections.

F. Is this a national/federal, provincial/territorial or local issue?

This will be important to know given that, preferably, you will want to use the same or similar messaging that supports the policy position of the CPA at the national/federal level.³¹ You might also want to reach out to the CPA for any background material (e.g., key messages, Briefs) and/or political intelligence. If it is more of a provincial/territorial issue, you might want to speak to your provincial/territorial psychological association to ensure alignment of messaging as well as intelligence gathering. If it is a local/community issue, there can be value in reaching out through your local community before approaching a city/town councillor. Some Canadian cities have a municipal association of psychology.



³⁰ All Members of Parliament and Senator can be found using this link: www.parl.ca.

³¹ Governments see an opportunity when a community is conveying more than one message. This can lead to two outcomes: (1) policy paralysis – where a government feels that it cannot make a decision because there is no consensus (i.e., cognitive dissonance); or (2) because there is no consensus, government will do what it thinks is best (which may not be what you are recommending) knowing that there is a divided opposition.

MAKING CONTACT – COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

As noted earlier, advocacy is the process of informing, educating, influencing and assisting elected representatives usually over a period of time. While there may be opportunities for a “one-off” conversation or meeting that can change the trajectory of an issue, there is significant value in building a strong and sustainable working relationship with them and their staff.

Now that you are ready to contact a decision-maker via email or a letter,³² below are several tips to keep in mind:

- **Introduce yourself** – Indicate that you are a constituent and a psychologist/psychology professional/psychology student at the beginning of the letter. This will get their attention because you are a voter. Provide a street address or postal code and consider including your phone number and email address.
- **Be clear** – Open with your request (e.g., “concern about access to mental health services”, “funding psychological science”, or “meeting request”, or “Bill C-xx”). State the subject of your email (subject line)/letter clearly, keep it brief and address only one (maximum two) issue(s) per communication.
- **Be brief** – The communication should be relatively short, written in user-friendly language, with a recommended maximum length of one-to-two pages.
- **Make recommendations** – If applicable, state exactly what action you want taken on the issue. List any recommendations, in bullet form, at the bottom of the communication.
- **Be accurate** – Beware of false or misleading information undercutting your credibility on the issue you want to raise.
- Always double-check your facts, figures and sources to ensure accuracy.
- **Be informative** – Use only one or two key arguments. State your views, support them with your expert knowledge, and cite the Bill number of relevant legislation, if appropriate. Your personal communication carries more weight than pre-printed materials or postcards. It is not recommended that you send a large file/documents (they will likely not have the time to read it).
- **Personalize your message** – It is always helpful when you can cite examples from your own experience/practice to support your position; for example, provide an example of how the issue will impact your community and your patients/clients.
- **Be political** – In raising your issue, it is useful to frame it in the current political context. This will help to make it more relevant to the government’s agenda/priorities.
- **Be constructive** – As much as possible, rely on the facts/evidence and avoid emotional arguments, threats of political influence, or demands.
- **Be focused** – Focus on the issue that is important to you and avoid going off message.
- **Be inquiring** – Ask for the elected representative’s view on the subject and how she or he intends to vote on relevant legislation.
- **Be repetitive** – Repeat your request again at the bottom of the communication.

³² Remember, if you send a letter to a Member of Parliament no postage is required (however, postage is required to write to your provincial and territorial representatives).

Knowing that this is your initial communication with an elected representative on a specific issue, *how* you approach them is just as important as *what* you say:

- **Be courteous/respectful** – Be assertive and respectful but not threatening (remember, you're trying to be helpful in addition to building a relationship). Keep in mind that there may be other issues where psychology will lobby this elected official at some point in the future. A cordial/constructive relationship always keeps the door open for future dialogue.
- **Be helpful** – Feel free to offer additional information if needed and make sure your elected representative knows how to contact you.
- **Be available** – Indicate that you would be pleased to meet to discuss this issue at their convenience.
- **Be appreciative** – Remember to say "thank you" at the bottom of the correspondence. Follow the issue after you write. Send a letter of thanks and appreciation if your elected representative votes your way.
- **Be patient** – Expect a reply – even if it's only a form letter. Keep in mind, elected officials receive a significant number of email/letters on a daily basis.

Appendix B outlines how to send/address communication with a Member of Parliament/Senator. **Appendices C, D and E** provide samples of different kinds of personalized email or letter (focused on an issue; request for a meeting).

A. Follow-up to your communication

As noted above, elected representatives receive hundreds of emails/letters every day, which means it can take a week or more to read and research the issue you have raised, and then respond to your letter. If you don't hear from their office after three or four weeks, it is reasonable to follow up with a phone call or with another communication which references the first one.

If the reply you receive asks specific questions about the issue, make sure you respond with the answers as promptly as you can. If you need help answering the questions, please feel free to contact the CPA (PublicAffairs@cpa.ca) or

connect with your local provincial or territorial psychological association.³³

If your representative votes or takes a public stand that reflects your position, be sure to send a note of appreciation. It is just as important to let your representatives know you support a position as it is to let them know you oppose one.

For issues that are national in nature, don't hesitate to send a copy of your communication with an elected official to the CPA (PublicAffairs@cpa.ca). This allows us to track grassroots communications and determine where we might need to get more involved. If you are advocating at the provincial or territorial level, send a copy to your provincial or territorial psychological association.

B. Make a phone call

When time is short or an issue is time sensitive, you may want to communicate with an elected representative by telephone. The guidelines for making an effective telephone call to an elected representative's office are similar to those for effective email/letter writing, with a few additions.

When preparing for a telephone call, start at the beginning, just like you would in a letter, remembering that the person you talk to may have just gotten *off* the telephone with another constituent who had a very different concern. Be prepared with facts and information at your fingertips and a clear idea of what you want your telephone call to achieve.

When making your call:

- State that you are a constituent in their riding at the onset of the call. You can ask to speak to your elected representative, but don't be disappointed if he or she is not available as they often have jammed packed schedules. Next, ask to speak with the assistant who handles the subject of your interest. It is important to know that this is often just as effective as speaking with your elected official. If neither the representative nor the relevant staff members are available, you can ask for a return call or leave a brief message, such as: "My name is Dr. Christine Mason and I am a constituent in your riding and a professor of psychology at the University of Hometown. I am calling to discuss my representative's support on..."

³³ For more information on provincial/territorial psychological associations, please go to the Council of Professional Associations of Psychology website: www.cpap-cspp.ca.

- Have a clear idea of the message you want to communicate. Write the main points down and, if needed, refer to them when you make your call. If you know the Bill number (proposed legislation), reference them in your call.
 - Organize your facts and arguments in a clear, coherent manner. You will likely have only a few minutes to make your case.
 - State exactly what action you want taken on the issue.
- Be prepared to give your email address or telephone number to ensure that they can respond to you directly. If you choose to present yourself as a representative of the University of Hometown or Hometown Hospital, make sure you have the permission of your employer/organization to do so.
- Be persistent but courteous and respectful. You may have to call back several times before you get through to either the correct staff person or the politician. Don't be discouraged – no one is trying to avoid you. It is important to remember that elected representatives get many calls each day, so remain determined and keep trying until you get through.



THE FACE-TO-FACE MEETING

The single most effective way to communicate your message to an elected official is through a face-to-face meeting. Keep in mind that the meeting may include an assistant along with the elected official, or it may be with an assistant, and not the elected representative. In these instances, most assistants are experts in their areas, and elected representatives depend heavily on their expertise to help keep them informed. The assistant can give you an idea of where they stand on the issue, let you know what additional information might be needed and tell you what action they are willing to take. They can also become an important contact in terms of relationship-building.

Most face-to-face meetings are scheduled for 30-45 minutes. Often, if the meeting goes beyond that, it is a good sign that you have engaged who you are meeting.

The rule for one-on-one meetings with an assistant or the elected representative is to: (a) plan ahead – know how you want to present the issue and what action you would like to see; (b) know your facts; (c) know with whom you are meeting, and (d) be familiar with the arguments against your position.

Appendices F and G provide different samples of personalized letters requesting a meeting.

A. Scheduling a meeting

To set up a meeting it is recommended that you first send a written meeting request letter by email/letter to your elected representative and then, if need be, follow up on the request by email/telephone. In the meeting request letter, you should introduce yourself, state that you are a constituent hoping to meet with the elected representative, and briefly outline, in a paragraph or two, the purpose of the meeting.

Meetings can take place in the elected representative's office in the House of Commons or in their riding office. Given that most CPA members and student affiliates live outside of Ottawa, it is likely you will meet at their riding office. Before calling you should check if the House of Commons is in session. If you know that they are going to be in the riding, take advantage of this time by planning a meeting.

That said, most Members of Parliament leave Ottawa on Thursday and return Sunday evening/ Monday morning so they can be with their constituents Friday through Sunday.

As a general rule, it is usually much easier and more effective to schedule a personal appointment with an elected representative (even one who is a Cabinet Minister) in their constituency office than in their legislative office. When you call ask to speak to the person in the office who handles their schedule and state that you are a constituent. Virtually all elected officials have regular constituency office appointment hours. For a meeting with a (specific) Member of Parliament, you may call the CPA Head Office, who can work with you to set up a meeting in Ottawa (PublicAffairs@cpa.ca).

For a meeting, contact the person handling your elected representative's schedule and state your affiliations and the subject you wish to discuss, and ask for 15 to 30 minutes of their time. If it is clear that they are unable to meet with you, then a very good substitute is a meeting with the assistant in charge of the file you are interested in discussing. As noted previously, do not feel discouraged if you cannot meet with your elected representative; they have demanding schedules and are often pulled away on short notice (e.g., a vote in The House, other time sensitive matters) and rely on their assistants to research issues and report on constituent concerns.

Finally, call to confirm your meeting a few days before it is scheduled to occur.

B. Once the meeting is scheduled

Now that the meeting has been confirmed, here are few pointers to consider:

- **Do your homework** – Learn as much as you can about the professional background of your elected representative and record as it relates to your issue (google them and check their website). Politicians want to be acknowledged for positive political action and to be informed about local issues. Be prepared to talk *in detail*, and directly, about the issue you wish to discuss. Know the opposing arguments as well as those in

favour of your view. Compile your information, such as local statistics, just as you would when writing a letter or making a telephone call. To make the issue “real”, have personal examples ready that illustrate the human side of what you are talking about. Be able to answer specific questions on how the issue affects you, your patients/clients/students and community, the province/territory or the country in general.

- **Contact the CPA Head Office (PublicAffairs@cpa.ca) to help you research any Federal Members of Parliament** – CPA staff can help you find out about the Member of Parliament's record on the issue – public statements, legislation, etc. It is much better to know if the elected representative does not support your position *before* you go into the meeting rather than to find out during the meeting. In addition, CPA Head Office staff can help you find out how the issue has played in the press by finding articles, op-eds, editorial statements on local television, etc. If the press coverage has been favourable to your point of view, get copies to distribute during your meeting. Again, for meetings with provincial or territorially elected officials, contact your provincial/territorial psychological association.
- **Consider developing a brief fact sheet (also known as a “one-pager” or a “leave behind”) on your topic (see Appendices H and I)** – For every meeting it is important that you leave a short synopsis describing the issue and listing your recommendations, in bullet form, with the elected representative and/or assistant. Ideally this document should be succinct – only one or two pages in length with clear recommendations noted at the end. CPA Head Office staff can help you with fact sheets, studies, or position papers to help explain the issue succinctly (PublicAffairs@cpa.ca). Do **not** bring large documents as they will likely end up unread.

If you are going to meet an elected representative as a group, it is important to practice your presentation ahead of time and, if you are going with colleagues, determine *who* will speak to *what*. Pick a leader who will introduce the issue and decide who will say what, and when. Prepare to only make one or two arguments (although more can be presented). If the meeting starts to go off topic, make sure that your group members are prepared to bring the conversation back to the subject of concern.

C. Day of the meeting

One the day of the meeting, note:

- **Be on time** – If you are meeting at the House of Commons or a government building ensure you arrive no less than 30 minutes before your meeting as you will be required to go through security.
- **Don't be surprised if they are late** – Elected officials' schedules are hectic and ever-changing. Being a visitor often requires patience and flexibility.
- **Build your network** – Make a point of introducing yourself to and learning the names of key staff you meet, including the secretary, legislative assistant, and executive assistant, and/or riding manager. These individuals may be especially helpful in the future. Convey information about your affiliations and exchange pleasantries briefly (a good sense of humour can go a long way!). Give them each your business card and a copy of the one-page leave-behind.
- **Be prepared.** Know how you want to present your issue (practice in advance). Also, consider how you would respond to the kinds of questions that might be raised by the elected representative.
- **Be organized.** If there are 2 or more members at the meeting, make sure you have decided in advance of the meeting who will speak to what issue. Nothing is more unhelpful to you or the elected representative than securing a meeting and being disorganized.
- **Don't waste time** – Get right to the issue you wish to discuss. Don't get too bogged down in small talk, keeping in mind the purpose of the meeting and don't allow time to get away from you (30 or 45 minutes can pass by quickly).
- **Use easy-to-understand language** – Speak in easy-to-understand language and use personal examples whenever possible. Avoid jargon or acronyms as much as possible.
- **Be assertive** – Know what you want in advance and politely ask for it!
- **Be respectful** – Avoid being judgemental of an opinion or perspective that you do not share. State your points clearly while avoiding arguments. Also avoid criticizing other Parliamentarians, political parties or organizations. Remain courteous and respectful.

- **Be inquiring** – Ask your elected official if they are familiar with your issue. If the answer is negative, take the opportunity to inform them. If the answer is positive, inquire about their views/position; however, if they are unable to do so immediately, then say you will follow-up at a later date.
- **Be a good listener** – This is an important opportunity to hear the reasons why they support your issue, or not. No need to dominate a two-way conversation; there is much to be gained by listening.
- **Ask for advice** – Many politicians appreciate being asked for advice on a specific issue and the opportunity to provide guidance to their constituents. You could ask “do you have any advice on how we should position ourselves on this issue?” Or, “how can we move our issue forward; is there anyone else with whom we should meet?”
- **Build on their support** – If the politician is supportive of your issue, you might want to ask them to speak to their colleagues, or caucus or write a letter to the Minister of Health or Finance (depending on the issue). This may provide you with an opportunity to follow-up with the elected representative and continue to build a strong working relationship.
- **Be responsive** – Answer the questions that you can. If you are not sure – say so; or if you need to check say you will get back to them with the information. It is much more important to provide them with accurate information than give them an incorrect answer.
- **Be appreciative** – Always end the meeting on a courteous note. Thank them for taking the time to meet and don’t overstay your welcome.
- **Be patient (and persistent)** – Successful advocacy often takes time. It is about building networks and taking opportunities to both listen to what matters to others and share what matters to you.
- **Thank you** – Follow-up the meeting with a thank you note (see **Appendices J and K**).
- **Follow-up** – Complete any follow-up that was committed to at the meeting.



OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVOCATE

While the most important opportunity to advance a discussion on a particular issue is via a face-to-face meeting, there are other ways in which you can ensure that your voice is heard. They are as follows:

A. Write a letter to the editor of your local/national newspaper

A letter to the editor is a short letter sent to a publication such as a newspaper or magazine about issues of concern from its readers. The subject matter of the letters can vary from supporting or opposing a stance taken by a particular government or party, commenting on a particular issue, policy or legislation, or responding to another article in the same newspaper or magazine (see Appendix L).

Each news agency will have its own rules and guidelines to be considered for publication, so it is important to make yourself aware of the requirements prior to submitting. Generally speaking, a letter to the editor must be short, approximately 250 words, and include the writer's full name, address and daytime phone number.

B. Invite the elected representative to an event

Riding offices are always looking for local activities for elected representatives and they generally welcome suggestions/invitations to events, particularly, if there is the potential for the media to be present.

For example, if psychologists in your province want to promote *pro bono* services they are donating to a disaster relief service, contact the local office of your elected representative, tell them what you are doing, and invite them to be a part of the press conference you are holding to announce the initiative. There are other ways to interact with your elected representative:

- Arrange a lunch/dinner meeting or reception in their honour.
- Invite representatives to speak at a psychological association conference and/or meeting.

- Have your psychological association or workplace newsletter/social media recognize your representatives' activities.
- Award a particularly active elected representative with a certificate/plaque/award and present it at a public meeting.

C. Invite your elected representative to your work

Your elected representative might be interested in visiting your university, hospital, or research or practice site. Sometimes the most convincing case is the one seen firsthand (i.e., up close and personal). If your research or program is funded by government, then a visit from your elected representative is a natural fit. Such visits keep them in touch with the interests and needs of their constituents, inform them about less familiar subject areas, see the impact of the work itself or the investment that was made, and provide you with an opportunity to strengthen your relationship with the elected representative. Most importantly, it gives them an opportunity to appreciate the important impact of your work on the lives of the people governments serve. It also provides them with an opportunity to meet a number of concerned and involved constituents face-to-face. The initiative to arrange such a visit will likely have to come from you.

If you want to invite your elected representative to a CPA sponsored event, coordinate the invitation with the CPA Head Office. If the event is sponsored by a provincial or territorial association of psychology, then coordinate the invitation with that association. The CPA can also provide valuable advice if you are inviting them to your research or practice site (PublicAffairs@cpa.ca).

Appearances or site visits by public officials are exciting but they require planning. Of course, ensure that you have the support of your institution in inviting a parliamentarian or member of the media to your event. Here are a few tips to consider:

- Arrange and coordinate the event with the staff scheduler from the elected representative's office. Send a written

request with all the appropriate details, such as time, place, duration of the visit, number of attendees and other guests, activities planned, etc.

- If you wish to have members of the local press attend the visit, contact your institution's public relations office or press office for professional help. Be sure the elected representative's relevant staff members are informed before members of the media are invited.
- It is important to target the right reporters to invite to the event. In this case, it could be a political reporter, a science or health reporter, and/or local media. You can invite them by sending a "media advisory" (a one-page announcement with basic information) or by sending a press release, following up with a telephone call two days before the event.
- Have someone on hand to take pictures of the event and give a photograph of your elected representative for use in their newsletter.
- Depending on the type of event that you are hosting you might want to consider giving the elected representative a (small) speaking role.
- Notify anyone who will be affected by the visit, such as colleagues in your department and the university administration, well in advance, and again the day before the event.
- Provide the elected representative's office with precise and detailed directions to the event and designate a contact person who will be available as a liaison in advance of the event.
- Meet the elected representative before the event, allow time for introductions, and provide a briefing on the itinerary and a time schedule for the event. Discuss important factors surrounding the visit, for example, how many scientists or practitioners are in the facility, the amount and source of funding received, or the areas of study being researched.
- Introduce your guest. Give a brief explanation of why they are visiting and announce whether or not there will be a question and answer session.
- Follow-up on any comments made to the elected representative at the event. Don't forget to send a thank you note, possibly containing photographs taken during the

event, as well as press clippings or news coverage generated by the event. Send information and photos to the CPA Head Office (PublicAffairs@cpa.ca) for inclusion in their social media platforms (or to the relevant provincial/ territorial psychological association).

D. Participate in the electoral process

Elections provide a great opportunity to bring your issue to the attention of the candidates and the public. Ensure psychology is on the political agenda in your riding, and ultimately on the national stage, by taking an active role in election campaigns. During election campaigns, you can raise psychology-related issues at public debates, work for a candidate who shares your views, or run for office and give psychology a strong voice. You can play a key role in advancing your goals by interacting with candidates directly using a number of platforms, including:

- Write a letter to the candidates in your riding asking them about access to psychological services, funding for post-secondary education and research or any other issues that are of concern.
- Encourage your colleagues and friends to also write the candidates by providing them with a letter template.
- If advocating on behalf of an association or organization, send questionnaires to party headquarters and share their responses with your members. Of course, if advocating on behalf of an association or organization, you must have the authority to do so which is typically conferred by its senior officers.
- Write a letter to the editor of your newspapers. Encourage your colleagues and friends to also send letters.
- Attend local debates and ask the candidates about your issue(s).
- Meet candidates at your door to make your points or visit their local election headquarters and ask them about your issue.
- Become active in a campaign. Volunteer your time or make a tax-deductible donation.
- Host an all-candidates debate during an election campaign on the specific issue.
- Write a congratulatory note to the winner and indicate that you look forward to working with them.

- Vote! ... And encourage others to do the same!

E. Appear as a committee witness

As an expert in the research and/or practice of psychology you may want to consider appearing as a House of Commons and/or Senate Standing Committee witness or submitting a written brief. Once a Bill has passed first reading it moves to the committee stage – who study a specific piece of legislation and/or policy issue. Standing Committees regularly invite individuals, experts, representatives of groups and associations, lobbyists, public servants, bill sponsors and ministers to appear before them to “testify” and collect information relevant to the issue or study.

The CPA and individual psychologists present to Standing Committees on a variety of subjects on a regular basis (e.g., conversion therapy, pre-budget consultations, medical assistance in dying). Generally speaking, the presentation times are short (at five minutes) and immediately followed by a question and answer period between witnesses and members of the committee. Your presentation must be brief and to the point.

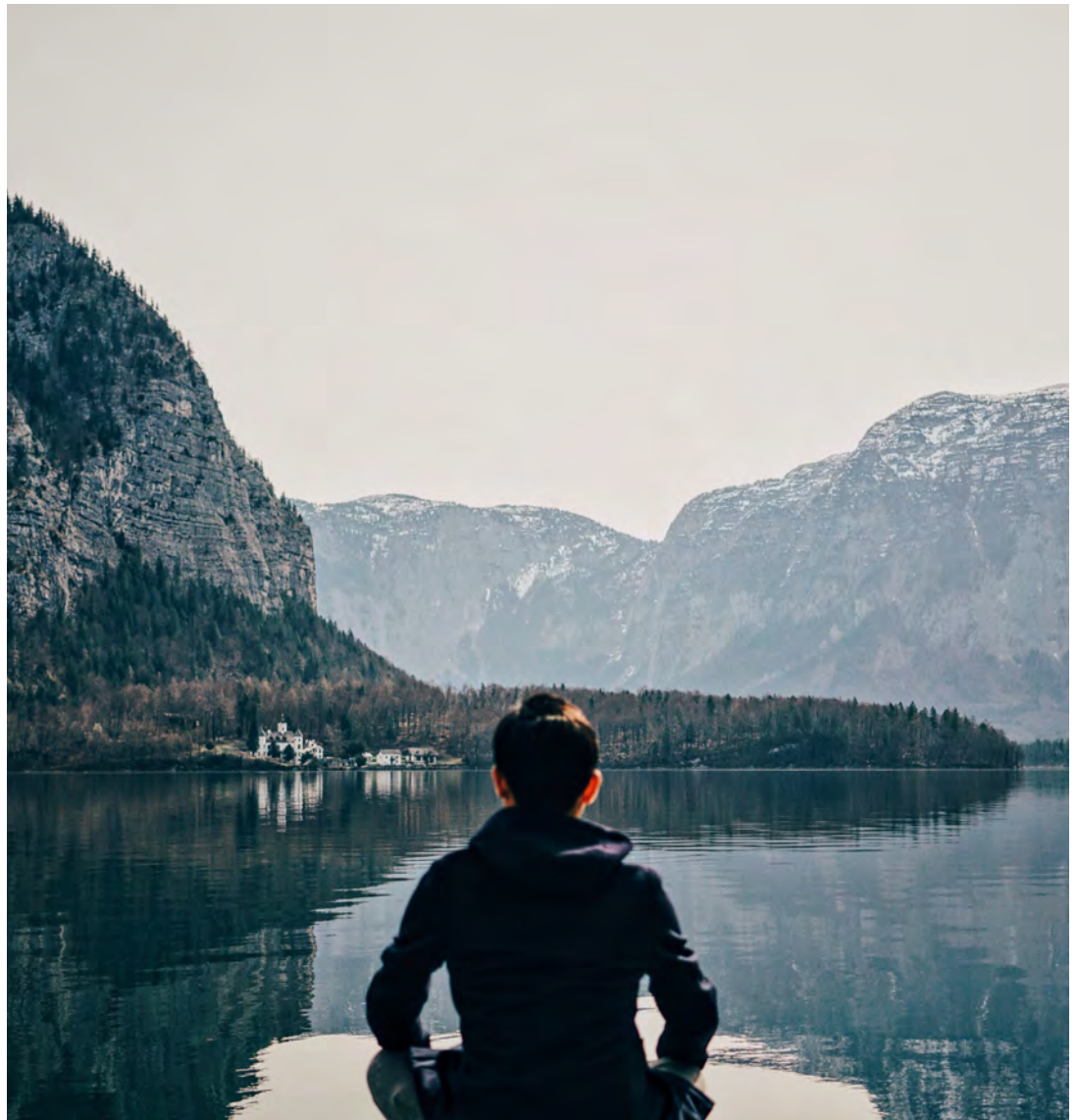
To seek standing as a witness you would write the chair of the committee requesting to appear, or you could contact the CPA Head Office (PublicAffairs@cpa.ca) who can assist you in this process (as well as preparing for the presentation).



CLOSING THOUGHTS

We hope that this guide will provide you with the basic information/tools you need to become an effective advocate on behalf of the profession and discipline. Keep in mind that the more you engage in the advocacy process, the more comfortable you will be with the process of meeting with/persuading a range of elected representatives.

As the quality of the guide will benefit from the ongoing input/perspective of members and student affiliates, feel free to reach out to the CPA (PublicAffairs@cpa.ca) with your comments and feedback.



Appendix A: Key Messages for Psychological Expertise for Performing Fitness to Stand Trial and Criminal Responsibility Assessments

1. WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) is urging the federal government to amend Section 672 of the *Criminal Code of Canada* (CCC) to explicitly designate qualified psychologists to be able to perform assessments of fitness to stand trial and criminal responsibility.

Assessing **Fitness to Stand Trial** requires the determination of whether an accused has the mental capacity to understand court proceedings, their charges, and to communicate effectively with counsel. Assessing **Criminal Responsibility** pertains to the complex process of retrospectively evaluating the accused's mental state at the time of the offence in order to determine whether an accused suffered from a mental disorder, acted voluntarily, with intention and understood the nature and consequences of their behaviour.

Currently, the CCC allows for "...an assessment by a medical practitioner or any other person who has been designated by the Attorney General as being qualified to conduct an assessment of the mental condition of the accused...". In most cases, the medical practitioner is a psychiatrist. To date, no federal, provincial, or territorial Attorney-General has designated a psychologist to conduct an assessment. However, qualified psychologists have performed these assessments in a variety of contexts such as part of clinical teams or independently and have been designated as experts on the topics in Court.

2. WHAT DOES THE CPA RECOMMEND?

The CPA recommends the following changes to the *Criminal Code of Canada*:

- The definition of assessment in Section 672.1 should read: "*assessment means an assessment by a qualified mental health professional through any incidental observation or examination of the accused.*"
- Similar to the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* a qualified mental health professional should be defined as: "*a person duly qualified by provincial law to practice psychiatry or a person duly qualified by provincial law to practice psychology.*"

The CPA recommends that a qualified mental health professional, whether a psychiatrist or psychologist, should have specialized education, training and experience in forensic mental health assessment in order to conduct evaluations under section 672 of the CCC.

3. WHY SHOULD THE CRIMINAL CODE OF CANADA BE AMENDED?

The explicit inclusion of qualified psychologists in the CCC would achieve the following objectives:

1. **Professional Expertise** – Psychologists, like psychiatrists, have the training and ability to diagnose mental disorders; however, psychologists are the only profession who have developed and hold expertise in the interpretation of psychological testing (e.g., developmental disorders, intellectual disability, personality, psychopathology, and the assessment malingering [feigning]). These tests are essential in allowing psychologists to rely on additional objective data to inform their clinical judgement. Given psychologists' training in psychometric measurement and assessment, they are uniquely qualified to provide an opinion as to an individual's cognitive capacity and state of mind. In fact, psychologists have developed many of the forensic assessment instruments upon which psychiatry relies to assess fitness to stand trial and are often referred to conduct malingering assessments for evaluations of criminal responsibility using tools developed by psychologists.
2. **Expand System Capacity** – Increase the pool of qualified mental health professionals who would act as experts for the Court within statutory timelines. This may be particularly important in underserved areas (e.g., rural, northern regions).

3. **International Precedent** – In criminal proceedings in the United States, both psychologists and psychiatrists have been deemed equally qualified to perform numerous types of forensic evaluations, including those that address fitness and criminal responsibility.³⁴ Psychologists also conduct these types of assessments in other jurisdictions including the Netherlands and Australia, and there is substantial support for registered psychologists to provide such reports in the UK.³⁵
4. **World-Class Research** – Canadian psychologists lead the world in conducting applied research and developing best practices related to psychology and the law (e.g., principles of effective intervention with justice involved individuals, risk assessment tools and practices, treatment of violent behaviour including sexual violence).³⁶

December 2020

About the CPA

The Canadian Psychological Association is the national voice for the science, practice and education of psychology in the service of the health and welfare of Canadians. The CPA is Canada's largest association for psychology and represents psychologists in public and private practice, university educators and researchers, as well as students. Psychologists are the country's largest group of regulated and specialized mental health providers, making our profession a key resource for the mental health treatment Canadians need.

Contact: Glenn Brimacombe
Director, Policy and Public Affairs
Canadian Psychological Association
(613) 866-3613
gbrimacombe@cpa.ca

³⁴ <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/4247>.

³⁵ Roesch, R., Kayfetz, J. H., Watt, M. C., Cooper, B. S., Guy, L. S., Hill, D., Haag, A. M., Pomichalek, M., & Kolton, D. J. C. (2019, February 25). Fitness to Stand Trial and Criminal Responsibility Assessments: Advocating for Changes to the Canadian Criminal Code. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/cap000001>.

³⁶ Dalby, J.T. (2014) Forensic psychology in Canada a century after Munsterberg. *Canadian Psychology*, 55, 27-33. (CPA award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychology as a Profession).

Appendix B: Sending a E-mail/Letter to Member of Parliament or Senator

You can find the contact information to reach your Member of Parliament or Senator at www.parl.ca.

Mail can be sent postage free at the following addresses:

Member of Parliament
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Name of Senator
The Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Before sending the letter you should look online to determine the proper way to address them (e.g., Minister, Parliamentary Secretary, Member of Parliament). A Minister, and in some cases, a Parliamentary Secretary will have “Honourable” in front of their name. Former Ministers and some former Parliamentary Secretaries will also use the designation of “Honourable”.

When addressing correspondence, these are the proper styles:

Mr. John Doe, M.P.
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

The Honourable Jane Jones, P.C.³⁷, M.P.
Minister of _____
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Member of Parliament:

Dear Senator:

³⁷ Note that PC refers to Privy Council. PC is the full group of personal consultants to the monarch of Canada on state and constitutional affairs. Responsible government, though, requires the sovereign or her viceroy, the Governor-General of Canada, to almost always follow only that advice tendered by the Cabinet: a committee within the Privy Council composed usually of elected Members of Parliament. Those summoned to the QPC are appointed for life by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister of Canada, meaning that the group is composed predominantly of former cabinet ministers, with some others having been inducted as an honorary gesture. Those in the council are accorded the use of an honorific style and post-nominal letters, as well as various signifiers of precedence.

Appendix C: Sample E-mail/Letter to an Elected Official (Practice Issue)

You can find the contact information to reach your Member of Parliament or Senator at www.parl.ca. Mail can be sent postage free at the following addresses:

Ms. Jane Jones, M.P.
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Ms. Jones:

As a constituent in your riding, I am writing about my concerns regarding access to psychological services, because the mental health needs of our Province are not being met in a timely way. Our success and economic prosperity depends on the mental health of its citizens. An important, but all too often neglected aspect of health is psychological health.

One of the greatest challenges faced when caring for the mental health of Canadians is the significant barriers to accessing mental health services. Despite the staggering statistic fact that one in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem in a given year, no more than one-third of those will receive the help they need. We have evidence-based psychological treatments that work, and clinical experts trained to deliver them. Yet the services of psychologists are not funded by provincial health insurance plans, which make them inaccessible to most Canadians.

When available, publicly funded services are often in short supply and wait lists are long and steadily growing. In addition, the cost of mental illness in Canada is estimated at \$50 billion dollars annually, so we must act now and be innovative in our approaches.

When compared to other First World countries, Canada has clearly fallen behind. Countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, The Netherlands, and Finland have all launched mental health initiatives which include covering the services of psychologists through public health systems. These initiatives are proving both cost- and clinically-effective.

In 2013, the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) commissioned an independent report by a group of internationally recognized health economists. The report, *An Imperative for Change*, states that the delivery of mental health services can be characterized as "a silent crisis" and provides a business case, and proposes models for improved access to psychological services that can be implemented in our province.

We urge you to affirm your commitment to our province's health and specifically to increasing access to psychologists by implementing the following recommendations from the report:

Adapt the United Kingdom's publicly-funded model for Improved Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) at the provincial and territorial level. Under this program psychologists and low intensity therapists deliver care for people with the most common mental health problems: depression and anxiety.

Integrate psychologists within primary health care teams so that mental health problems are addressed at the right time, in the right place, by the right provider.

Include psychologists on specialist care teams in secondary and tertiary care facilities for health and mental health conditions.

Expand the private insurance coverage and promote employer support for psychological services. Canadian employers could expect to recover \$6 to \$7 billion annually with attention to prevention, early identification and treatment of mental health problems among their workforces.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

If need be, I would be pleased to meet with you at your convenience to discuss this issue further. I can be reached at email@email.ca, or 111-222-3333.

Sincerely,

Name
[Title]

Copy to: Dr. Karen Cohen, Ph.D., C.Psych., CEO, Canadian Psychological Association

Appendix D: Sample E-mail/Letter to an Elected Official (Research Issue)

You can find the contact information to reach your Member of Parliament or Senator at www.parl.ca. Mail can be sent postage free at the following addresses:

Ms. Jane Jones, M.P.
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Ms. Jones:

As a constituent in your riding, I am writing to express my concern that the ABC Foundation grant and fellowship program for new awards has been suspended for 2020-21. I understand that this suspension is due, in part, to reduced earnings by the Foundation's endowment, as well as a 10% funding reduction from the Ministry of Health.

One in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem in their lifetimes at tremendous personal, social and economic costs to individuals and society. How people think, feel and act are the cornerstones of a society's human infrastructure and all of its systems (health, social, educational, community, economic). Mental health research is critical to promoting mental health, preventing and treating mental disorders, and improving diagnosis, evidence-based practice and rehabilitation. Further, our understanding of people, human problems and the many environments in which we live and work depend upon sound peer-reviewed research.

Research funding is not only essential to the advancement of knowledge, but it also provides the platform within which graduate student research takes place and hence is critical to the future of Canada's and Ontario's health human and research resource. Interruptions and/or reductions in funding will have long-lasting consequences, as researchers may need to relocate, abandon local research, stop providing services to clients, etc. Researchers are already facing funding cuts by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). The decision to suspend the ABC Foundation's grant and fellowship program means that researchers have lost yet another important source of potential funding.

I call upon you to support continued investments in mental health research. This can be done by ensuring that stable Ministry funding is in place so that the ABC Foundation can continue to achieve its mission to promote mental health, to prevent mental illness and to improve diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation through excellent, peer-reviewed research. Threats to funding not only compromise developments in mental health and disorders but also critically affect the training, recruitment and retention of mental health researchers and practitioners.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. If need be, I would be pleased to meet with you at your convenience to discuss this issue further. I can be reached at email@email.ca, or 111-222-3333.

Sincerely,

Name
[Title]

Copy to: Dr. Karen Cohen, Ph.D., C.Psych., CEO, Canadian Psychological Association

Appendix E: Sample E-mail/Letter to Funder (Practice and Research Issue)

Dr. John Doe
President
Name of Funder
Street
City, Province
Postal Code

Re: Restructuring of Granting Councils and the Implications for Psychology

Dear Dr. Doe:

My name is Dr. Wood, a researcher with the University or Hometown Hospital. I am writing to express my concern that the recent restructuring of the granting councils will negatively impact psychological research in Canada. How people think, feel and act are the cornerstones of a society's human infrastructure and all of its systems (health, social, educational, community, economic). Psychology is diverse in its scope and the research methods that it uses. It is both a basic science and a social science whose relevance to science, technology, societal well-being, human functioning and health is everywhere.

Following the Federal Government's 2020 Budget, the granting councils undertook a strategic review in which they revised their mandates, restructured their funding criteria and identified areas where operations could be streamlined to be made more efficient. As part of the restructuring, various programs or aspects of granting programs have been eliminated. This restructuring continues to have many implications for psychology as a discipline, as well as all students, researchers and universities.

One outcome of the strategic review that remains of particular concern to psychology is the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's (NSERC's) decision to explicitly state that it will not fund students in clinical programs even when their research falls within the NSERC mandate.

Unlike the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), which base their eligibility criteria on the nature of the research, NSERC is basing its criteria on the career path of the researcher. NSERC's decision to not fund students in clinical psychology programs, while not only excluding a proportion of students from federal funding, will undoubtedly interfere with future innovation and progress in both basic research and health-related research. There should be consistency across all the granting councils in terms of how eligibility criteria are set. They should be set upon the nature of the research not the home or career path of the researcher.

NSERC is presuming that all clinical psychology students will pursue a health-research or practitioner-based career – this is inaccurate. Many students who graduate with a Ph.D. in clinical psychology or clinical neuropsychology find employment in universities or institutes where they continue to work on basic science and NSERC-related projects rather than on health-related research. These students represent from 10-30% of clinical graduates.

Many students who graduate with a Ph.D. in clinical psychology discover an aptitude for basic science research during their studies. The decision by NSERC may discourage students from pursuing their interests in basic science, thereby affecting the productivity of future scientists and limiting the range of science that engages students - in doing so, innovative basic science research findings may be lost.

Many researchers can maintain both NSERC and CIHR relevant lines of research and might, at times, focus on one area more than the other. NSERC's new approach will mean that students, and subsequent faculty, who have interests in both areas, will no longer be able to nurture those interests.

When NSERC defers funding for clinical psychology students, NSERC is assuming that all clinical psychology student thesis research has direct or near-direct relevance to health or CIHR-fundable topics. Much of this research does not. Students carrying out such research should not be disenfranchised from fellowship funding or judged by committees less knowledgeable about these applications than others.

NSERC's decision will also undoubtedly affect students' acceptance into various graduate programs across the country as faculty members who are doing basic **NSERC** research will not take on students enrolled in clinical programs. As per the Canadian Psychological Associations' position paper on this issue, I **call upon NSERC to revise its eligibility criteria and base its funding decision on the content, focus and intention of the research and not on one's program area or career path.**

I ask that you consider the position taken in this letter and ensure that core funding is in place to advance knowledge and ensure that **all** graduate student research can take place.

If need be, I would be pleased to meet with you at your convenience to discuss this issue further. I can be reached at email@email.ca, or 111-222-3333.

Sincerely,

Name
[Title]

cc: My Member of Parliament, Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Science & Technology
Dr. Karen Cohen, Ph.D., C.Psych., CEO, Canadian Psychological Association

Appendix F: Sample Meeting Request E-mail/Letter (Practice)

You can find the contact information to reach your Member of Parliament or Senator at www.parl.ca. Mail can be sent postage free at the following addresses:

Ms. Jane Jones, M.P.
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Ms. Jones:

My name is Dr. Christine Mason, a clinical psychologist with a private practice in your riding and I am interested in speaking to Ms. Jane Jones about improving access to psychological services.

In any given year, one in five people in Canada is living with a mental health problem or disorder with estimated costs to the economy of 51 billion dollars annually. Psychologists are the largest regulated and specialized mental health care providers in the country, outnumbering psychiatrists 4:1. However, the services of psychologists are not funded by provincial health insurance plans, which make them inaccessible to many Canadians with modest incomes or no insurance. Although there are some publicly funded services available in Canada, these are often in short supply, wait lists are long and the criteria to access these services can be restrictive. As a result, the burden of mental health care surpasses the public health expenditure.

Other jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom, Australia, the Netherlands, and Finland have launched mental health initiatives which include covering the services of psychologists through the public health systems, particularly primary care. The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) commissioned a report by a group of health economists to develop the model for enhanced access to psychological services here in Canada (place link/url). The report provides a business case for improved access to psychological services based on demonstrating positive return on investment (ROI) and proposed service that yields desired outcomes.

The CPA has put forward a number of workable solutions based on the findings of this report that we would like to bring to your attention. I will call your office next week to follow-up and hopefully schedule an appointment. In the meantime, please let me know if I can provide any additional information about the purpose of the meeting or be of any further assistance.

Thank you very much for considering this request.
I can be reached at email@email.ca, or 111-222-3333.

Sincerely,

Name
[Title]

Copy to: Dr. Karen Cohen, Ph.D., C.Psych., CEO, Canadian Psychological Association

Appendix G: Sample Meeting Request E-mail/Letter (Research)

You can find the contact information to reach your Member of Parliament or Senator at www.parl.ca. Mail can be sent postage free at the following addresses:

Ms. Jane Jones, M.P.
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Ms. Jones:

My name is Dr. Christine Mason and I am a researcher at the University of School and a constituent in your riding. I am interested in speaking to Ms. Jane Jones about the need for funding for psychological science.

Psychological science creates an understanding of people; human problems and the many environments in which we live. How people think, feel and act are the cornerstones of a society's human infrastructure and all of its systems (health, social, educational, community, economic). We know that one in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem in their lifetimes at tremendous personal, social and economic costs to individuals and society. Mental health research is critical to promoting mental health, preventing and treating mental disorders, and improving diagnosis, evidence-based practice and rehabilitation. Further, our understanding of people, human problems and the many environments in which we live and work depend upon sound peer-reviewed research.

Research funding is not only essential to the advancement of knowledge, but it also provides the platform within which graduate student research takes place and hence is critical to the future of Canada's health human and research resource. Interruptions in funding will have long-lasting consequences, as researchers may need to relocate, abandon local research, stop providing services to clients, stop supporting students, etc.

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) has put forward a number of documents highlighting the contribution of psychological research as health, social science and natural science whose relevance to science, technology, societal well-being, human functioning and health is everywhere (add link/url). I will call your office next week to followup and hopefully schedule an appointment. In the meantime, please let me know if I can provide any additional information about the purpose of the meeting or be of any further assistance.

Thank you very much for considering this request.
I can be reached at email@email.ca, or 111-222-3333.

Sincerely,

Name
[Title]

Copy to: Dr. Karen Cohen, Ph.D., C.Psych., CEO, Canadian Psychological Association

Appendix H: Sample Leave Behind Document (Practice)

What is a Psychologist?

Psychology is the study of how people think, feel and behave. Psychologists use this knowledge to develop assessments and treatments that can help people to understand, explain and change their feelings, thinking, and behaviour. Psychologists diagnose developmental problems like learning disabilities and autism, neuropsychological problems that result from head injury or dementia, and mental disorders like depression and anxiety. They help people to recover from and manage these problems and disorders using evidence-based psychological treatments which they develop and evaluate. Training to become a psychologist takes 7 to 10 years of post-secondary study.

Psychological Treatments

Psychological treatments are proven effective in treating a wide range of mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and substance abuse. People with depression who are treated with psychological therapy tend to relapse less frequently than those treated with medication.

Psychological treatments help people manage chronic health problems and conditions like heart disease and chronic pain.

Psychological treatments are less expensive than, and at least as effective as, medication for a number of common mental health conditions like depression and anxiety.

Issue: Access to Psychological Services

In any given year, one in five people in Canada is living with a mental health problem or disorder with estimated costs to the economy of 51 billion dollars annually. Up to 70% of problems brought to family physicians are for mental health issues or have a mental health component.

Psychologists are the largest, regulated, specialized mental health care providers in the country—outnumbering psychiatrists about 4:1. However, the services of psychologists are not funded by provincial health insurance plans, which make them inaccessible to many Canadians with modest incomes or no insurance. Although there are some publicly funded services available in Canada, these are often in short supply, wait lists are long and the criteria to access these services can be restrictive. Despite an awareness of the benefits of evidence-based psychological interventions, there continues to be a severe gap in the ability of patients to receive needed care. As a result, the burden of mental health care surpasses the public health expenditure.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada has recognized this issue and its national mental health strategy calls for increased access to evidence-based psychotherapies by service providers qualified to deliver them.

Other Jurisdictions

The United Kingdom, Australia, the Netherlands, and Finland have launched mental health initiatives that include covering the services of psychologists through public health systems, particularly primary care. The United Kingdom has invested to make evidence-based psychological therapies more accessible, and Australia has also enhanced access to psychologists through its publicly funded health insurance plans. The UK and Australia have demonstrated the cost effectiveness of psychological services on a population wide basis.

A Business Model for Better Access

In 2013 the Canadian Psychological Association commissioned a report from a group of health economists to develop the model for enhanced access to psychological services for Canadians. The report '**An Imperative for Change: Access to Psychological Services for Canada**' provides a business case for improved access to psychological services based on demonstrating positive return on investment and proposed service that yields desired outcomes.

The Canadian business case for improved access to psychological services rests on two well established facts: (1) there is widely acknowledged need for increased mental health care. Approximately 14% of the population experience impaired mental health but only about one third

of those are receiving care; and (2) psychological services are a cost-effective way to provide mental health care. There are ample academic studies to confirm this fact.

Models and Recommendations for Canada

1. UK's Improved Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) – could be adopted provincially/ territorially. These programs are designed to deliver care for people with the most common of mental health problems such as depression and anxiety, staffed by teams of psychologists and low intensity therapists (e.g., peer support, self-help, counselors) using a stepped care approach. In Canada, they could be managed by Regional Health Authorities (RHAs), coordinated with existing community mental health services and function as training venues. Provinces that wish to establish IAPT programs be encouraged to begin with RHAs that serve populations that are underserved in terms of mental health care. Additional sites could be added incrementally, gaining from experience by pioneering sites. Financial incentives could be provided for IAPT models that excel in terms of innovative approaches and patient outcomes.
2. Collaborative primary care models that include psychologists should become an accepted fact in the evolution of collaborative care in Canada. Administrative structures and funding methods need to support the range and ratios of health professionals who can meet the needs of populations served and recognize the importance of professional and client decision making. Incentives should be provided for best practices with demonstrated improved patient outcomes. These models should follow a stepped care approach to mental health care with psychologists' roles focusing on assessment and diagnosis, consultation and education with health team members, program and service development and evaluation, treatment of complex and chronic co-morbid conditions involving mental health and addictions and supervision of other providers as appropriate.
3. Collaborative specialist care models should be implemented and/or expanded in hospitals and other sites offering secondary and tertiary care for conditions where psychological services are core to effective care (i.e., mental health conditions) and/or have been shown to improve outcomes (i.e., health conditions such as heart disease, cancer, obesity, diabetes, and chronic pain). As concerns tertiary care of mental health conditions, psychologists can carry out most or all of the responsibilities presently assigned to psychiatrists in psychiatric inpatient or outpatient care. The removal of referral bottlenecks to psychological assessment and care in tertiary care mental health facilities could enhance the provision of timely and appropriate care to those in need of mental health services.
4. Fee-for-service models continue to be the preferred funding method for insurers, social security funds (WCB and publicly-funded liability insurance), and for individuals who prefer to use private sector psychologists' services. Mental health, and the provision of appropriate mental health services, needs to be chief among the workforce concerns of Canadian employers given that lost productivity resulting from mental illness and addiction is estimated at \$20 billion annually. Employers could expect to recover \$6 - \$7 billion of this amount annually with attention to prevention, early identification of and treatment of mental health problems. With timely and meaningful insurance coverage that delivers effective psychological services, insurers also stand to reduce disability costs – given that approximately 30% of long-term disability claims made to Canadian employers are for mental health conditions.

Appendix I: Sample Leave Behind Document (Research)

What is Psychological Science?

Psychological science creates an understanding of people, human problems and the many environments in which we live. How people think, feel and act are the cornerstones of a society's human infrastructure and all of its systems (health, social, educational, community, economic). Psychology is diverse in its scope and the research methods that it uses. It is health, social science and natural science whose relevance to science, technology, societal well-being; human functioning and health is everywhere.

Issue: Investment in Research

Despite government recognition that investment in research is necessary to fuel Canada's economic growth and prosperity, following the recent Federal Government Budget announcement, the granting councils were instructed to find internal savings of \$74 million over the next two years; as such, they undertook a strategic review in which they revised their mandates, restructured their funding criteria and identified areas where operations could be streamlined to be made more efficient. As part of the restructuring, various programs or aspects of granting programs have been eliminated. This restructuring has many implications for psychology as a discipline, as well as all students, researchers and universities.

- The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) has limited funds available for psychological health-related research that focuses on the social and psychological aspects and interventions.
- The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) has not sufficiently moved beyond its biomedical focus. This is evidenced by the lower funding rate of behavioural science research compared to biomedical research at CIHR, as well as the lower success rate for behavioural sciences research at CIHR than at SSHRC.
- Many faculties are concerned about the likelihood of their students being awarded CIHR funding if they themselves have not been CIHR-funded.
- It is very important to ensure that research proposals are being judged by officers and committees who have the sufficient knowledge in the research area as well as familiarity with the discipline in which it is conducted to competently and fairly evaluate its merits.
- The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) defers funding for clinical psychology students, erroneously concluding that all clinical psychology student thesis research has direct or near-direct relevance to health or that all clinical psychology students will pursue a health-research or practitioner-based career.

Examples of researchers at risk are:

- The clinical psychology student whose combination of field of study and research will not meet the eligibility criteria of any of the granting Councils;
- The health psychology researcher whose focus on psychological etiology and interventions of human functioning and problems will render their work ineligible for SSHRC funding and at risk of not being funded by CIHR because of its lack of biomedical focus; and
- The social psychology researcher whose interest in personality development may be perceived as health research by SSHRC and social science research by CIHR and effectively funded by neither.

Recommendations

1. **Investment in Research:** A report by the Council of Canadian Academies entitled, *The State of Science and Technology in Canada, 2012* provides a thorough analysis of the scientific disciplines and technological applications where Canada excels in a global context. Psychology and cognitive sciences was one of six research fields in which Canada excels. Investment in research is necessary to fuel Canada's growth and prosperity. As such, we recommend that the government significantly increase its investment in basic and applied research for all the granting councils, so that psychological science can continue to excel at this level.
2. **Structuring of Granting Councils:** Core funding of the Councils is not only essential to the advancement of knowledge but also provides the platform within which graduate student research takes place. While disciplines and the growing inter-disciplinarity of research are comfortable with permeable boundaries, the granting agencies clearly are not – the most recent restructuring creates silos whereas knowledge is being best created through transit ways. A particular risk of siloed research funding for psychology is that some of its researchers, because of their area of specialty or area of research, will have no access to funding. As such, we make the following recommendations of the granting councils:
 - a. **That CIHR ensures that it reflects the need for psychological health research and inter-disciplinarity, across all its Institutes that includes, but is not limited to, a biomedical focus.**
 - b. **That NSERC revises its eligibility criteria and bases its funding decision on the content, focus and intention of the research and not on one's program area or career path.** NSERC's decision to not fund students in clinical psychology programs, while not only excluding a proportion of students from federal funding, will undoubtedly interfere with future innovation and progress in both basic research and health-related research.
 - c. **There should be consistency across all the granting councils in terms of how eligibility criteria are set.** They should be set upon the nature of the research not the home or career path of the researcher.
 - d. **That SSHRC ensures that psychological research that does not have an immediate health focus continues to have a home at SSHRC.** Where to draw the line on what research is and is not related to health is difficult but an important consideration in psychological science. Research that focuses on personality development or group behavior has a home in the social sciences not health. Further, it is important to ensure that research proposals are being judged by officers and committees who are sufficiently knowledgeable about the applications of research.

Appendix J: Sample Thank You Note (Practice)

You can find the contact information to reach your Member of Parliament or Senator at www.parl.ca. Mail can be sent postage free at the following addresses:

Date

Ms. Jane Jones, MP
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario Canada
K1A0A6

Dear Ms. Jones:

I would like to thank you for taking the time to meet with me to discuss the importance of improving access to psychological services in Canada in your riding and across Canada.

As you know, I am very concerned that despite an awareness of the benefits of evidence-based psychological interventions, there continues to be a severe gap in the ability of patients to receive needed care. As a result, the burden of mental health care surpasses the public health expenditure costing the Canadian economy over 50 billion dollars annually.

I want to thank you for agreeing to send the Minister of Health a letter of support indicating that the province can implement measures to improved access to psychological services while at the same time demonstrating positive return on investment.

Again, thank you for taking the time to meet with me and for your support of mental health. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Name
[Title]

Copy to: Dr. Karen Cohen, Ph.D., C.Psych., CEO, Canadian Psychological Association

Appendix K: Sample Thank You Note (Research)

You can find the contact information to reach your Member of Parliament or Senator at www.parl.ca. Mail can be sent postage free at the following addresses:

Date

Ms. Jane Jones, MP
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario Canada
K1A0A6

Dear Ms. Jones:

I would like to thank you for taking the time to meet with me to discuss the importance of funding for psychological research in Canada.

As you know, psychology is diverse in its scope and the research methods that it uses. It is a health, social science, and natural science whose relevance to science, technology, societal well-being, human functioning and health is everywhere. Despite this, Canada's funding councils continue to experience funding cuts. Threats to funding for psychological research not only compromise developments in mental health and disorders but also critically affect the training, recruitment and retention of all psychology researchers and practitioners.

Research funding is not only essential to the advancement of knowledge, but it also provides the platform within which graduate student research takes place and hence is critical to the future of Canada's and Ontario's health human and research resource.

I want to thank you for agreeing to send the Minister of Finance a letter of support indicating that the province can explore means of providing complementary research dollars to awarded federal research grants.

Again, thank you for taking the time to meet with me and for your support of funding for psychological research. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Name
[Title]

Copy to: Dr. Karen Cohen, Ph.D., C.Psych., CEO, Canadian Psychological Association

Appendix L: Sample Letter to the Editor

Published, June 13, 2020 in the Globe and Mail:

Dental and Drug Coverage, Too

Re It's Time To Make Medicare Truly Universal (June 6): The Canadian Psychological Association couldn't agree more that Medicare in Canada has significant gaps. Pharmacare and dental care are only two of them. Medicare in Canada covers health services delivered in public institutions (i.e., hospitals) and primarily by physicians. However, not all health care happens in hospitals and not all licensed health professionals are physicians.

If Canadians need the services of psychologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists (among others), who work outside of hospitals, they need to pay out of pocket or rely on private health insurance typically funded through their employer.

The mental health care gap, in particular, is a large one. There are two main interventions for mental health problems – medication (and we don't have pharmacare) and treatments such as psychotherapy, which are more often provided by psychologists rather than physicians.

Canada needs to deliver the mental health care people need, when and where they need it, from the health providers licensed and trained to deliver it.

It doesn't now – and our health and well-being depends on it doing so in the future. Mental health must be part of Medicare's unfinished business.

Dr. Karen Cohen, Ph.D., C.Psych., CEO of Canadian Psychological Association, Ottawa



ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC POLICY IN CANADA...

A Government
Relations Guide
for Psychology



THE CANADIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

141 Laurier Avenue West, Suite 702

Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5J3

Tel: 613-237-2144

Toll free (in Canada): 1-888-472-0657

Fax: 613-237-1674

E-mail: cpa@cpa.ca

