



Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology

Suite 455, 5991 Spring Garden Road
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3H 1Y6
www.nsbep.org

Telephone: (902) 423-2238
Fax: (902) 423-0058

A Grievance Policy may be Helpful

The following information is provided by the Board in order to offer guidance to psychologists addressing potential client concerns within their practice.

The Board is aware of some cases in which a formal complaint has been made by a member of the public against a psychologist, when it is possible that the matter could have been resolved informally within the practice. Some individuals who have contacted the Board to make a complaint indicated that they did so because they were not aware of any mechanism within the psychological practice in question through which they could have their concerns or grievances addressed.

Without a clear policy which outlines the process that clients can follow if they have a concern related to the psychological services they receive, clients may, understandably, be unclear about how to manage such a situation, other than contacting the Board. It could be helpful and beneficial for all involved if psychologists include, as part of their practice policies, information about whom clients should contact if they have a concern. For instance, should it be the psychologist, the practice owner, the administrative assistant?

If the Board receives a call involving a situation where advice might seem apparent, the Registrar or Assistant Registrar would certainly attempt to offer information and suggestions to the caller about the steps they might consider taking to resolve their concerns or to obtain clarification. However, some people, at the time of making contact with the Board, have concerns that have escalated to the point of a formal complaint.

Once a formal complaint is made, it must be investigated. There is nothing in the Psychologists Act which authorizes alternative dispute resolution until a complaint is made and the investigation committee is the only party authorized to consider such an option.

A grievance policy could mitigate one of the reasons that clients may lodge a formal complaint – specifically that they feel they have no recourse but to complain to the NSBEP. Moreover, providing clients with clear guidance on how to voice their concerns allows for the possibility that their concerns get addressed and their needs met.

Often the NSBEP might see the beginning of a potential complaint when the party has no clear way to discuss their concerns with the psychologist. A grievance policy that can be shared with others before concerns escalate could provide an opportunity for the individual to address their concerns at this level.