



**Nova Scotia
Board of Examiners
in Psychology**

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**BULLETIN FROM NSBEP
CONCERNING THE EVOLVING CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)
April 1, 2020**

To date, NSBEP has issued information from the Chief Medical Officer of Health. There have been five additional communications from NSBEP beginning in the month of March. You can click on the links below to review the archives.

[March 12, 2020 – Topics: Supervision; Telepsychology Considerations](#)

[March 19, 2020 - Topics: Interprovincial Telepsychology; Informed Consent; Technology Platforms; Information Regarding Employment](#)

[March 20, 2020 – Topics: Board Office Operating Virtually; Board Examinations](#)

[March 23, 2020 – Topics: Interprovincial Telepsychology – Update 1; Telepsychology – Additional Information](#)

[March 25, 2020 – Topics: Interprovincial Telepsychology – Update 2; Telepsychology Resources From Other Organizations](#)

In today's communication, we wish to provide a further update for psychologists continuing to operate during the COVID-19 crisis, further to the [Order made by the Chief Medical Officer of Health](#).

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS VIA TELPEPSYCHOLOGY

The Board has previously issued information in relation to telepsychology. Psychologists would be free to use telepsychology for any activities they deem appropriate, in consultation with the NSBEP [Telepsychology Standards](#). Provided all the usual safeguards are in place, many assessments could be done using this approach. NSBEP would suggest that the report generated from the assessment should clearly outline that the assessment was carried out in this way, in the same manner that any factors that impact an assessment would be described in a report.

There may be challenges with such a methodology and not all testing and/or alternatives may be available or suitable. As always decisions to use telepsychology need to be assessed on a case-by-case

basis using the psychologist's judgment and being sure to address particular limitations that may arise with this approach.

Here are some additional resources to consider:

The BC College of Psychologists have shared a checklist on the topic of telepsychological assessment. Registrants may find this useful. While the checklist cites BC's Code of Conduct, the principles are universally shared. Here is the URL for this resource:

<http://collegeofpsychologists.bc.ca/docs/psc/PS15%20-%20Telepsychology%20Assessment.pdf>

Pearson, one of the major testing corporations has provided information regarding telepsychology and in the context of assessments. Here is the URL for this information:

<https://www.pearsonassessments.com/professional-assessments/digital-solutions/telepractice/about.html?tab=how-to>

Other testing corporations may have relevant information available, but this is meant to provide an example to pertain to the topic of using telepsychology for psychological assessment.

Some additional links are listed below which may provide information you find helpful.

<https://www.apaservices.org/practice/good-practice/psychological-neuropsychological.pdf>

<http://www.davidluxton.com/publications/Luxton%20Pruitt%20Osenbach%202014%20PPRP.pdf>

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

During this time of dealing with the health crisis that is COVID-19, psychologists may be approached by their employers to perform functions that fall outside of their normal job description and the scope of their practice. NSBEP would be concerned if the other functions included the provision of psychological services that were beyond the psychologist's scope of practice or competency, in which case the psychologist should discuss their limits with the employer. It is understood that during COVID-19, organizations will be looking at utilizing resources in order to cope with the circumstances related to the crisis, and often these other functions will fall outside the scope of practice normally considered to be psychological services. NSBEP does not have any authority over these non-psychology, employer-employee functions. These would be subject to the contracts, collective agreements, or other agreements that are in place between the employer and the psychologist.

In a crisis, the Board supports its registrants in practicing within the scope of practice for psychologists. At the same time, however, NSBEP recognizes that psychologists may be asked to take on differing responsibilities, that would clearly not be expected in normal operations.

At this time, if a psychologist feels they are being asked to carry out activities they cannot perform, and their normal duties have been suspended by the employer, they might consider suggesting alternative roles which would capitalize on their skills. Some other jurisdictions in Canada and the United States have experience with the provision of emergency assistance by psychologists at times of natural disasters, such as the aftermath of hurricanes.

The NSBEP offers the following observations:

- When practicing psychology, registrants provide services within their competence and with consent.
- Especially in a time of crisis, sometimes the help needed is with matters that are more general, rather than specialized. For example, providing support for psychological wellbeing in general.
- Psychologists have core skills in listening and can provide basic advice and reassurance.
- Psychologists may find it helpful to contact their supervisor/manager, their union or human resource department over workplace dilemmas.