

CAPDA

Canadian Academy of Psychologists in Disability Assessment

October 2, 2015

CAPDA Board of Directors

CAPDA Standards & Guidelines Committee

(previously: Dr. Brian Levitt, Dr. Diana Velikonja, Dr. Jonathan Siegel, Dr. Jen Deffendall)

I am writing in my capacity as the new Chair to CAPDA's Standard's & Guidelines Committee.

This letter is seeking your consideration and input regarding proposed directions moving forward for the S&G Committee. For members of the previous S&G Committee, I am asking whether, and hoping that, you are willing to continue working with the committee.

As most of you will know, I am a returning member both to CAPDA's Board of Directors and to the S&G Committee. I have had no direct involvement with either group now for many years. In particular, it has taken me some time to catch up regarding the work of the S&G Committee. Recently, I have been focused on collaborating with the OPA Auto Task Force both in regards to their development of draft guidelines for insurer examiners and in responding to looming changes through FSCO.

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The previous S&G Committee led by Dr. Brian Levitt undertook a comprehensive review of CAPDA's longstanding Practice Standards document. Their work identified numerous content areas and terms requiring update, clarification and expansion, as well as the need for substantive additional content to be developed. They identified that an extensive amount of work would be required to complete a re-write. They particularly noted that the practice standards would need to be expanded to incorporate disability assessments beyond the MVA context. In their simultaneous review and consideration of the Revised APA Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology, the previous S&G Committee concluded that CAPDA's Practice Standards document was outdated and insufficient for current purposes and recommended instead that the APA Specialty Guideline for Forensics be referred to by CAPDA members through an interim basis as a new CAPDA Standards document was developed. I interpret this as a strong endorsement for the APA guidelines.

I have reviewed the previous S&G Committee work and looked at the Revised APA Guidelines. I am questioning whether a re-write of the older CAPDA Practice Standards is advised at this time. Part of that questioning involves whether we actually need a document additional to the APA Guidelines and what such a document would accomplish. I further question which skill sets and knowledge bases would be required to competently develop such a document that could supplant the APA guidelines.

I further have a longstanding professional interest in better integrating issues specific to disability assessment with children and youth into CAPDA's visage. I have had multiple conversations with CAPDA members who work with children and youth over the years also identifying the need to better address the issues unique to assessment with children and youth. I am wishing to create a forum to integrate consideration of work with children and youth into CAPDA's traditional focus on work with adults.

I respect the work that S&G Committee members have completed over the previous years and wish to be cautious and sensitive to their perspectives and interests. I have already spoken to a number of the previous S&G Committee members and I did not

detect a clear and determined commitment to re-write the CAPDA Standards and supplant the APA Guideline; at least in the short term.

I have been considering an alternative direction for moving forward at this time and perhaps on an interim basis. I have long wished that CAPDA could provide a forum to review and consider “problem” practice patterns and behaviours, and the associated adherence to professional practice standards and guidelines, modeled after the College of Psychologists of Ontario’s “Tricky Issues”. Potentially, where our members become aware of work in disability assessment that raises significant question or concern, they could submit such examples for review by an “expert panel” for discussion. Examples of issues with “educational value” could be prioritized and then discussed in detail in written form for the membership. Many details of such a process would need development.

The developments with APA through this previous summer, and particularly the extensive criticism about their process in developing revised ethical standards has been disquieting. I am much inspired about stated initial intent to develop a “Case Book” in parallel to their Ethics Standards and for purposes of providing specific instruction/direction/clarification for professional practice (as opposed to abstract generalizations failing to direct appropriate practice decisions). I propose that CAPDA seek out in a clear and concrete fashion the kinds of problems experienced in disability assessment and construct such a “Case Book” with inclusion of how to respond most appropriately to observed issues. I perceive this would be highly educational for our membership and provide some greater consistency in terms of how we respond to presenting difficulties. Through the development of this “Case Book” over time, the need for any further development of practice standards/guidelines for CAPDA could be considered.

Hoping for feedback!!!!!!

Dr. John VanDeursen