Unnecessary treatment: is therapy still helping?

CRPO's Standard 3.5: therapy only with a reasonable prospect of benefit, decided with the client, and a conversation about stopping when it is no longer indicated or effective; what to document, and the misconduct rule.

Study aid, not legal advice. Last verified against the official sources linked below on 11 November 2026.

1 Standard 3.5

1. Provide or continue therapy only when there is a **reasonable prospect of benefit** to the client (3.5.1).
2. **Involve clients** in deciding whether therapy offers that prospect (3.5.2).
3. When therapy seems no longer indicated or has ceased to be effective, **discuss the option** of discontinuing (3.5.3).

2 CRPO's definitions

- **Reasonable prospect of benefit**: some likelihood the client's condition or well-being will stabilize or improve, as determined by clinical judgment.
- **Indicated**: suggested by symptoms or assessment, as appropriate.

3 Why it matters

- Unnecessary therapy risks harm: **false expectations** and the client's time and money wasted.
- One goal of therapy is **independence** and autonomy from therapy.
- Clients with similar issues may **respond differently** to the same treatment: judge each case by the client's condition, the modality and the client's input.

4 The misconduct rule

- Recommending or providing unnecessary treatment, or continuing when it is no longer indicated or has ceased to be effective, is misconduct (O. Reg. 317/12, **para. 7**).
- CRPO's Policy on Suitability to Practise lists services not in a client's **best interest**, unnecessary treatment included, as likely relevant to suitability.

5 Meeting the standard

- ☐ **Set goals with the client**, in conversation and collaboration.
- ☐ **Reassess them** periodically.
- ☐ **Document the rationale** for any assessment or treatment you offer.
- ☐ Document every discussion about **continuing or stopping**.

Therapy continues only while it can help: decide that with the client, review goals, and talk about stopping when it no longer does. Endings themselves: see the endings sheet (6.3).

Official sources: CRPO Standard 3.5, Unnecessary Treatment and O. Reg. 317/12 and CRPO, Policy on Suitability to Practise (2025). Condensed from Client-Therapist Relationship. Independent study aid, not legal advice, not affiliated with CRPO or COMPASS.