

PLOs to Skills

Example Program Area: Behavioral Health

The Translation Process

CCA used a three-step process to move from PLOs to industry skill language:

1. **Start with the PLO or published competency.** Every program at CCA has approved Program Learning Outcomes or, in the case of Behavioral Health, industry-validated competencies published by the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) and Colorado Community College System. These are the source of record.
2. **Ask: what does this look like as a named skill?** PLOs are written for curriculum alignment and accreditation. They describe what students will be able to do in academic language. The translation question is: if a student said this skill out loud to an employer or on a resume, what would they actually say?
3. **Calibrate to credential level.** A certificate skill should sound entry-level and hands-on. An AAS skill should reflect applied competency with greater breadth. A BAS skill should reflect leadership, clinical judgment, or research application. The same underlying competency is described differently at each level.

Credential Level Guide

Credential	Skill Depth Expected	Example Language Pattern
Microcredential / Certificate	Entry-level, hands-on, job-ready tasks	"Motivational interviewing I" / "De-escalation techniques" / "Case documentation and record-keeping"
AAS Degree	Applied competency across the full scope of practice	"Co-occurring disorder assessment and support" / "Clinical documentation standards" / "Knowledge of BHA and DORA certification requirements"
BAS Degree	Leadership, supervision, program evaluation, advanced clinical judgment	"Clinical supervision of BH staff" / "Program evaluation and quality improvement design" / "Advanced treatment planning across addiction and co-occurring disorders"



Behavioral Health Program Area: Worked Example

The Behavioral Health pathway at CCA was developed through Senate Bill 22-181 in partnership with the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) and the Colorado Community College System. The curriculum was co-designed with employers and aligned to BHA and DORA regulatory requirements. Published competencies from the BHA and official Program Learning Outcomes from the AAS and BAS served as the source documents for the translation below.

Microcredentials and Certificates

At the microcredential level, the BHA and CCCS published specific competencies for each credential. These were used directly as the source language for translation.

Program / Credential	Program Learning Outcome or Competency (Source Language)	Industry Skill (Translated Language)	What Employers Call This
Behavioral Health Plus (BHP) Microcredential	Communication, Interviewing, Empathy, and Rapport (published BHA/CCCS competency)	Motivational interviewing basics; Active listening and rapport-building; Interviewing individuals in distress	Therapeutic communication; Person-centered engagement
Behavioral Health Plus (BHP) Microcredential	Legal, Professional, and Ethical Considerations (published BHA/CCCS competency)	Legal and ethical responsibilities in BH settings; Professional boundaries	Compliance; Professional conduct
Behavioral Health Plus (BHP) Microcredential	Crisis Management and Documentation (published BHA/CCCS competency)	Recognizing mental health crisis warning signs; De-escalation techniques; Basic crisis documentation	Crisis intervention; De-escalation
QBHA Microcredential	Understanding of Behavioral Health and Healthcare Systems (published BHA/CCCS competency)	Behavioral health and healthcare system navigation; Knowledge of Medicaid-reimbursed service structures	Systems navigation; Medicaid knowledge
QBHA Microcredential	Trauma-Informed Care and Cultural Competency (published BHA/CCCS competency)	Trauma-informed care practices; Culturally responsive engagement	Trauma-informed care; Cultural competence
QBHA Microcredential	Case Management and Documentation (published BHA/CCCS competency); Medicaid competencies include: Case Management, Screening, Referral, Group Interventions	Case management documentation; Electronic health record basics; Screening and referral procedures; Group intervention facilitation basics	Case management; EHR documentation; Clinical documentation
Addiction Recovery Assistant Microcredential	Empathy and Rapport Building through Entry-Level Counseling Skills (published BHA/CCCS competency)	Motivational interviewing I; Addiction counseling skills; Group counseling skills	Motivational interviewing; Entry-level counseling
Addiction Recovery Assistant Microcredential	Legal, Professional, and Ethical Considerations in Behavioral Health (published BHA/CCCS competency); Course: CSL 2046	Ethical practice in addiction treatment; Legal standards for Certified Addiction	Addiction treatment ethics; CAT certification preparation

Program / Credential	Program Learning Outcome or Competency (Source Language)	Industry Skill (Translated Language)	What Employers Call This
	Ethical Practice in Addiction Treatment	Technician (CAT) role; Case documentation and record-keeping	
Addiction Recovery Assistant Microcredential	Foundational Knowledge of Addiction and Strength-Based Recovery (published BHA/CCCS competency); Course: CSL 2069 Principles of Addiction Treatment	Principles of addiction treatment; Strength-based recovery model application; Trauma-informed care in addiction contexts	Addiction recovery knowledge; Strength-based practice
Patient Navigator Microcredential	Exceptional Interpersonal Communication Skills; Empathy, Cultural Competency, and Boundaries (published BHA/CCCS competencies)	Interpersonal communication with diverse clients; Empathy and person-centered engagement; Cultural competency in health settings	Patient communication; Cultural competence; Health navigation
Patient Navigator Microcredential	Understanding of Behavioral Healthcare Systems; CPR and Assessment of Basic Vital Signs (published BHA/CCCS competencies)	Healthcare system navigation; Care coordination across providers; Basic vital signs assessment; CPR certification	Care coordination; Community health navigation

Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degrees

The AAS PLOs are the official Program Learning Outcomes published in the CCCS Behavioral Health pathway document. These reflect the full scope of the two-year applied degree and serve directly as the source language for translation.

Program / Credential	Program Learning Outcome or Competency (Source Language)	Industry Skill (Translated Language)	What Employers Call This
Behavioral Health AAS (Both Emphases)	Demonstrate the ability to assess the behavioral health needs of individuals, taking into consideration cultural, social, and environmental factors. (Official AAS PLO)	Behavioral health needs assessment; Cultural competence in BH practice; Understanding of abnormal psychology and psychiatric concepts	Clinical assessment; Culturally competent practice
Behavioral Health AAS (Both Emphases)	Exhibit strong communication and interpersonal skills, enabling effective collaboration with individuals, families, and interdisciplinary teams. (Official AAS PLO)	Applied therapeutic communication; Case management and clinical documentation; Conflict resolution in care settings	Therapeutic communication; Interdisciplinary collaboration
Behavioral Health AAS (Both Emphases)	Apply crisis intervention techniques and strategies to support individuals in times of distress. (Official AAS PLO)	Mental health crisis intervention and de-escalation; Advocacy for individuals, children, and families	Crisis intervention; De-escalation; Advocacy

Program / Credential	Program Learning Outcome or Competency (Source Language)	Industry Skill (Translated Language)	What Employers Call This
Behavioral Health AAS (Both Emphases)	Recognize and respect the diverse cultural backgrounds and perspectives of individuals and integrate cultural competence into behavioral health practice. (Official AAS PLO)	Sociology of diversity applied to BH practice; Cultural competence in BH practice; Service-learning in community agencies	Diversity-informed practice; Equity-centered care
Behavioral Health AAS (Both Emphases)	Adhere to ethical and legal standards in behavioral health. Maintain accurate and confidential client records in compliance with industry standards. (Official AAS PLOs)	Law and ethics for health professions; Clinical documentation standards; Knowledge of BHA and DORA certification requirements	Regulatory compliance; HIPAA; Confidential recordkeeping
AAS: Mental Health and Social Work Emphasis	Course: BEH 1060 Registered Behavior Technician OR BEH 1050 Peer Support Specialist (emphasis-specific coursework)	Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) skills OR Peer Support Specialist skills	RBT; Peer support; Behavior technician
AAS: Addiction Recovery Emphasis	Courses: CSL 2050 Motivational Interviewing I; CSL 2053 Cognitive Behavioral Therapy; CSL 2056 Co-occurring Disorders; CSL 2052 Advanced Pharmacology (emphasis-specific coursework)	Motivational interviewing (advanced); Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques; Co-occurring disorder assessment and support; Advanced pharmacology applications	Motivational interviewing; CBT; Co-occurring disorders; CAT/CAC pathway

Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) Degree

The BAS PLOs are the official Program Learning Outcomes published in the CCCS Behavioral Health pathway document. They represent the upper-division, leadership-oriented outcomes that distinguish the BAS from the AAS.

Program / Credential	Program Learning Outcome or Competency (Source Language)	Industry Skill (Translated Language)	What Employers Call This
Behavioral Health BAS (Both Concentrations)	Apply leadership and management principles to guide teams and organizations in behavioral health settings. (Official BAS PLO)	Clinical supervision of BH staff; Leadership and management in behavioral healthcare organizations; Team guidance and professional development	Clinical supervision; Program management; Team leadership
Behavioral Health BAS (Both Concentrations)	Evaluate the effectiveness of behavioral health programs and interventions using appropriate research methods. Design quality improvement strategies to enhance behavioral health service delivery. (Official BAS PLOs)	Program evaluation and quality improvement design; Research methodology; Data-informed decision making for service improvement	Program evaluation; QI; Evidence-based practice

Program / Credential	Program Learning Outcome or Competency (Source Language)	Industry Skill (Translated Language)	What Employers Call This
Behavioral Health BAS (Both Concentrations)	Integrate advanced theoretical knowledge and evidence-based practices to develop comprehensive behavioral health intervention plans. (Official BAS PLO)	Advanced treatment planning across addiction and co-occurring disorders; Trauma-informed and whole-person care at advanced level; Evidence-based practice integration	Treatment planning; Evidence-based practice; Whole-person care
Behavioral Health BAS (Both Concentrations)	Formulate client-centered treatment plans incorporating trauma-informed care, cultural competence, and whole-person approaches. (Official BAS PLO)	Client-centered treatment planning across diverse populations; Cultural competence in complex, multi-system cases	Client-centered care; Cultural competence; Trauma-informed practice
Behavioral Health BAS (Both Concentrations)	Analyze complex ethical dilemmas and policy issues in behavioral health. Propose solutions that adhere to professional standards and promote social justice. (Official BAS PLOs)	Advanced ethical reasoning in mental health settings; Behavioral health policy analysis and advocacy; Structural and systemic equity in care delivery	Ethics; Policy analysis; Social justice
BAS: Mental Health Concentration	Course: BEH 4080 Mental Health Internship (225 contact hours); BEH 3030 Behavioral Health Program and Case Management (concentration-specific)	Behavioral health internship (225+ hours); Peer support and wellness program design; Behavioral health program and case management	Supervised clinical hours; Program management; Peer support
BAS: Addiction Recovery Concentration	Courses: CSL 4020 Clinical Supervision I; CSL 4021 Clinical Supervision II; BEH 4081 Addiction Recovery Internship (225 contact hours with test prep) (concentration-specific)	Clinical supervision I and II; Addiction recovery internship (225+ hours); Certified Addiction Specialist (CAS) pathway preparation	Clinical supervision; CAS certification pathway; Correctional re-entry services