

2026 LSBC 13
Hearing File No.: HE20250006
Decision Issued: August 12, 2026
Citation Issued: July 31, 2025

THE LAW SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA TRIBUNAL
HEARING DIVISION

BETWEEN:

THE LAW SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

AND:

EDWARD CHIA HAO CHU

RESPONDENT

**DECISION OF THE HEARING PANEL
ON FACTS AND DETERMINATION**

Written materials: March 10, 2026

Panel: Gurminder Sandhu, KC, Chair
Alykhan Alladina, Public representative
Robert Wickett, KC, Lawyer

Discipline Counsel: Gagan Mann

Counsel for the Respondent: Joshua Wandler

INTRODUCTION

[1] On July 31, 2025, the Law Society of British Columbia issued a citation against the Respondent, Edward Chia Hao Chu (the “Citation”). The allegations set out in the Citation are as follows:

1. On or about August 9, 2021, you assaulted AA by choking, and on May 10, 2023 you were found guilty of this assault, contrary to section 267(c) of the *Criminal Code of Canada*.

This conduct constitutes conduct unbecoming the profession, pursuant to s. 38(4) of the *Legal Profession Act*.

2. On or about November 17, 2021, you were charged with an offence under section 267(c) of the *Criminal Code of Canada*, and you failed to immediately provide written notice of the charge to the Executive Director, contrary to Rule 3-97(2) of the Law Society Rules ["Rules"].

This conduct constitutes professional misconduct, pursuant to s. 38(4) of the *Legal Profession Act*.

[2] The parties consented to proceed by way of a hearing in writing, intending to proceed by admissions. On January 7, 2026, the Law Society and the Respondent executed an Agreed Statement of Facts ("ASF"). Within the ASF, the Respondent admits to the facts underlying the Citation and admits that his conduct constitutes conduct unbecoming the profession (allegation 1) and professional misconduct (allegation 2).

[3] The issues for this phase of the Hearing are whether the facts set out in the ASF should be accepted, and whether those facts establish that the Respondent committed conduct unbecoming the profession and professional misconduct. Submissions regarding the appropriate disciplinary action (sanction) have been expressly reserved by the parties for a subsequent phase of this Hearing.

AGREED STATEMENT OF FACTS

[4] The Respondent was called and admitted as a member of the Law Society of British Columbia on July 20, 2011. He practices primarily in criminal law as a sole practitioner.

[5] On August 9, 2021, the Respondent and his intimate partner, AA, were both intoxicated at his residence. An argument regarding money ensued, and AA barricaded herself in the Respondent's bedroom by moving a dresser in front of the door.

[6] The Respondent pushed the dresser aside to force his entry into the bedroom. He grabbed a backpack AA was packing, emptied its contents, and hit her on the head with it. The Respondent then pushed AA against a wall, hit her head area with an open palm, and began choking her. He squeezed her throat until she could not breathe and almost lost consciousness.

[7] When the Respondent briefly stopped, AA began screaming. The Respondent told her to shut up and squeezed her throat again until she could not breathe. When he stopped

and she screamed again, he choked her for a third and then a fourth time. The assault ended when the Respondent's sister entered the residence, and he removed his hand from the AA's throat.

[8] On November 17, 2021, the Respondent was charged with assault by choking under section 267(c) of the *Criminal Code*. The Respondent understood his obligation to immediately report this charge to the Law Society, but he failed to do so. The charge was discovered over a month later, on December 21, 2021, by a Law Society forensic accountant investigating another matter.

[9] Following a trial, the Honourable Judge Janzen rejected the Respondent's claims that the physical altercation was a consensual fight and that he never choked AA. On May 10, 2023, the Respondent was found guilty of the assault.

[10] On July 26, 2024, the Respondent was sentenced to a conditional discharge and three years' probation. In her sentencing reasons, Judge Janzen described the Respondent's conduct as "heinous" and "despicable," emphasizing that intimate partner violence is a significant statutory aggravating factor and that the crime of choking threatens the life of a victim and can lead to permanent brain damage.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ANALYSIS

Onus and standard of proof

[11] The Law Society bears the onus of proving on a balance of probabilities that the facts alleged constitute a discipline violation. As noted by the British Columbia Court of Appeal in *Foo v. Law Society of British Columbia*, 2017 BCCA 151, the civil burden of proof applies to discipline proceedings. Factual conclusions must be made by deciding whether it is more likely than not that the events occurred.

[12] The Respondent has voluntarily executed an Agreed Statement of Facts, admitting to the truth of the events of August 9, 2021, his subsequent criminal conviction, and his failure to report his criminal charge. The Panel finds the ASF to be clear, convincing, and cogent evidence, and accepts the facts set out within it in their entirety.

Allegation 1: Conduct unbecoming the profession

[13] "Conduct unbecoming the profession" is defined in section 1 of the *Legal Profession Act* as a matter, conduct, or thing that is considered contrary to the best interests of the public or the legal profession, or that harms the standing of the legal profession.

[14] As established in *Law Society of BC v. Berge*, 2007 LSBC 7, criminal conduct is an obvious example of conduct unbecoming. Lawyers must live up to a high standard of conduct in their private lives, as irresponsible or dishonourable conduct erodes public confidence in the administration of justice.

[15] Intimate partner violence is a pervasive social problem that disproportionately affects women and represents a profound breach of trust. The Respondent committed an aggravated, violent, and repeated assault against his intimate partner, deliberately choking her to the point of near unconsciousness on multiple occasions.

[16] This shocking and grave conduct clearly harms the standing of the legal profession and brings it into disrepute. The Panel accepts the Respondent's admission and finds that the facts establish conduct unbecoming the profession as set out in allegation 1.

Allegation 2: Professional misconduct

[17] The test for whether conduct constitutes professional misconduct is objective: the Panel must determine whether the facts disclose a "marked departure from that conduct the Law Society expects of its members" (*Law Society of BC v. Martin*, 2005 LSBC 16).

[18] Rule 3-97(2) of the Rules strictly requires a lawyer charged with an offence to immediately provide written notice of the charge to the Executive Director. This rule enables the Law Society to fulfill its paramount duty to protect the public by promptly assessing whether a charged member poses a risk.

[19] The Respondent knew he was obligated to report his criminal charge but failed to do so, leaving the Law Society to discover it independently. The Respondent's failure interfered with the Law Society's ability to regulate the Respondent's conduct and to uphold and protect the public interest. Given the violence and gravity of the underlying offence, this failure to report represents a marked departure from the conduct expected of a lawyer. The Panel accepts the Respondent's admission and finds that the facts establish professional misconduct as set out in allegation 2.

DISPOSITION

[20] The Panel accepts the Agreed Statement of Facts in its entirety.

[21] The Panel accepts the Respondent's admissions and finds that he has committed conduct unbecoming the profession (allegation 1) and professional misconduct (allegation 2).

[22] As the parties have expressly reserved submissions on the appropriate sanction, the matter is remitted to a separate disciplinary action phase for determination.