



CANADIAN COUNSELLING AND  
PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION  
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE  
COUNSELING ET DE PSYCHOTHÉRAPIE

## **Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association Acknowledges Brain Awareness Week**

OTTAWA (March 10, 2014) Today, the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) proudly acknowledges Brain Awareness Week, taking place from March 10 – 16.

Brain Awareness Week, coordinated by the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives, is a global campaign to increase public awareness of the progress and benefits of brain research. Worldwide, communities and organizations come together every March to celebrate the brain.

“This special week provides an opportunity for community members, businesses, schools and other institutions, and members of the general public to get involved, raise the profile, and work together to build greater awareness and education of the benefits and promise of brain research,” said CCPA President, Blythe Shepard. Brain research offers insights that can be of direct benefit in improving our understanding of human development and behaviour as well as the types of helping interventions that are likely to be useful in promoting positive counselling and psychotherapeutic outcomes among clients in diverse populations.

As a national, bilingual association for the counselling and psychotherapy profession, CCPA’s focus is on professional learning, research, and advocacy in all areas of the profession. Counsellors and psychotherapists are part of the continuum of care in primary health care and make vital contributions to the mental health and well-being of all Canadians.

In the past twenty years, neuroscience and psychotherapy research has increased our knowledge of how and why people change and how and why they get stuck in negative patterns of behaviour. This new brain awareness allows for innovative ways to understand interpersonal relationships, emotional memories, and strategies for mental health and wellness. It simultaneously offers new hope for recovery and stabilization of mental illnesses. The brain can change — it is not fixed. The brain responds to external environmental events and actions undertaken by the individual. This means that counselling can also build new brain networks as we listen to our clients, show empathic understanding, and build client strengths.

“Most people think of brain research in terms of disease and treatment options. But brain research is much more than that. It affects the daily lives of all Canadians. From learning disabilities to dementia, from strokes to disease, from the effect of environmental pollutants to the effect of repeated concussions, knowing more about how our brains affect our thinking, our moods, our memories and our abilities means knowing more about how we can all live full and rewarding lives” added Shepard. As researchers learn more about issues such as mental illness, emotional trauma, and brain injury, they also learn more about how the brain continues to build and rebuild itself based on its experiences with the world. Qualified counsellors and psychotherapists combine their therapeutic processes with this knowledge of the changing architecture of the brain.

CCPA hosts a public website “Talking Helps” ([www.talkingcanhelp.ca](http://www.talkingcanhelp.ca)), which facilitates open dialogue and provides a place where members of the public can find authoritative information about the benefits of counselling in ameliorating a variety of challenging life situations. This website also provides a directory to Canadian Certified Counsellors by geographic location and specialty. You can also visit [www.ccpa-accp.ca](http://www.ccpa-accp.ca), to access this directory and search for a Canadian Certified Counsellor in your region.

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*The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) is a national bilingual association providing professional counsellors and psychotherapists with access to exclusive educational programs, certification, professional development and direct contact with professional peers and specialty groups. CCPA promotes the profession and its contribution to the mental health and well-being of all Canadians.*

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