



## **Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association Proudly Acknowledges International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

OTTAWA (December 3, 2013) Today, the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) acknowledges and recognizes the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Celebrated each year on December 3rd, this special day serves to promote awareness and engage support for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all dimensions of society, including the workplace, schools, sports, and leisure. This year's theme is "*Break Barriers, Open Doors: For an inclusive society and development for all*".

"We are pleased to highlight the importance of this special day in Canada, a nation known for its inclusivity and open door policies", said CCPA President Blythe Shepard. "As counsellors and psychotherapists, we are proud to celebrate and encourage the contributions made by persons with visible and invisible disabilities and recognize their full potential and important inclusion in communities around the world."

The United Nations highlights that more than one billion people or 15% of the world's population are living with disabilities - the world's largest and most disadvantaged group - most of which are in developing countries. In Canada, about 4.4 million Canadians (14.3%) are affected by disabilities. The percentage of Canadians with disabilities increase with age, ranging from 3.7% for children under 15 years to 56.3% for those 75 years and over. We recognize that there are many forms of disabilities. Most obvious are physical disabilities, particularly mobility-related conditions. Less visible, but equally devastating to full inclusion in society are disabilities related to mental health, learning, speech and development.

Globally, persons with disabilities encounter challenges every day: physical, social, personal, or economic barriers. These challenges often combine to exclude persons with disabilities from participating fully and effectively as equal members of society. ***CCPA's counsellors and psychotherapists recognize the need for social justice advocacy and service delivery for persons with disabilities across the lifespan. Our goal is to enhance the well-being of all persons in Canada by providing timely, appropriate supports for mental health.***

Our nation's greatness can be measured by how we treat persons who have unique or special challenges to everyday life. CCPA remains dedicated to the enhancement of the counselling and psychotherapy profession in Canada and advocates for accessible, effective, professional mental health supports, particularly for those who are vulnerable or oppressed. As a national bilingual association of professionally trained counsellors and psychotherapists engaged in the helping professions, CCPA has over 5,000 members who work in diverse areas such as education, employment and career development, social work, business, industry, mental health, public service agencies, government and private practice. Many of our CCPA members devote their area of practice to supporting and empowering persons affected by disabilities across the lifespan.

"On behalf of CCPA and its members, I encourage all Canadians to join us as we celebrate the importance of all persons with disabilities in our country. Help us to raise awareness on disability issues, break down barriers to well-being, and encourage the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities," concluded Shepard.

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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. For more information on the counselling and psychotherapy profession, please visit [www.ccpa-accp.ca](http://www.ccpa-accp.ca) or [www.talkingcanhelp.ca](http://www.talkingcanhelp.ca).*

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