

**The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association’s quarterly
newsletter – Printable Version**

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President’s Message

**Paving the way for the next generation of counsellors and
psychotherapists in Canada**

By Natasha Caverley

As we enter the fall season, I wanted to reflect upon the counselling and psychotherapy profession in terms of our emerging student membership within the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA).

For students either entering or returning to their graduate studies in counselling this fall, you are participating in a program of study that is garnering greater attention and awareness by policy decision-makers and citizens at large in terms of how counselling and psychotherapy needs to be recognized as part of the continuum of primary health care—making vital contributions to the mental health and well-being of all Canadians. Through CCPA’s proactive stakeholder relations, outreach and advocacy work, we are endeavouring (on behalf of all 5 500 CCPA members) in our ongoing commitment to making positive strides in the engagement and recognition of our CCPA members who are collectively engaging in mental health care in Canada.

In today’s labour market, individuals are generally responsible for initiating their own career planning. Typically, it is up to individuals to identify their own interests and seek out information about career options to identify their goals and develop career plans. For some graduate students, especially those entering into practice for the first time, this can be a daunting task. Furthermore, in Canada, there is currently a shortage of mental health resources and the need for appropriateness of care—access to the right care, provided by the right providers, to the right person, at the right time. By supporting our student members (the next generation of counsellors and psychotherapists) via initiatives such as the [Student Representative Program](#), [Student Awards](#) and [Student Newsletter](#)—just to name a few, CCPA remains committed to fostering the sustainability and continuity of the counselling and psychotherapy profession in Canada.

On a personal note, I fondly remember and acknowledge how counsellor educators such as Drs. David de Rosenroll, Honore France-Rodriguez and Blythe Shepard positively influenced my passion and interest in counselling psychology when I was completing my graduate studies in Counselling Psychology at the University of Victoria. It was the family and community-like atmosphere of CCPA of which David, Honore and Blythe have and continue to be members that created the welcoming

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environment for me to join CCPA back in 2001 and subsequently obtain my Canadian Certified Counsellor (CCC) designation!

In closing, as post-secondary institutions across Canada commence the 2015—2016 academic term this fall, I raise my hands to our counsellor educators who have assisted us along the way in our respective learning journeys in the counselling field. Also, I invite counselling graduate students to collectively partake in CCPA’s network of advocacy, outreach, and professional development activities—as a means of advancing the important role that we as counsellors and psychotherapists play in the continuum of mental health care in Canada that facilitates appropriate, accessible, and cost-effective services for all.

Thank you/Merci/Meegwetch,
Natasha Caverley, PhD, CCC
CCPA President

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**President-elect Message: CCPA’s Publications: Useful Resources for all
Practitioners**

By John Driscoll

Dear CCPA Members,

As part of our 50th anniversary celebration we saw the publication of *Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Experience: Ethics-Based Issues and Cases* and the updated publication of CCPA Standards of Practice (5th edition). Below is a brief synopsis of both, kindly put together by Dr. Lorna Martin, President Emeritus of CCPA, who, along with Dr. Blythe Shepard and Dr. Ron Lehr, is a co-editor of both publications.

In April 2015, Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Experience: Ethics-Based Issues and Cases was published by CCPA. With more than 500 pages of counselling and psychotherapy-specific ethical issues and cases pertaining to the Canadian experience, the publication promises to be an essential resource for Canadian students, educators, and practitioners. Written by 24 Canadian authors, the text works its way through the development and implementation of counselling ethics in Canada, focusing on such issues as: ethical and legal best practices, professional identity and regulation, certification and supervision, working in remote and rural Canada, and using electronic platforms. It also considers ethics and standards of practice with specific client groups such as: couples and families; children, youth, and persons with diminished capacity; persons identifying with LGBTQ, with attention to the use of culture-infused counselling and psychotherapy, isolation in private practice, and awareness of secondary trauma and compassion fatigue. The text ends with more than 100 pages of ethics-based case studies.

The CCPA Standards of Practice (5th edition) updates the 2008 edition to include additional clarifications related to dual and multiple relationships, particularly for practitioners living in northern, rural, remote, or isolated areas. Also added in the 5th edition is new information related to research and publications that aligns with the Tri-Council Policy

Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (2010) focusing on First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis participation. The section related to services using distance delivery, social media, and electronic technologies has been enhanced to reflect the increasing use of these strategies in counselling and psychotherapy. The greatest addition to the Standards of Practice in 2015 is focused on clinical supervision of counsellors and psychotherapists. This section now includes standards for both clinical supervision of counsellors-in-training as well as clinical supervision of counsellors-in-practice.

If you go to the resources section on our new CCPA web-site (<http://www.ccpa-accp.ca/ccpa-publications/>), you will find these listings and instructions for how to order them. Of course, our

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Standards of Practice and *Code of Ethics* are available for you to print or view in a PDF format. Additionally, our CCPA National Office has prepared an attractive new cover that highlights our flag and national colours.

As I read the synopsis provided by Lorna, I was reminded of some things that are valued about CCPA. We are an organization with an incredible amount of energy and resources. Counsellor educators and other members of CCPA and our profession have pooled their expertise, knowledge, and experience to produce a book of over 500 pages dealing with ethics-based cases and issues. The 24 contributors come from all across our country. They are professionals who share with us a commitment to learning and ongoing professional development, and to practicing counselling and psychotherapy with care.

The same can be said for our *Standards of Practice*. The newest sections, dealing with research and publications focusing on First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis participation, distance delivery, social media and electronic technologies, and standards for clinical supervision of counsellors and psychotherapists, indicate that our Association

works hard to ensure all our members are up-to-date in the practice of the profession. To do this takes resources, commitment, and a willingness to constantly move forward in the best way possible. Our organization does this in a powerful way.

The preamble of our *Standards of Practice* states five purposes that they are intended to serve. The first, "To support statutory and professional self-regulation by establishing a shared set of expectations related to the many areas of counselling-related activities and responsibilities" is a further reminder that the resources of our organization support provinces/territories and our members in those provinces/territories, particularly as individual provinces/territories move toward regulation. When the Nova Scotia Association was working on forming a college, it was recognized that the expertise of CCPA was substantial as the leading, long-standing national professional organization devoted to members who work in service to the public across the country. The ongoing research conducted by CCPA members made the Association the natural place to find these types of resources. The Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists uses CCPA's *Code of Ethics* and *Standards of Practice*. In fact, it is written into the province's legislation, "An Act Respecting the Practice of Counselling Therapists." Adopting these documents was seen to be a way to ensure that members of the Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists and the public would be best served. While I understand that my brief letter is not to point out what is good for Nova Scotia, I do believe this example is an additional indicator that Association members, and even those who are not members, recognize the unique strengths of CCPA and its mission.

Recently, we received notification that Issue 2 Volume 49 of the *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy* was available. It is good reading and valuable professional development, with

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contributors from University of British Columbia, University of Calgary, Athabasca University and University of Lenoir-Rhyme in the United States.

The site is <http://cjc-rcc.ucalgary.ca/cjc/index.php/rcc/index>. To login, type in your user name which is your full name in lower case with no spaces, and your password – which is your last name followed by your member number, again, all lower case with no spaces.

As our summer comes to an end, I do hope that everyone was able to find some moments for rest, relaxation, and refreshment.

Sincerely,

John Driscoll
President- Elect

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Our 50th Anniversary and a Personal Discovery from 50 Years Ago

**By Dr. Glenn Sheppard
CCPA President Emeritus**

This has been a wonderful golden anniversary year for the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA). A year to honour our founders who met at Niagara Falls 50 years ago with the wisdom to know that Canada needed a national association for the young counselling profession still struggling to find its confident stride. They had the audacity and the vision to address this need by founding the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association (CGCA) that was later renamed the Canadian Counselling Association (CCA) in 1999 and is now CCPA. It was a delight to have one of these founders, Dr. John Paterson, join us for the anniversary conference at the Falls. His positive presence, his generous spirit, and quick wit remain a joy to experience.

Of course, this is also a time to celebrate the growth and accomplishments of this association that has become the primary national associational home for over 5500 counsellors and psychotherapists. This membership stretches from coast to coast and embraces great diversity with respect to our members, their respective services settings, the clients they serve, and the beliefs they hold regarding the most efficacious conditions for therapeutic change. However, this varied membership is united by standing on an ethical foundation that informs the work of all members, some principles of which stretch back to Hippocrates, and by a shared belief in the capacity of individuals, families, and communities to change, to heal, and to be resilient.

This has been a year to honour the hundreds of volunteers who have given up their time and used their talent to build this association and to sustain it both in the good and bleak times. It is also a time to remember and to thank the many who have served in leadership roles such as national directors, presidents, chapter leaders, journal editors and committee members. Let us not forget the hard working and competent leaders and staff who work at our National Office, and who attend daily to member needs and who manage an increasing array of services, programs, and initiatives. They provide the holding ground as volunteers come and go.

It was a delight to attend the celebratory national conference in Niagara Falls in May 2015. The annual conferences are always a special communal gathering, and an occasion for the sharing of and learning about best practices and new and emerging ones. However, this gathering was extra special. Conferences are also a time for the renewal of friendships and for a welcoming embrace of new members. The presence of so many colleagues from other national associations is a reminder of the international network of which we are now a member and an affirmation of the prestige of CCPA within this international community.

Anniversaries are usually a collective celebration but the memories they evoke are private and personal. So it is this way for me during this celebratory year. When our founders were gathering at

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the Falls, I was a graduate student in a master’s degree program in counselling at Boston University (BU). Of course, neither they nor I realized they were creating at that time a national professional dwelling place for me. A place that has become a venerable national guild of professional healers in which I have been privileged to ‘reside’ for over 37 years.

I was at BU for a total of four years and acquired three graduate degrees in counselling. What an exciting time it was to be there and what an amazing journey it was for me to have travelled from my one-room school house on a small island on the coast of Newfoundland to a place rich in new ideas and possibilities, brimming with opportunities! Opportunities for me, for example, to attend a noonday talk by B.F. Skinner, and then another talk by Carl Rogers just across the river at Harvard University. It was a special time in the life of a young profession and a young aspiring counsellor. There are those who now say that the 1960s represent the most important formative period in the history of the counselling profession.

In 1964, Donald Super and Al Thompson chaired the Greyston conference. An event intended to review the progress made since the establishment of the Counselling Psychology Division 17 of the American Psychological Association (APA) and to consolidate and clarify the emerging conceptualization of counselling psychology. In 1969, APA first published the journal *The Counselling Psychologist*. The following are some of the authors who were issuing new publications, during this period, all of which constituted part of my graduate school curriculum: Rollo May, Rudolph Dreikurs, Albert Ellis, Victor Frankl, Virginia Axline, John Krumboltz, Dugell Arbuckle, Joseph Wolpe, and Fritz Perls. As well, Donald Super, John Holland, Eli Ginzberg, Anne Roe, and other pioneers were busy contributing to our knowledge about the nature of occupational choice and career development. Of course, the transformational ideas of Carl Rogers were sweeping across our developing profession and revolutionizing how we thought about the nature of counselling and challenging our assumptions about human nature. Rogers’ belief in the primacy of the counselling relationship, and his view that the conditions of congruency, empathic understanding, and positive personal regard comprised the necessary and sufficient conditions for therapeutic change to occur, were finding fertile ground. Rogers further asserted that when these conditions were met, they would serve to harness an innate human drive to actualize our human potential.

Rogarian views were predominant in my early professional education at BU. My Department Chair and Professor, Dr. Dugell Arbuckle, was a committed disciple and a prolific writer about Rogers’ humanistic and client-centered philosophy of counselling. It is not surprising then that these ideas permeated many aspects of my education including my practica and internship experiences. A strategy used in one of my practicum seminars was, at about the halfway mark into our placements, to have us each select one of our audio-recorded counselling sessions and to transcribe a large portion of it (the development of counselling transcription was one of Rogers’ contributions.) Once transcribed, we were to make anonymous copies for each of our colleagues in the seminar. Having each received our collection we were then required to assign each transcription to the colleague to whom we believed it

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belonged by virtue of our perception of their counselling style and skills evident in it and give them this feedback. I have used this approach in my work as a counsellor educator and still see it as a useful pedagogical exercise.

Imagine my surprise when recently going through my considerable professional archives and discovering one of my transcriptions from 50 years ago. I have decided to share it with you because it seems appropriate at this anniversary time. It will also be enjoyable to see firsthand a young novice counsellor try his hand at providing Rogers’ three therapeutic conditions and, in particular, to review his efforts to sustain his empathic understanding with a 17-year-old high school student. I hope that it serves to take you back to your professional roots, too! It is not difficult to note the lack of finesse in some of these responses and to think of different ones. Nevertheless, I do believe that my means of relating to him did have the effect of moving him to a deeper level of self-exploration. And what about the familial violence and the abuse? I will leave to you to decide and to maybe create an opportunity to discuss whether the counselling conversation fostered some self-understanding as well. Also, of course, reviewing this ‘historical’ transcript can be a vehicle for you and others to determine what your responses might have been and what other interventions could have facilitated behaviour change for this young client.

A seventeen-year-old high school student (Cl. = client and Co. = counsellor)

Cl. - I came down before, and Judy S. wanted to have a cigarette, I had one in my hand for her. She wanted to have it in the lav. over there but Mrs. H. wouldn’t let her smoke it here. So we went outside but the shop teacher could see us, right, we walked inside and she said “I want to have a f...king cigarette” so, I said “come on I know where to have one”. She is scared as hell, I said “come on relax”. So she had it and took off.

Co. - So, she was scared, but you weren’t feeling very scared about the whole thing.

Cl. - No, what is a teacher going to say? If she comes I’d just put my arm around her (laughing) then she can’t say nothing. I’d just throw the cigarette down and put my arm around her. If she says anything I’d just say “well, we got a B block study” right.

Co. - So, you seem to have an answer already figured out sometimes.

Cl. - Yeah....

Co. - So you seem to find it fairly easy then, in school when you do things that might be against some school rules to sort of manage to handle yourself when teachers come by?

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CL. - Yeah, if I want to skip a class all I have to do is have a paper in my hand, right. If they ask me for a pass, I just hold it out, just like coming down here, the teacher said "you got a pass?", I just showed her my pass, but she really didn't look at it. She goes "o.k."

Co. - You're sort of the "ole pro." You've got it figured out.

CL. - Yeah, you've got to be one step ahead of them, or you're going to get bagged with demerits. I hate teachers sometimes. I'm in language class right. There is a kid in the back talking and all that crap, right, so he is giving the teacher some hassles. (___ interrupted by a knock at the door).

Co. - You were saying that sometimes you really get very angry with teachers.

CL. - Yes, so he takes the kid from the back and puts him up front. I was going to say something but I didn't. Another kid, right, John, was sitting in the back of the room. He said, "Take Paul's seat." I said, "I'm not moving." He said "you didn't want to be up there in the beginning of the year, so why not?" I said, "I like this seat, I'm not moving, you can throw me out! I'm staying in this seat." So, he didn't move the kid, you know.

Co. - Seems like the teacher...you really laid it on the line and said you weren't moving and you won the argument.

CL. - Yeah, and another teacher, she is a pain in the ass. We were playing cards, you know, like everybody brought lunches, teacher comes around she goes, "pick up those lunches" right. I goes, "Don't worry about it, we're playing a game of cards." She goes "Don't give me none of your hassle." I goes, "He told you he is going to pick them up, he answered you straight, what's the matter with that, can't a kid speak to a teacher anymore?" She goes, "You want to get out of here, go to see Mr. S?" I goes, "You're pretty smart aren't you?" I thought she was going to kick me out, but she didn't (laughs).

Co. - So, you sort of got involved in a conflict between the teacher and another student and you spoke back to the teachers but she didn't send you to ___ Mr. B.

CL. - Yeah, the kid said he was going to pick up, didn't he, you know.

Co. - It sounds to me that you did it even though you weren't sure whether or not the teacher would send you out. But you did it anyway.

CL. - I'd go down to see Mr. B. he is a reasonable guy. I'd explain to him, like it happened before when I was a freshman, right, he didn't say nothing to me.

LATER...

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CL. - One time the teacher kicked me out. I just started laughing in his face. It didn't bother me.

Co. - You were feeling angry, but yet you laughed.

CL. - Yeah, like if...I don't know...like...when I was small, right, my father...I used to get the shit kicked out of me. Sometimes I got so pissed off. My father kept hitting me, once until I cry, right, sometimes I'd just start laughing, he start hitting me more, I'd start laughing more, he go "Can't I do anything with you, you little bastard, get out of here." That way I'd get out of getting the shit kicked out of me. I'd laugh at him, you know, I don't know if that's the way I am with teachers or not when a teacher gets ticked off with me.

Co. - When your father got you angry when he was beating you, you found that a way you could handle that was by getting back at him by laughing, not really giving in and crying and maybe that's why you do it with teachers.

CL. - Yeah, he probably thought that if he beats the shit out of me, I'm going to cry, you know, but I'd start laughing in his face.

Co. - It must have been difficult not to cry sometimes.

CL. - Sometimes, I'd cry, like he belted me once and I started crying but he kept on going, so I said "To hell with it," so I started laughing in his face, so he got ticked off with me and stopped.

Co. - Sort a like, I'm going to stay tough and not give in no matter what happens.

CL. - Yeah, then he'd chase me around the kitchen table, take the belt and try to reach me, you know. He'd try to hold me, that guy is as strong as a mother, you know. He'd say, "You little bastard." I'd crawl around the other side. He got so pissed off as shit. (laughs)

Co. - So you really had your own way when you were very angry with your father of really getting back at him.

CL. - Yeah, he'd just kept on going around the table (smiling) you know.

Co. - When you were talking about the teachers you seem to have them going around in circles sometimes too, bringing up one comment after another, much like with your father.

CL. - Yeah, I guess so, like one time I was going to belt him in the head. He pulled my hair and that gets me ticked off when somebody pulls my hair. So I swung at him and hit him in the mouth, that was when

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I was six years old because he was beating the shit out of my sister, right. I tried to hold him back and he pulled my hair so I hit him right in the face.

Co. - You were only six, it must have been really difficult to fight back with your father when he was so angry with you.

Cl. - Yeah, I have many stories to tell. You should listen to my mother the stories she tells my girlfriend when she comes over about when I was small. I use to get the shit kicked out of me.

Co. - You still remember that one time when you were six years old and you fought back.

Cl. - Yeah, I swung at him, oh, it was as funny as anything. He was so surprised (smiling). He started hitting my sister and he went after me. I was really ticked off. It wasn't her fault. My mother asked her "Go up there and get the salt," you know. It was on the shelf and it wasn't that strong, so she went up right, she put her hand on the shelf. My uncle's watch was up there so it fell, right. My uncle took a shit, right, he tells my father and my father starts hitting her. So after that I spit in my uncle's face. My mother didn't say anything about it, my mother was there, my father wasn't.

Co. - So sometimes you got angry with your father not only when he was hitting you, but when he was hitting your sister.

Cl. - Yeah, it wasn't her fault. If she didn't get the salt my mother would have belted her one, you know.

Co. - So ___ your mother would hit you and your sister too? You had to step in to protect her?

Cl. - Yeah, my uncle was just a son-of-a-bitch. My other uncle, Peter, was a wicked good shit. He use to take us to the beach all the time. He use to take me to his cottage and met his buddies, and all that crap. He gave me a Coke once, right. I drank it, right, I goes, "Can I have some more?" He brings up another, but he goes "You can have a little more, but no more because you're going to get sick. I goes "Alright." My oldest uncle comes along and says "Where is my Coke?" I said "I drank it, Uncle Peter gave it to me." He goes "What!" My mother takes out a quarter and throws it at my uncle's face. My father starts in on my mother. She goes "Why don't you shut the f.... up!"

Co. - So, your mother used to step in and take your side sometimes.

Cl. - Yes, she always did, unless I really did something wrong!

Fifty years have passed since I engaged in and then transcribed that counselling session. The young man of 17 would today be a mature man of 67. I hope that our time together in this session and our

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subsequent meetings may have planted some seeds of possibility for a different life narrative and played a part in his embarking on a path to what Rogers would have termed a self-actualized life. In this manner, the young man’s story would have paralleled the outcome of a conversation 50 years ago among visionary counselling professionals gathered in Niagara Falls. That conversation led to the founding of Canada’s national professional body for counsellors and psychotherapists: the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association. Some might suggest that CCPA’s founders set the profession on a path to self-actualization!

Happy 50th anniversary CCPA!!

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The Career Counsellor Practitioner Grant

By CCPA’s Career Counsellor Chapter

The Career Counsellors (CC) Chapter of the CCPA recognizes that for career counsellors who are practitioners-in-the-field, there is limited support to conduct applied research projects in the counselling workplace. Many of our chapter members are practitioners who work daily in the field of career counselling in communities across Canada. These career practitioners completed their counsellor training earlier in their career and may not currently have the financial support to conduct research. Yet, our members indicate to us that there is profound value in, and need for evidence accruing from work within the career counselling profession. The CC Chapter recognizes the importance of this work and would like to acknowledge the significant contribution it makes to the field.

In this, the 50th anniversary year of the CCPA, the CC Chapter has instituted a small grant fund (\$500 - \$1500) to promote the value, importance, and results of applied research performed by career counsellors in the community and/or workplace. These applied research initiatives may consist, for example, of small exploratory projects with an evaluation component; pilot proposals with specific career-related criteria; online surveys or assessments surveys with outcome measures; a needs assessment study of a particular career issue involving a specific demographic population, or other initiatives.

The Career Counsellor Practitioner’s Grant program has been approved to be piloted for 2016, 2017, and 2018, whereupon the Chapter membership will vote at the 2018 Chapter AGM whether to continue the grant program. The CC Chapter will award on a competitive annual basis one funding grant per year. The applications for this grant will be reviewed by the Chapter Executive and they will determine that year’s award winner.

The criteria for submission, evaluation, and the associated dates for the Career Counsellor Practitioner’s Grant can be found on our Chapter website at <http://www.ccpa-accp.ca/chapters/career-counsellors/> and on our blogsite at <http://ccpacdchapter.blogspot.ca/> As part of the practitioner’s acceptance of the grant they are encouraged to disseminate some of their research findings to the members of the Chapter, either through a presentation at the CCPA annual conference, submission of a blog article to be published on the Chapter’s blogsite, or by hosting a CCPA webinar on their research topic.

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the CCPA and it is fitting that 2015 would mark the initiation of this new funding opportunity within the Career Counsellors Chapter of our national organization. The benefits of this initiative include the opportunity for the CC Chapter to herald the future of career counselling in Canada for the next 50 years. This initiative provides a distinctive way that our chapter can support our members and highlight the new directions that are being sought for career counselling

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in Canada. As well, this opportunity provides an ongoing marketing opportunity for the Chapter in 2015 and beyond in several formats including media, social media, publications, and future conference activity.

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Taking Care of Yourself as a Helping Professional

By Cheryll Woodbury

Working as a helping professional can be hazardous to your health. In any introductory course that leads to a degree in counselling and mental health this should be clearly noted and addressed. Programs typically focus on theories and practices of traditional and contemporary therapeutic models, human development, learning theory, and ethics. Education that focuses only on theory and practice lacks sufficient concern with the self-preservation of the helping professional. Graduates of these programs may be adequately equipped with skills to help others, but still know little about self-care.

Self-care is the key not only to surviving as a helping professional; it is the key to helping others. Destroying our own mental and physical health while trying to help another save theirs is harmful, counterproductive, and professionally unsound. It takes a great deal of strength and energy to assist another through crisis, through trauma, and situational difficulties. As helping professionals we run an emotional marathon with each individual we assist and we need to be in good shape. We need to protect our energy and our health.

Self-care starts with self-awareness. Self-awareness starts with observation. Observing our working environment, our social interactions, our resulting emotions and behavior, enables us to gain insight into our outer and inner worlds. During this self-observation process we become our own helping professional, allowing us to gain insight and instigate change.

It is easy to understand why the helping profession is so stressful and how it can be hazardous to our health. The constant demands to respond to crisis, urgency, intensity, and change are extremely taxing. Maintaining positive regard, objectivity and tolerance, while trying to piece together verbal cues and body language to create a coherent picture of a person's issue, is akin to a circus high wire act. This is but a part of the external and internal balancing act that comes into play and depletes our energy as we help others.

Depletion is the breeding ground for illness and the playground for self-doubt. Our immune system can only handle a limited amount of emotional stress which, in itself, is an energy guzzler. If we deplete our ability to stay well, we expose ourselves to serious health issues. Further, when exhausted and overwhelmed, we lose confidence in our ability, causing us to question our personal and professional worth.

The elements of the physical and social environment in which we work greatly impact our professional and personal health. In a helping environment where there are constant pressures, people on edge, lack of support, insufficient direction and too much to do in too little time, our personal and

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professional energy is compromised. Confidence and wellbeing can be eroded if we feel that we cannot “get a handle” on the situation. If we are expending energy on coping with our environment and the emotional turmoil that it creates, we are not fully attending to the person in need who sits in front of us.

Swimming around in our own and someone else’s emotional waters without drowning requires courage, skill, stamina, and a certain degree of detachment. Ideally, we are like a life guard who jumps into the water to save a person who is drowning. The life guard remains calm and positions herself so that she is not pulled under the water by the panicking and flailing person. She does not become distracted by the intense emotions of the drowning person or allow herself to over react emotionally. She maintains a professional detachment enabling her to focus on the task at hand and utilize her skills to save a life. Like the life guard, maintaining a degree of practiced detachment is vital to the helping professional.

Being a helping professional requires that we keep our thoughts, feelings, and behavior in check while engaged in a process that is frequently loaded with dramatic and irrational content. We have to remain focused and maintain the energy and enthusiasm to facilitate another’s healing and growth. Applying self-observation, we began to understand what we need and can implement changes to our environment, our thinking, and our emotional reactions.

There are a number of ways to stay healthy and protect our personal and professional energy. Developing our internal locus of control by accepting that we are responsible for how we think, feel, and behave enables us to change our attitude, our interactions with others, and to find new ways to take care of ourselves. Telling ourselves; “I care about myself too much to let myself do this to myself” is the first step. When we truly internalize this message, we are on the road to self-preservation and self-care.

Self-Care Strategies

Ego Investment

- Watch your level of ego investment; too much can kindle strong emotions and irrational thinking.
- When we overly personalize what happens to us we blind ourselves from seeing objectively.
- When ego is in the way, the inner child is at play.

Emotional Intelligence

- Acknowledge feelings – they are an experiential cue of what is going on with us and what we need.
- Don’t fight feelings, but don’t massage them or put them in charge.

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- Chronic anger can poison. To avoid a habitual "Mad-on" stop taking "Vianger". Resolve issues and move on.
- Remember that emotional states are transitory, if we let them be.

Crooked Thinking

- Don't believe everything you think.
- Avoid over analyzing, things are not usually as difficult as they may seem.
- Stop "Catastrophizing" (RET term used to describe excessive worry). What is the worst that can happen?
- Stop "Musterbating" (RET term used to describe excessive feelings of obligation). It only massages the stress.
- Change "What if" thinking to "so what" thinking.
- Get off the Rumination (cyclical thinking) treadmill, you're not a gerbil.

Perception Shift

- Change the way you think. Try several points of view, i.e. "depth is height turned upside down".
- Reframe your job, relationship, or situation.
- Identify the parts of a concern and reconstruct them in a different way.
- Don't just think outside of the box; take it apart.

Thinking and Feeling Clutter

- Do a personal inventory in your emotional and cognitive closets. Throw out the unproductive and self-defeating thoughts and feelings that are sabotaging your efforts to meet your own needs.
- Replace old thoughts and feelings with positive ones and try different approaches and behaviors in your life.

Thank Your Mistakes

- Mistakes are powerful teachers. As Henry Ford stated, "What we learn from our mistakes we utilize in our successes".
- Don't use your mistake as a bat to beat yourself with. Use it to knock your next idea out of the ball park.

Practice Wise Practice

- Protect your emotional energy and don't give more than you have.

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- Use reflective listening if you are feeling depleted. When helping someone, it is better to provide empathic support than to open a personal issue that you haven't the energy to bring closure to.
- Stay grounded and don't over empathize.
- Remember that the responsibility for insight and resolution belongs to the person being helped. Your responsibility as a helper is to illuminate and reflect.
- Set clear boundaries that define what you will and will not do.
- Consider referring someone you are helping to another professional when you can't be objective, you're over-sensitive to the person's issue, you're in over your head, or you are unable to feel a positive regard for the person.
- Share with a trusted colleague for professional input, debriefing, and support. You don't always have to be the helper.
- Remember that counseling is an open-ended process and you may not always know the outcome.

Practice Professional Detachment

- Don't get stuck in the emotional and irrational undertow of the person you are helping.
- Be like the lifeguard; focus on the task at hand and utilize your skills.

Create Your Own Environment

- Create a peaceful working environment. As Winston Churchill stated, "We shape our buildings and they shape us".
- Create a tranquil working space with music, nature sounds lighting, photos, art work and objects that bring you joy and help you relax.
- Position a photo or object that comforts you and focus on it when feeling stressed or to improve your mood.

Slow Down The Pace

- When you can, shut your office door and do some deep breathing and stretching exercises.
- Book in some desk time.
- Cut down on the "multi-tasking". If it isn't urgent, it can wait. Practice triages; there are degrees of urgency.
- Don't over book, it is better to do a good job with a few people than a second rate job with a lot of people.

Surviving The System

- Know what you can do, do what you can do, and let go of the rest.

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- Acknowledge that you are not responsible for the inadequacies, dysfunction and performance of others.
- Know that you are accountable to do your job and stay ethical while doing it, and don't overdo it.
- Stay grounded in your skills and abilities.
- Don't let yourself stagnate personally or professionally. Continue to learn and grow.
- Use humor to defuse stress. Laugh, laugh and laugh some more.
- Practice insouciance, become an observer instead of a victim in situations where you have no control.

When Work Is Done

- Make some time for you.
- Book play dates with friends and family.
- Practice "positive escapism". Get outside of yourself through movies, books, music, long hot baths, massage, dancing, exercise, hobbies, etc.
- Plan LFT's (look forward to's) like trips, events, entertainment, visits, etc.
- Reward yourself, especially if you have had a "day/week from Hell".
- Maintain an active and fulfilling life outside of work. Remember we work to live not live to work.
- Be grateful for who you are and what you have.
- Let go of professional resentment, disappointment, and lingering feelings of unjust treatment. The Universe has a way of balancing things. As the Buddhists say, "Don't worry about getting back at your enemy, just sit quietly on the river bank and watch his body float by".

We are born with all the skills we need to survive this life. They lie sleeping within us until hard time's jar them awake. Once awake, they never sleep again. Be thankful for the hard times, they make us stronger as individuals and as helping professionals.

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**Notebook on Ethics, Standards, and Legal issues for Counsellors and
Psychotherapists: Professional Wills for Counsellors and Psychotherapists**

By Dr. Glenn Sheppard

In 2002 when several members of the San Diego Psychological Association (SDPA) died unexpectedly their colleagues and spouses were left with a responsibility for which they were not prepared. They had to notify the members’ clients of the death of these members, gain access to all relevant documents related to their practices, and address associated ethical and legal issues. They were challenged by problems which can be encountered by colleagues and family members whenever a professional counsellor or psychotherapist dies or suddenly becomes incapacitated. For example, computer passwords and access codes were unknown and some client records, appointment books, and financial records were not readily accessible. I have been consulted with respect to somewhat similar events in Canada. A core recommendation from the task group established by SDPA to provide advice on matters related to the retirement, death, or incapacitation of its members was that all its members should have a professional will.

In 2003 in my **Notebook** in **Cognica** entitled *When Counsellors Cease to Practice*, I did address our responsibility to prepare for the cessation of our professional practice, whatever the reason for it, and the many associated obligations. So, I am now returning to this important matter with a recommendation that members engaged in private professional practice consider establishing a professional will. I have now done so as have a number of colleagues with whom I work. In fact, the *Newfoundland and Labrador Board of Psychology* recently offered a teleconference seminar delivered by a lawyer in which we were all encouraged to establish such a will and given advice as to what it should cover.

A professional will should be separate from a private family will. It gives authority and direction to a will executor as to how to fulfill ethical and legal obligation when a practitioner dies or becomes incapacitated. The most obvious person to select for an executor is another mental health professional who is already familiar with the nature of our professional work and associated obligations. Of course, it is wise to consult with a lawyer when developing such a will. A will should cover topics such as:

Client Records

The executor will need to know where records are kept and how to gain access to them. The mental health executor is likely to be familiar with the ethical guidelines regarding how long records should be kept, confidentiality, record access, and their security and so forth. Our professional records are any physical recording of information related to our professional services to our clients.

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Financial Records

There should be access to these records so that any outstanding financial matters can be appropriately managed.

Client Contact Information and Appointment Records

These may include information about access codes and computer passwords. This may also include access to relevant e-mail and voice mail access codes.

Client Notification

Some members may want their clients to be notified by phone whenever possible, others may prefer a written notification and it could also include an announcement in a local newspaper. Others might leave the choice of methods of notification up to the executor.

Liability Insurance

Our liability insurance carrier will expect to be notified as soon as possible about a member’s death or incapacitating illness.

Whether we establish a professional will or not we do have an ethical obligation to make provisions for the unexpected ending of a professional practice because of our death or incapacitation. Meeting this obligation requires us to acknowledge our human vulnerability and mortality and, at least, suspending any illusion to the contrary about this aspect of our human condition. I hope that this exercise does not evoke too much existential anxiety!