

FALL 2019
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COGNICA

THE CANADIAN COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION

Notebook on Ethics, Standards and Legal Issues for Counsellors & Psychotherapists—

Typology of Dishonesty by Health Practitioners

Joining the Discussion (Part II)

National Self-Care Survey

What's the Buzz—

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WHAT'S AHEAD FOR
CLINICAL SUPERVISION
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2020

Congrès de l'ACCP

CCPA Conference

May 7-10

7 au 10 mai

HÔTEL WESTIN HOTEL

EDMONTON, AB



James Makokis

Miyomâmitoneyihcikan, sohkemâmitoneyihcikan –
“A Good Mind, a Strong Mind: Understanding the Indigenous Health Care System”

.....
“Un bon esprit, un esprit fort : Comprendre le système de santé autochtone”



Lori Gill

Intersections: Attachment, Adversity, and Health Outcomes and Integrative Healing to Promote Repair

.....
Attachement, adversité et résultats sur la santé, ainsi que guérison intégrative pour favoriser la réparation



Carol Allain

Le choc des générations : Du je triomphant au nous rassembleur

.....
Generational Shock: Uniting Triumphant Individuals



CANADIAN COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION

L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE COUNSELING ET DE PSYCHOTHÉRAPIE



CCPA PRESIDENTIAL ROADSHOW CELEBRATES ITS KICKOFF THIS FALL!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Though the excitement of football season is being felt in our home [insert a playful eyeroll], I am much more enthusiastic about being a team player in CCPA's inaugural Presidential Roadshow. As part of our 2019-2021 Strategic Leadership Plan, the Presidential Roadshow will enable our Regional Directors and Executive team to collaborate on projects all across the country, which will focus on listening to the voices of our valued members, and enhancing our outreach to potential new members. I am thrilled to share the first two events that will be happening during October and November.

Our Presidential Roadshow began on October 4-5, 2019 in Whitehorse! Dr. Blythe Shepard, President Emerita and current national Board Director representing Alberta and Northwest Territories, and I co-facilitated two clinical supervision workshops in response to a survey that was sent out to our members in the region. The back-to-back workshops filled quickly, with 20 participants in both the Introductory and Intermediate workshops. Siri Brown, our national Board Director representing the British Columbia and Yukon region, along with our highly efficient team at head office, have been instrumental in planning the event. Blythe, Siri, and I enjoyed learning, sharing, networking, and listening to the voices of our Northern members.

The second stop for the Presidential Roadshow will be on November 7-8, 2019 in Montreal! Carrie Foster, a member of our Executive team who serves as Treasurer and national Board Director representing Anglo-

phone Quebec, has been planning a special viewing of *PsyCause*. This documentary provides details of the challenges related to the Psychotherapy permit in Quebec. This event will provide awareness, education, and bring together stakeholders such as practitioners, counselling associations, and political leaders. Following the documentary, an expert panel will offer their insights and answer questions from the audience. This event will be followed by a breakfast the next morning which will give members and potential members an opportunity to speak with Carrie, Liette Goyer, Quebec Francophone Director, our Deputy CEO Kim Hollihan, our Manager of Member Services Karina Albert, and yours truly. We are eager to listen to the voices of our Quebec members!

I look forward to sharing our future Presidential Roadshow(s) as we celebrate the opportunity to directly connect with and listen to our members through these special events that are relevant to each region. Until next time, may you savour the brilliant colours and crispness in the air that the autumn season brings.

With Gratitude, merci beaucoup, Wela'lin, Woliwon!

Jenny L. Rowett,
PhD, LCT, CCC-S
President, CCPA



CELEBRATING GRATITUDE

PRESIDENT-ELECT'S MESSAGE

Happy Fall to all! I am hoping that the summer months brought rest, relaxation, outdoor enjoyment, and fun with family and friends! Although "summer" was short in Calgary, I was able to visit both the east and west coasts to soak up some additional sun, see new places, meet incredible new people, and spend some truly quality time with those familiar to me. Life is good and I am grateful!

Gratitude and appreciation are what I thought I would focus my greetings on in this issue. It will be the closest issue to Thanksgiving, so apropos perhaps, though I am of the mind that when gratitude is heartfelt, it needs to be expressed and not saved for a special day.

Along with at least three other CCPA members, I recently got the opportunity to take an active role in the dissertation defense at UNB of our very own President, Jen Rowett (who *Passed*—with flying colours of course); she is far too humble to celebrate this openly with you...but if you look at her by-line above, you might note that she is no longer a PhD Candidate, but a full PhD! So not only do I wish to celebrate her accomplishment, but I want to share some of the incredible history that was made that day. The Dean of Graduate Studies confirmed that for the first time in UNB's 243-year history was a

dissertation defense conducted completely within the ceremonies and blessings of Elders from the traditional peoples of the land. It was one of the most magical moments of my academic and professional career! To be greeted by community members, to see traditional medicines, regalia, and to share in the ceremonies and traditional songs that have been very much a part of Jen's, and my own, academic journey and life be acknowledged and serve as the guiding force of the process was transformative! The four Elders present were all given a seat at the decision-making table—an enormous sign of respect, inclusion, equity, and reconciliation. I do not think my heart could have swollen more with pride, honour, and humility that I was chosen to serve and partake in this historic moment. I am so grateful that I was able to be present alongside her supervisors, fellow CCPA members, Dr. Jose Domene and Dr. Jeff Landine! Dr. Kim Hollihan (our Deputy CEO) was also present, along with more than 50 others, including many of her co-researchers, community members, Elders, young children, as well as other academics, students, and her Dean. We all were transfixed in this wonderful process, which ended with a blessing, a song, and a traditional feast. So magical! So powerful! So grateful!

My blessings did not end there, as I was honoured

by being invited to meet a wise Mi'kmaw Elder, Dr. Albert Marshall in Cape Breton. Multiple eagles soared, my heart swelled, gifts were shared, sights, sunsets, food, and the company were outstanding; words cannot fully capture all that I felt. What I know is that moments like this need to be shared! For Jen, CCPA, those who were present, and those who will follow and wish to include more ceremony in academia—precedent was set on August 22, 2019—and TRC Calls to Action are being enacted upon! I was so honoured to take part!

Closer to home, I cannot close without also sharing how proud I am to know that the Expedited Route to become a Registered Counselling Therapist in Alberta went Live on August 29th. This has taken years of work by a very dedicated group of volunteers, who have virtually spent 1000s of hours (I can attest to this!), to get us to this momentous place with such record speed. The word tenacity can aptly be used with this group—WOW! Hat's off Alberta and all those many CCPA members, as well as 13 other associations, involved—we did it! There are far too many individuals to name—you know who you are—and to each of you, I want to thank you and send huge kudos your way for all that you have contributed, from letter-writing, to giving up summers and holidays to work on documents, to lobbying government officials. Each of these activities are aimed at keeping the importance of supporting and protecting the public's rights to receive quality and competent mental health supports in the forefront of our government's mind. Know that every contribution you made has reaped this award; be proud of the role you played—we at CCPA and all Albertans are grateful! To not mention the exceptional dedication of a few would simply be remiss. These individuals have gone over and above, consistently for more than a decade and need to be acknowledged! These include: Dr. Blythe Shepard for initiating the whole discussion some 11 years ago and who brought with her more than a decade of expertise from her previous home province of BC. To (soon to be Dr.) Nicole Imgrund, our fearless champion and Chair of the committee and process that have led to this point of celebra-



From Left to Right: Kim Hollihan, Deputy CEO; Jenny Rowett, President; Kathy Offet-Gartner, President-Elect

tion. To know Nicole is to know her passion, her presence, and her perseverance on this issue. She, like Blythe and myself, are founding members of the Alberta/Northwest Territories Chapter; she joined specifically to forge ahead on the need for regulation of the counselling profession. Well Nicole, that dream has come to fruition and all Albertans have much to be thankful for as a result! I got

the pleasure of working closely with Nicole as her President-Elect, President, and then Past President of the chapter so I know very well what this process has involved! Barbara MacCallum, our fearless leader and CEO, whose energy and commitment never seems to wane, has dedicated more hours of flying, chairing, hosting, fact-finding, budget crunching—you name it—to help this province (along with many others) either achieve or be working toward the same goal. Barbara, your efforts are always in the back ground, out of the limelight, and yet are so crucial to the success of this association, our various chapters, boards, initiatives, and all regulation activities. We simply would not be where we are, as an association, and as a province about to fully regulate the profession of counselling without your efforts and those of the incredible team we have at head office (again too many to name). Suffice it to say, you are appreciated more than you likely ever hear!

Once again, I am honoured and humbled to be in the company and presence of these powerful women: thank you from the bottom of my heart for including me on this joyous journey! It has been the right thing to do and we ensured we put ourselves in the right places, with the right messages, and the right people, with the right energy to make this a reality—*WOW* can not capture the magnitude of this accomplishment. Never can we doubt the efforts of a few dedicated souls to move seemingly impenetrable mountains! For those of you who are residing in Alberta and who have questions regarding this process, who have not yet submitted your application, or if you are unsure if you qualify, please be sure to visit the [ACTA website](#) today—the development of the College depends on you

The Dean of Graduate Studies confirmed that for the first time in UNB's 243-year history was a dissertation defense conducted completely within the ceremonies and blessings of Elders from the traditional peoples of the land.

It was one of the most magical moments of my academic and professional career!

and time is running out! The deadline will be upon us before we know it and this expedited route may no longer be available to you. This information was sent by email from head office to members on August 22nd if that is easier to access. However you access the information—do it *now* and *revisit often*, as things can change rapidly.

I simply could not contain the gratitude and appreciation I feel for CCPA, the people, and opportunities that arise when people unite to achieve common goals, share expertise, and a love of this profession. I read this quote recently and felt it so fitting: "Gratitude is when memory is stored in the heart and not in the

mind. Sharing gratitude is the greatest gift of love and respect we can offer" (author unknown). My heart is so very full—thank you!

In gratitude and celebration,



Kathy Offet-Gartner,
PhD, R.Psych (AB)
President-Elect, CCPA

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CCPA PRESIDENT REGARDING REPARATIVE/ CONVERSION THERAPY

The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) is a strong proponent of and advocate for the well-being of its members and the persons they serve. The CCPA Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics are the benchmarks upon which the Association measures the professionalism of its members. CCPA takes the public, overarching stance that any action or intervention, therapeutic or otherwise, between a practitioner and a client must uphold the dignity and integrity of the person, must be within the enacted laws of their province/territory and Canada, and must be congruent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Specifically, CCPA takes a public and ethical stance when it categorically requires its members to “participate in only those practices which are respectful of the legal, civic, and moral rights of others, and act to safeguard the dignity and rights of their clients, students, and research participants” (Code of Ethics, A2). This requirement is further strengthened by Ethical Code A10, which requires understanding and respect for “the diversity of...clients, including differences related to age, ethnicity, culture, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation and socio-economic status” and Ethical Code B9, which focuses on respecting diversity and its associated standard of practice which states in part that, “counsellors are aware of and sensitive for cultural biases that may be inherent in certain assessment tools and procedures and particularly

those associated with certain counselling practices.”

To this end, it is clear that reparative/conversion therapy or any other action or therapy that does not respect the individual rights and autonomy of the individual would be a serious contravention of the CCPA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. Any such activities, including those that would intentionally seek to change or direct an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity would be considered misconduct and be actionable by the CCPA Ethics Committee.

Both the [Code of Ethics](#) and [Standards of Practice](#) for CCPA are public documents. The Association takes a very strong and substantive stance on appropriate treatment by appropriate professionals. It issues regular press releases, distributes issues papers, conducts media interviews, and meets with policy makers at local, municipal, provincial/territorial, and federal levels to advocate strongly and positively for fair, equitable, timely access to mental health therapies that are proven to be legal, ethical, helpful, evidence-based, and offered by qualified mental health practitioners. Conversion therapy is not among such therapies.

Respectfully,



Jenny L. Rowett,
PhD, LCT, CCC-S
President, CCPA

CCPA'S PROFESSIONAL CHAMPION AWARD FOR 2019

BY JOHN DRISCOLL, MEd, CCC, RCT
PAST PRESIDENT, CCPA

In May, at our National Conference in Moncton, New Brunswick, it was my pleasure as the outgoing President of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association, to announce the recipient of CCPA's Professional Champion Award for 2019, Barbara MacCallum, Chief Executive Officer of CCPA.

The Professional Champion Award was created to honour and promote the stellar work of individuals in Canada who have played exemplary roles in enhancing the lives of others through championing the role of counselling and psychotherapy in enhancing mental health and well-being. To be considered for this award, nominees:

- ⇒ must have a presence on the national or international stage;
- ⇒ must publish, speak and advocate on behalf of the counselling and psychotherapy profession either directly or indirectly through social justice, humanitarian, or other related actions that advance the importance of mental health and wellness in populations;
- ⇒ may have delivered an address at a CCPA or other highly visible counselling- or psychotherapy-related conference, humanitarian-focused conference, or social justice forum; and
- ⇒ must have a stellar reputation over more than five years that shows consistent advocacy for the profession and for increased access for

those who seek service.

Barbara MacCallum is the fifth recipient of this award. Past recipients include Senator Murray Sinclair, Lieutenant-General (retired) Romeo Dallaire, Mary Walsh and Grand Chief Sheila North.

Barbara was selected for the Professional Champion award because of her outstanding contributions to statutory regulation, adept stewardship of CCPA, and significant involvement on an international level.

Barbara has made a unique and invaluable contribution to our profession of counselling and psychotherapy through her work on regulation. As a leader, visionary and professional she may be the only person in Canada to make champion contributions to the establishment of regulatory Colleges in provinces across the country. Her undying commitment is exemplified in her ongoing and outstanding support of provincial level committees who have achieved or who are working toward regulatory status. Her contributions include her frequent travels from coast to coast to participate in meetings and presentations, countless hours spent behind the scenes completing administrative tasks, and her persistence and words of encouragement in the face of obstacles and challenges. She continually shares her knowledge, skills and wisdom not just for the benefit of CCPA members but for all who work in the profession and the public they serve. Her tremendous and unwavering devotion to



As a leader, visionary and professional [Barbara] may be the only person in Canada to make champion contributions to the establishment of regulatory Colleges in provinces across the country.

Top (from left to right): John Driscoll, Past President; Carrie Foster, Treasurer; Barbara MacCallum, CEO; Kathy Offet-Gartner, President-Elect; Jenny Rowett, President

Bottom (from left to right): John Driscoll, Past President; Barbara MacCallum, CEO



regulation and related matters such as HST/GST exemption and third-party billing, was acknowledged, appreciated and celebrated by this award. This Professional Champion award also recognized Barbara's 15 plus years of stewardship of the CCPA, the leading national professional association for counsellors and psychotherapists in Canada. Since 2004, Barbara has served as CEO, demonstrating leadership and vision that has seen the Association membership triple in size from approximately 2300 members to over 7300 and from a staff of 2 to 17. During her tenure at CCPA, Barb has provided around-the-clock support to 7 National Presidents and Boards of Directors, numerous Chapter Presidents and Committee Chairs, and countless Association volunteers. Her business acumen has seen the Association always sitting on a strong financial foundation while growing the benefits and professional supports offered to members. A strong insurance portfolio for members that includes low cost professional liability insurance for practicing members is one such example of her vision and understanding of membership needs in the area of financial services.

As CEO, she has recruited and mentored many young professionals who have benefited greatly from her experience and guidance. You need only to call CCPA or visit the office to speak with or meet staff who demonstrate a professional commitment of service to our members and the Association. Barb demonstrates a keen awareness of the needs of CCPA members which serves as an important building block for a diverse array of member services that continues to expand. Her collaborative approach to stakeholder engagement has helped cultivate valuable and innovative partnerships and projects such as the National Assessment. Her stewardship also includes establishing partnerships, developing trusted relationships and seeing CCPA become members and participants of provincial and national bodies such as the Ontario Alliance of Mental Health Practitioners, the Canadian Career Development Foundation, Organizations for Health Action and the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health.

Barbara has also made significant contributions on an international level. In her capacity as CCPA's CEO, her proactive engagement with the Interna-

tional Association for Counselling (IAC) and related international counselling associations has not gone unnoticed. Over the years, she embodies the spirit and intent of global partnerships in her actions and strategic perspectives by advancing various collaborations and related opportunities alongside various CCPA Boards of Directors. Her organizational development and leadership skills have positioned CCPA as a recognized authority on counselling and psychotherapy in Canada and as a collaborative and reliable partner and ally internationally. Notable highlights include co-hosting conferences with the IAC and with the American Counselling Association, enhancing CCPA and Canada's international profile in a leadership and ambassador capacity at numerous international conferences, and the generous provision of a diverse range of support to IAC to assist with its growth and development. When the award was presented to Barbara at our annual conference, a President of a Counselling Association outside of Canada remarked to me that it was a fitting tribute to her work and vision as a leader for CCPA and the profession of counselling and psychotherapy in Canada. Certainly, such praise is a clear acknowledgement that Barbara is genuinely appreciated and recognized.

Thankfully, Barbara continues to provide leadership, vision, and support for CCPA as well as for the other provincial committees across the country working towards regulation. Her ongoing specialized knowledge and skills will assist the work of these committees as they move forward. Barbara's ongoing work will also ensure the profession is seen as one of a continuum of mental health providers in all communities across our country, as well as a profession that is recognized for providing the public with unique and valuable services. Finally, through her commitment to regulation we will see that the profession of counselling and psychotherapy is recognized as providing its own oversight for service to the public.

Sincerely,



John Driscoll
Past-President, CCPA

NOTEBOOK ON ETHICS, LEGAL ISSUES AND STANDARDS FOR COUNSELLORS & PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

TYOLOGY OF DISHONESTY BY HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

BY DR. GLENN SHEPPARD



Virtually all health professionals want to practice in ways that fulfill their commitment to ethical behaviour as expressed in their respective codes and standards of ethical conduct. They also share in a fundamental belief that honesty is essential to the maintenance of trust with clients and for the fulfillment of their fiduciary duty to them. However, ethical codes of conduct are aspirational in nature and, unfortunately, some practitioners, for a variety of reasons, fail in their promise to adhere to them and engage in unethical conduct including dishonest behaviour. My reflection on this aspirational perspective reminds me of Robert Browning's often-quoted expression that "a man's reach should exceed his grasp or what's a heaven for."

Despite Browning's apparent recognition that perfection will always remain outside our human reach, it is often a challenge to achieve an empathetic understanding of some acts of dishonesty by professionals and such conduct will continue to warrant professional and societal sanctions. I am reminded of one such example of professional dishonesty involving an individual who was providing counselling services with the unregulated title of counsellor. However, it became clear during the court proceedings related to some of his activities and with evidence from his clients, that he encouraged them to refer to him as a psychologist and did not correct others when they did so. He was legally sanctioned for this behaviour as a result of action taken by the provincial College of Psychologists. Of course, for a CCPA member, such conduct would also be in violation of the Article 5 of the **CCPA Code of Ethics**.

REPRESENTATION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Counsellors do claim or imply only those professional qualifications which they possess, and are responsible for correcting any known misrepresentations of their qualifications by others.

I also became aware that a senior associate, a psychologist, working in the same counselling practice billed third party payers for this person's services using his own title and invoice. It was this case that prompted us to place the following prohibition in

the **CCPA Standards of Practice**:

Under no circumstances should counsellors submit their billing invoice as a surrogate for professional services provided by another service provider (p. 46).

We have no reliable means of knowing just how many members of the health professions deviate from ethical norms in their professional or public conduct. Of course, an analysis of the ethical complaints lodged with various ethical complaints committees can provide some insight into the types of ethical misconduct with which they deal. A recent study entitled **Typology of Dishonesty** commissioned by the UK Professional Standards Authority (PSA) did just that but with a particular focus on cases of misconduct that included the allegations of dishonesty.

THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AUTHORITY (PSA)

The PSA is a British authority that oversees the activities of nine statutory bodies that regulate health professionals in the UK and social workers in England. It conducts reviews of these regulatory bodies, promotes improvements in professional standards, provides standards and accreditation for voluntary registration in unregulated health care organizations, and accepts assignments to conduct related work outside of the UK. One recent PSA study was an invited review of the complaints procedures and practices of the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association.

The study reviewed in this Notebook was commissioned by the PSA and conducted by two academic professionals—Ann Gallagher, Professor of Ethics and Care, University of Surrey, and Albert Jago, Senior Lecturer of Law, Royal Holloway University of London—who reviewed and analyzed 151 discipline cases that involved practitioner dishonesty. At the outset of their report, the authors observed that being honest may not always be straight forward. For example, a full disclosure of a grave diagnosis might be withheld based on the view that it is best to do so for the patient's own good. However, attitudes are now changing in favour of giving primacy to patient autonomy. Of course, the timing of disclosures, the language used, and the nature of the prognosis disclosed to clients remain important

considerations. At the beginning, they also provide the following definition of dishonesty:

To be honest is to be real, genuine, and bona fide. To be dishonest is to be partly feigned, forged, fake, or fictitious. Honesty expressed both self-respect and respect for others. Dishonesty fully respects neither oneself nor others. Honesty imbues lives with openness, reliability and candour; it expresses a disposition to live in the light. Dishonesty seeks shade, cover, or concealment. It is a disposition to live partly in the dark (Bennett 1993, p. 599).

Following their analysis, the authors identified the following six categories of dishonest conduct by health practitioners:

- ⇒ *“Dishonesty by omission—not disclosing—where the truth is withheld;*
- ⇒ *Dishonesty by commission—lying—where a registrant tells an untruth;*
- ⇒ *Impersonation—impersonating—assuming the identity of another person;*
- ⇒ *Theft—stealing;*
- ⇒ *Fraud—deceiving; and*
- ⇒ *Academic dishonestly—cheating.”*

They highlight various examples from the disciplinary cases for each one of these from both the professional practices and private lives of health professionals. For example, the impersonation category, a nurse was found guilty of impersonating both a physician (who can use flashing green lights in the UK when attending to an emergency) and a police officer to facilitate speeding through traffic. The equipment was stolen from work. Another example of impersonation, in the private domain, was a practitioner who impersonated his brother in order to sit for examinations in his stead. This behaviour from the private lives of these individuals was sanctioned as professional misconduct and it brought their health professions into disrepute.

Examples of the most prevalent types of dishonesty found in the 151 cases were:

Of the 151 cases reviewed, the three most particular kinds of dishonest activities were, firstly, failure to disclose convictions/cautions to the regulator either upon registration or for the purposes of retention on the register (19 cases). Secondly, simple theft of identified monies, prescription pads and medication or drug paraphernalia (18 cases) and finally, receiving sick pay and salary from a 2nd employer simultaneously (13 cases).



“To be honest is to be real, genuine, and bona fide. To be dishonest is to be partly feigned, forged, fake, or fictitious. Honesty expressed both self-respect and respect for others.”

Bennett 1993, p. 599

With respect to sanctions for dishonest conduct, the investigations found a variety of consequences were imposed, the most severe being revocation of a license to practice, which means a permanent suspension. However, most sanctions were moderate suspensions of a registration or license to practice.

The authors suggest that the results of their study might have some value if included in pre and in-service educational activities for health practitioners. For example, they might benefit from reflection on the following:

- ⇒ *The wide variety of forms in which dishonesty can arise,*
- ⇒ *The rationales given for acting in a way that is untruthful (e.g., “that rule is bureaucratic and unfair anyway”),*
- ⇒ *The challenges in being candid (e.g., forgetting to obtain a client’s signature for a document and having to choose between chasing down the client or forging the client’s signature), and*
- ⇒ *The consequences of dishonesty to one’s clients, one’s profession and oneself.*

They also offer regulators the following acronymic framework for use in their assessment of dishonest behaviours:

- ⇒ *Highlight the type of dishonesty and domain of offense*
- ⇒ *Organizational (environmental) issues that may have impacted on the offence?*
- ⇒ *Negative or aggravating individual factors that contributed to offence?*
- ⇒ *Explanations offered as possible mitigation?*
- ⇒ *Sanction applied—is it fair? Too lenient? Too severe? Is the sanction proportionate?*
- ⇒ *Training or professional education that may remedy?*

They conclude with this recommendation:

“We strongly recommend that educators and regulators capitalize on the rich resource of cases in their databases to illustrate the types of dishonesty and also to urge reflection on strategies that registrants may use to develop

their moral resilience.”

Although this study is a significant and welcome contribution to the ethics literature and resources for us as health professionals, much remains to be done. For example, a further examination of the organizational and collegial environments in which unethical behaviour might go unchallenged. Also, it would help to have a fuller understanding of the cognitive distortions and the fallacious logic in our ethical reasoning of which we are all capable when defending our inappropriate conduct. The power of these “ethics placebos” will be addressed in another notebook edition.

This study can be found at:

www.professionalstandards.org/uk/publications

The Notebook on Ethics, Legal Issues and Standards for Counsellors & Psychotherapists is published in each edition of COGNICA and is an additional ethical resource for CCPA Members.

Previous Notebooks include:

- ⇒ [Email Communication with Clients: A Brief Review and Some Recommendations](#)
- ⇒ [Scope of Practice for Counsellors](#)
- ⇒ [Counselling Records: Best Practices for Counsellors and Psychotherapists](#)
- ⇒ [A Supreme Court of Canada Decision, and the Goudge Report on Complaints & Discipline](#)

For a compilation of selected works, or to download the entire Notebook, [refer to our website](#).

JOINING THE DISCUSSION (PART II)

The Interplay Between Ethics, Social Justice, Religious Freedom, Human Rights, and Legal Systems Within the Current and Emerging Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Landscape

CO-WRITTEN BY NATASHA CAVERLEY (PhD, CCC), JOHN DRISCOLL (RCT, CCC), CARRIE FOSTER (CFT, PST, RDT, CCC, M.Sc, M.A.) AND KATHY OFFET-GARTNER (PhD, RPsych)

As a follow up to our Spring 2019 COGNICA article on the *Interplay amongst counselling ethics and standards of practice, social justice, religious freedom, human rights and the Canadian and provincial/territorial legal systems when they are not aligned in the context of counselling and psychotherapy*, we hosted an interactive presentation during the May 2019 CCPA-IAC conference on this complex and interesting topic.

ACCESS THE PRESENTATION

For a copy of the corresponding May 2019 CCPA-IAC presentation entitled, "A shared learning journey: CCPA's national update and reflections on the interplay between ethics, social justice, religious freedom, human rights, and legal systems within the current and emerging Canadian counselling and psychotherapy landscape", see <https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/A-shared-learning-journey-Natasha-Caverley.pdf>

Through a scaffolding of information that we shared on the "interplay" question in relation to CCPA's mandate, the May 2019 "A shared learning journey" CCPA-IAC conference presentation invited participants (approximately 56 people in attendance) to reflect on said question based on the following three key perspectives:

- ⇒ **As individual counsellors and psychotherapists**—supporting professional and ethical practice with our clients, our continued life-long learning as practitioners in counselling and psychotherapy, and within our respective workplaces;
- ⇒ **As counsellor educators/training programs**—supporting, developing and modelling professional ethical practice in the training of counsellors and psychotherapists at the program and institutional levels of post-secondary institutions in Canada which includes, but is not limited to, counsellor competency development; social justice, inclusion and diversity principles; and counsellor educator professional development; and
- ⇒ **As CCPA**—supporting competency development and social justice/inclusion/diversity principles at the micro (practitioner) and macro (organizational) levels of the counselling and psychotherapy profession in Canada—in relation to CCPA's mandate and its "interplay" with current case law, ethics, accreditation, certification and regulation trends.

As the “interplay” question can be explored across many disciplines and within a variety of contexts, it was important for CCPA to focus on this important question as it specifically relates to CCPA’s mandate.

The following provides notable highlights on themes and discussion points emerging from each perspective during the May 2019 interactive conference presentation on the “interplay” question:

As individual counsellors and psychotherapists

In order to reflect on and respond to the “interplay” question in this context, it is important for us as individual counsellors and psychotherapists to make space for clients in the form of inclusion (e.g., “how do you identify?”; asking clients about their “preferred pronouns”). As a companion activity, our offices and therapeutic settings need to be equally inclusive, safe and welcoming. Participants highlighted the opportunity to have a variety of imagery in our offices and waiting areas showing multiple identities, diversity, gender fluidity – thereby, representing through actions and words the importance of offering accessible and culturally congruent counselling and psychotherapy services for diverse populations.

Through the process of becoming culturally-informed counsellors and psychotherapists, there is also a need to reflect upon and challenge ourselves in terms of expanding our self-awareness in terms of worldviews and engaging in community gatherings and professional development events to grow our competencies in diversity, culture and counselling.

As counsellors and psychotherapists, a healthy, safe and culturally-congruent client-therapist alliance and working relationship needs to be based on trust and authenticity. Therefore, when working with clients across diverse populations, our ethics (e.g., [CCPA Code of Ethics](#) and [Standards of Practice](#)) and our core beliefs as individuals in the helping profession become essential components to our practice in mental health service delivery now and

in the future. Staying current on ethics and standards of practice, social justice, religious freedom, human rights and the Canadian and provincial/territorial legal system and its regulatory bodies in the context of counselling and psychotherapy is important in our respective learning journeys.

As counsellor educators/training programs

The training and professional development of counsellors and psychotherapists (particularly at the master’s level) in Canada establishes fundamentals in the theory, practice and skills development of the next generation of counsellors and psychotherapists. As such, participants noted that master’s level counselling programs in Canada can build or enhance existing curriculum (theory, practice and skills development) to include learning about advocacy, social justice and inclusion when working with diverse populations, and exploring the intersectionality between social justice, ethics and religious freedoms when working with clients, particularly if those clients avail from marginalized and/or underserved groups.

As CCPA

As the “interplay” question can be explored across many disciplines and within a variety of contexts, it was important for CCPA to focus on this important question as it specifically relates to CCPA’s mandate. From 2014 to present, successive CCPA National Board of Directors thoroughly reviewed, discussed and explored its response to the “interplay” question in the form of a CCPA audit. Leadership in and responsiveness to the “interplay” question has and continues to be a recognized priority area for the CCPA National Board of Directors. As such, notable programs, services and initiatives that CCPA carries out on behalf of its members in relation to

the “interplay” question include, but are not limited to, the following,

- ⇒ Provides professional development,
- ⇒ Supports the work of the CCPA Indigenous Circle, CCPA Spirituality in Counselling Chapter and CCPA Social Justice Chapter,
- ⇒ Provides legal consultative services,
- ⇒ Is currently updating the *CCPA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*,
- ⇒ Has created the National Indigenous Director position on the CCPA National Board of Directors,
- ⇒ Has created the Indigenous Continuing Education Credit (CEC) Program,
- ⇒ Engages in extensive advocacy work,
- ⇒ Works in collaboration with the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) and like-minded organizations to bring mental health issues and education to the public—providing insights into timely and accessible services and support available to those living with mental health issues,
- ⇒ Reviews CCPA policies and procedures through its quality assurance process, and
- ⇒ Advises on current developments in ethics and the legal system within the context of counselling and psychotherapy.

Through the five year shared learning journey by the CCPA National Board of Directors, CCPA National Office and designated CCPA members, you can

be assured that CCPA continues to document and monitor progress made on interplays within CCPA policies and procedures, *CCPA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice*, CACEP accreditation, CCPA certification (CCC and CCC-S), and advises (if and when necessary) regulatory associations on the “interplay” questions. Though the Research Task Group Initiative draws to a close as a formal project, updating future CCPA National Boards is a necessary next step with the “interplay” question in terms of CCPA continuing to take an inclusive approach to the counselling and psychotherapy profession - respecting all diversities in a Canadian context. Overall, competencies related to the “interplay” question require lifelong learning. This is especially important to remind long-term counselling and psychotherapy practitioners who may have not engaged in updating or maintaining currency. As part of a small group discussion during our May 2019 CCPA-IAC conference presentation, an invitation was made for all of us “to be sponges and be open to learning” about diversity, culture and counselling. Let’s all endeavour to accept this invitation in the spirit of inclusivity!

Many thanks to the following individuals and groups for their collective involvement in this shared learning journey for CCPA:

CCPA National Board of Directors

CCPA National Office

Research Task Group

CCPA Board-led Research Task Group Sub-Committee

Peer Reviews

Reflections and feedback from participants at the May 2019 “A shared learning journey” CCPA-IAC conference presentation

“Appreciative of the thoughtful summary of complex issues and how CCPA is responding”

“Appreciative of being asked for input, examples, anecdotes, and questions.”

“This was a great session—thanks!”

“Thank you for taking the information and using it in a positive and respectful way.” (from one of the original CCPA Research Task Group authors present during the conference presentation)

What's Ahead

for Clinical Supervision in Canada

BY BLYTHE SHEPARD, PhD, CCC, CCC-S
CCPA DIRECTOR, ALBERTA & NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Until recently most counselling-related associations and regulatory colleges required only entry-to-practice supervision requirements. However, clinical supervision is increasingly acknowledged as an essential component for optimizing clinician competencies, ensuring quality control, and optimizing client care (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). With the anticipation that there will be a heightened demand for clinical supervision across the country and across the career span, what are the trends in the practice of clinical supervision?

Clinical supervision is a distinct professional practice with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that requires a shift from “thinking about and seeing my supervisees and clients through the eyes of therapist to seeing through the supervisor’s eyes of dual responsibility. We are responsible not just for the client’s welfare, but also for the supervisee’s professional development and welfare. That dual responsibility can be tricky for supervisors” (Ellis, 2010, pp. 97-98).

One of the major trends has been a shift to focusing on competencies or “the integrated use of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that are necessary to ensure the protection of the public” (Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards [ASPPB], 2015, p. 3). CCPA has created the *National Clinical Supervision Framework: Qualifications, Competencies, and Best Practices* to cultivate competency and best practices in supervision among its members. A self-assessment tool has been developed and is currently being used by 48 Family Service Ontario member agencies to inform the development of a guiding policy, flexible training programs, and support for their clinical supervisors. Information gained from this study will be used by CCPA to review the

core areas of knowledge, competencies, and personal traits of effective supervisors outlined in the Framework as well as to develop recommendations for training experiences and professional development activities. CCPA has also developed supervision resources including a textbook, modules, and a graduate level course in clinical supervision for master’s level practitioners.

The Framework self-assessment can be used to evaluate supervisors-in-training or to seek feedback from practica and internship students about their supervision experiences. Self-assessments could become the basis for forming peer supervision of supervision and peer consultation arrangements to encourage further professional development. Counsellors and practitioners in all settings can use the document to advocate for the supervision they need to be effective with their clients. Counsellors working in agencies can evaluate the policies regarding the conduct of supervision, complete self-assessments, identify areas for continuing education or ongoing need for supervisors and counselling staff to receive supervision, and advocate for resources to help the agency apply best practices. Access to quality supervision has been shown to enhance staff retention and morale (SAMHSA, 2009). Agency administrators may use the document as a resource when developing supervisor training programs and supervisor evaluation procedures.

There will be an increased call for qualified supervisors in Canada because most regulatory colleges require applicants to accrue more hours of post-master’s supervision than they received during graduate training. As such, colleges are developing criteria for qualified supervisors. For example, the



“Clinical supervision is increasingly acknowledged as an essential component for optimizing clinician competencies, ensuring quality control, and optimizing client care.”

Bernard & Goodyear, 2019.

College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO) requires that supervisors have at least five years of clinical experience, meet CRPO’s “independent practice” requirement (completion of 1000 direct client contact hours and 150 hours of clinical supervision), and have completed 30 hours of directed learning in providing clinical supervision. Directed learning can include course work, supervised practice as a clinical supervisor, individual/peer/group learning, and independent study that includes structured readings.

The Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists (NSCCT) requires that supervisors demonstrate completion of at least the College sponsored introductory workshop in supervision, have completed training in supervision at the graduate level through coursework or hold a supervision certification, or have taken a workshop on supervision that is acceptable as an alternative. Only active practicing members who have a minimum of three years of practice in Nova Scotia after having attained their professional Registration or License are eligible. In New Brunswick, practitioners with five years or more of counselling practice are eligible to supervise and must complete approved training in supervision by July 1, 2019. In Quebec, holders of a psychotherapy permit must have a minimum of 5 years clinical experience in at least one of the 4 major psychotherapy models and training in supervision.

Trends across Canada suggest a movement from clinical supervision being an optional competency to it being essential and requiring a process of continuous

growth and self-assessment with continuous enhancement of competence through experience, collaboration, learning, and continuing education. It is likely that the emergent recognition in Canada of clinical supervision as a specialty area of practice in counselling and psychotherapy will be accompanied by increased attunement to ethical comportment and professionalism expected of clinical supervisors.

...it is no longer assumed that competence as a supervisor is accomplished through osmosis. Instead attention is directed to development of specific supervision competencies and competencies of the supervisor (Fouad et al., 2009). The shift has led to assessment of the impact of supervision training (Tebes et al., 2011), identifying components of effective supervision (Falender & Shafranske, 2008), and defining a lifelong trajectory of professional competence and development (Wise et al., 2010). (Falender & Shafranske, 2012, p. 133)

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National Self-Care Survey

BY NICOLA SHERWIN-ROLLER, MA, CCC, RCAT
CCPA DIRECTOR, SASKATCHEWAN

Shallcross (2011) in Counseling Today says "anyone who has flown on an airplane and listened to the flight attendant before takeoff has been cautioned what to do in the event oxygen masks fall from the ceiling: Put on your own mask first before trying to help someone else. Counsellor wellness experts say that idea has mileage on the ground, too."

In April 2019, members were asked to participate in a short survey on self-care and professional wellness. We had just over 1,300 participants from almost all Provinces and Territories, which suggests that this topic is one that is important for many of us. As professionals, in counselling, psychotherapy and human service fields, we often promote self-care for those that we work with. We are full of wellness tips for others, but do we promote that for ourselves? Given the nature of our work, we are at high risk for compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma and burnout, so what are the issues and implications of not doing self-care? How do we promote wellness and self-care throughout our lifespan?

For the most part, respondents agreed that the terms

self-care and professional wellness went hand in hand with 51.64% stating very similar and 38.38% saying similar. The largest area of respondents practice was private practice (53.7%) with the next highest grouping coming from Elementary/Middle/High School (12.25%). Respondents engaged in multiple activities to promote wellness and self-care (Fig. 1) with 61.96% reporting that they practiced daily. Self-care activities were varied throughout the year, (very varied 15.08%, varied 46.71%) which makes sense given our climate. It is important to note the necessity of activities being varied and to promote flexibility to switch up activities not only during different points of the year but as we need different things within our lives. Our lives develop and change and grow, and we should periodically engage in self-reflection and

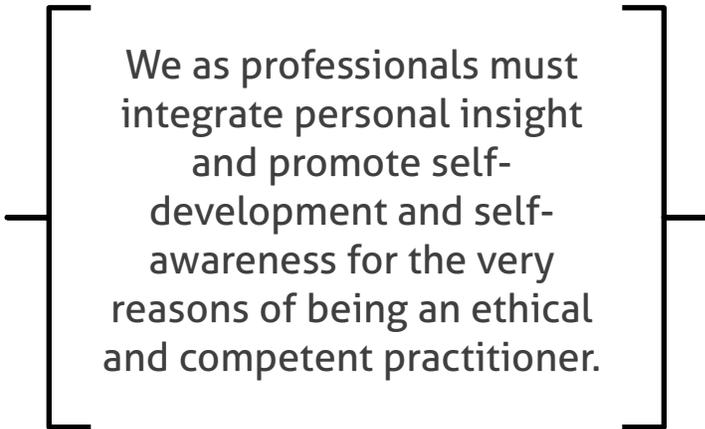
evaluate our practices, acknowledging the professional, work-related factors and the personal factors that can contribute to burnout and address common themes or recurring issues that pull us towards feeling depleted. As mentioned by members in the “other comments” section, it is imperative that self-care tools do not go awry and turn into distractions and diversions that add to disease rather than alleviating it. This can often be the case with technology, where we can “zone out.” It can also happen with food and even exercise; balance and moderation are always key. Within the comments on the survey, further education, workshops and podcasts were also seen as being helpful professional wellness and self-care tools. The act of participating in a training can have many effects, from socialization and networking, if taken with other professionals, to feeling validated in your practice and gaining confidence in your skill base. Trainings can also have an energizing effect which can stave off feelings of burnout and energy depletion.

Within the survey, it was reported that during stressful times (grief and loss, illness, financial stressors and family emergencies) that we need to promote and increase self-care strategies (Fig. 2), and that these may indeed be different than those utilized on a regular basis (67.69% of respondents agreed with this).

Effective time management is also a big piece with regards to self-care and professional wellness (Fig. 3); most practitioners showed that they utilize many of the tools to varying degrees. Setting healthy boundaries within practices is seen within the research as one of the important factors for maintaining professional wellness. It can be hard to “justify” time off, as private practitioners do not receive an income when not working. However, if one does not utilize time management, create spaces for time off and work with reasonable “body breaks,” counsellors can become unhealthy which directly impacts the quality of care offered to clients. Working beyond set hours or coming in on time off for clients can also build resentment which Shallcross (2011), Norcross (2007), Baruch (2004) and Barnett (2014) all see as pathways to create burnout.

Within the literature regarding self-care and professional wellness for counsellors and psychotherapists, including trainees, there are several predominant themes. First, Scholars (Baruch, 2004; Barnett, 2014; Baratta, 2018; Shallcross, 2011; Norcross and Guy,

2007) all agree that self-care is important because of the risk of compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic



We as professionals must integrate personal insight and promote self-development and self-awareness for the very reasons of being an ethical and competent practitioner.

stress and burnout, for those within our profession. They suggest that we must be mindful of the issues that can impact our wellness and the blind-spots or thoughts we promote such as, “I am a therapist, I should be able to handle...”, or feeling shame because of “not measuring up”, or ideas of personal inadequacy because we are tired or overwhelmed. Gilroy, Carroll and Murra (2002) stress that the key to prevention of burnout lies in the **“establishment of a professional ethos in which self-care is viewed as a moral imperative.”** Elman & Forrest (2007) state that

“The practice of Psychotherapy can be highly rewarding and gratifying. Psychotherapists regularly make a significant positive impact upon the lives of those with whom they work. Yet, this endeavour can also be emotionally demanding and challenging; if we do not attend to our own functioning and wellness, we can be at risk of developing Problems with our professional competence.”

Suggesting that the moral imperative is as much for client wellbeing as that of our own and vice versa... *“put on your own oxygen mask before attempting to assist another.”* Within the CCPA Code of Ethics (2007) F.9. Self-Development and Self-Awareness, F.10 Dealing with Personal Issues and F.11 Self-Growth Activities are particularly meaningful within this context. We as professionals must integrate personal insight and promote self development and self-awareness for the very reasons of being an ethical and competent practitioner.

Scholars Baruch (2004), Barnett (2014), Baratta (2018), Shallcross (2011), Norcross & Guy (2007) also agree that there is a distinct lack of self-care being addressed within counsellor education and it is gen-

Activities You Do To Promote Self-care and Professional Wellness

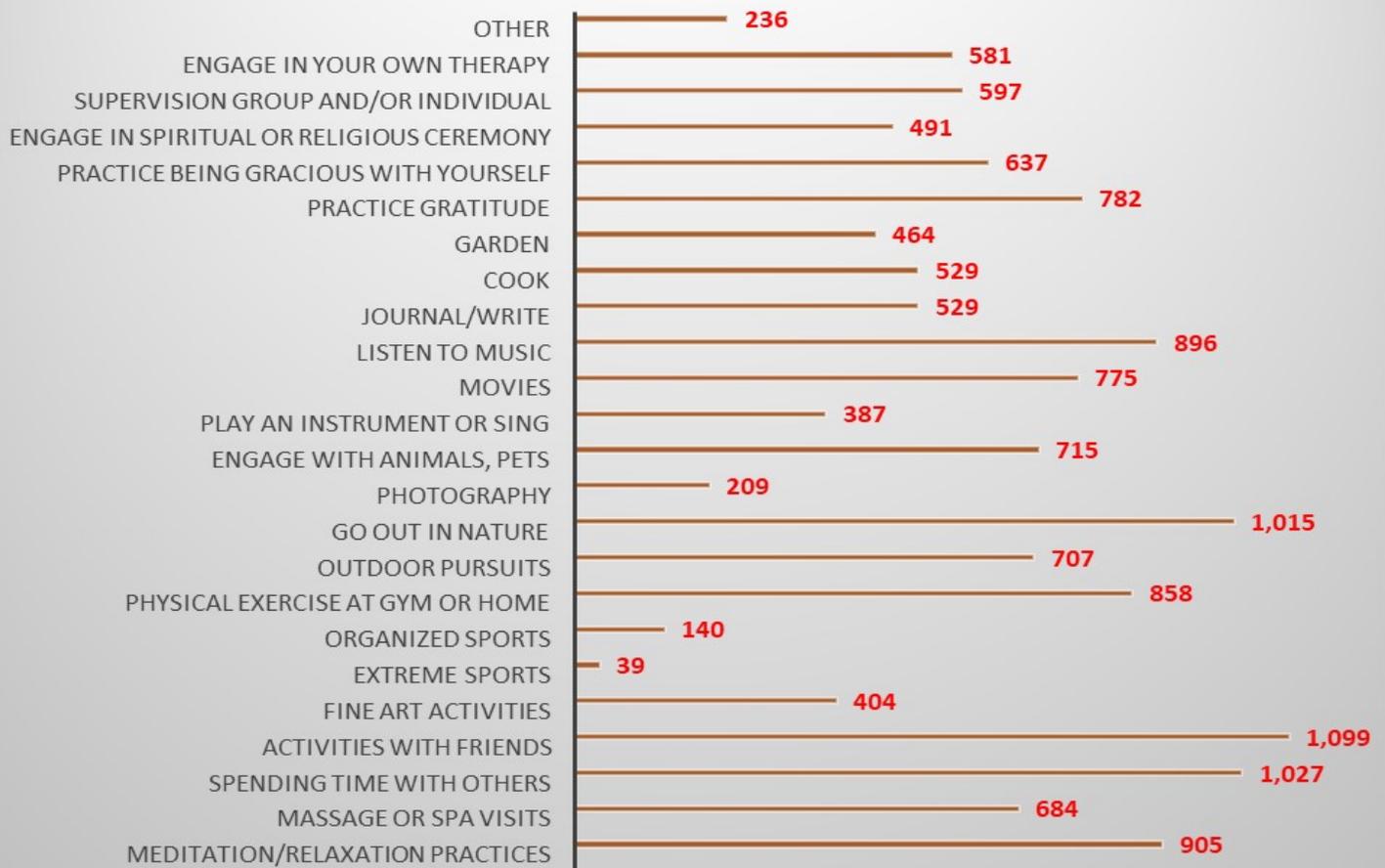


Figure 1: Activities you do to Promote Self-care and Professional Wellness

To Promote Self-Care Through Stressful Times

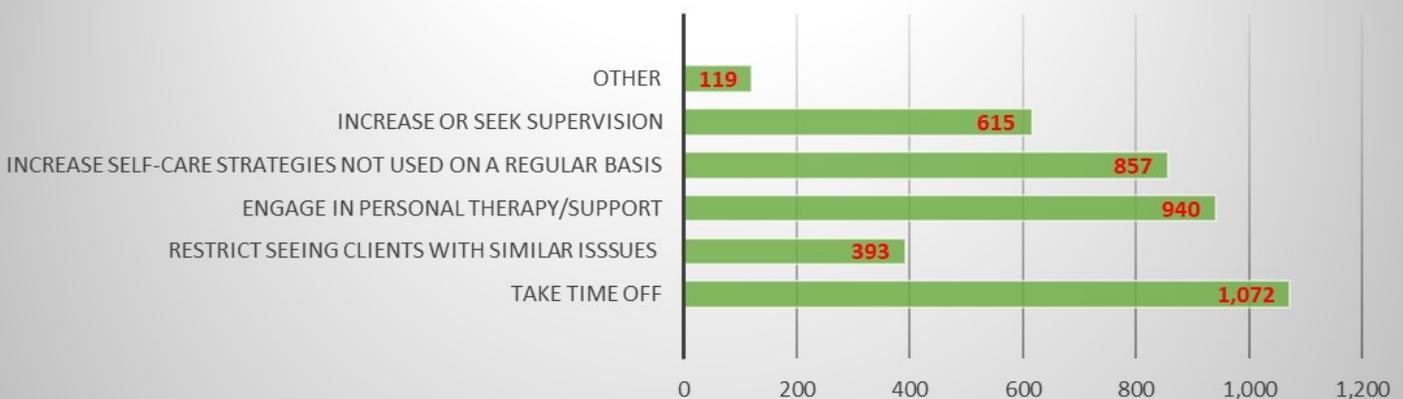


Figure 2: To Promote Self-Care Through Stressful Times

What You Do To Promote Good Time Management Practices

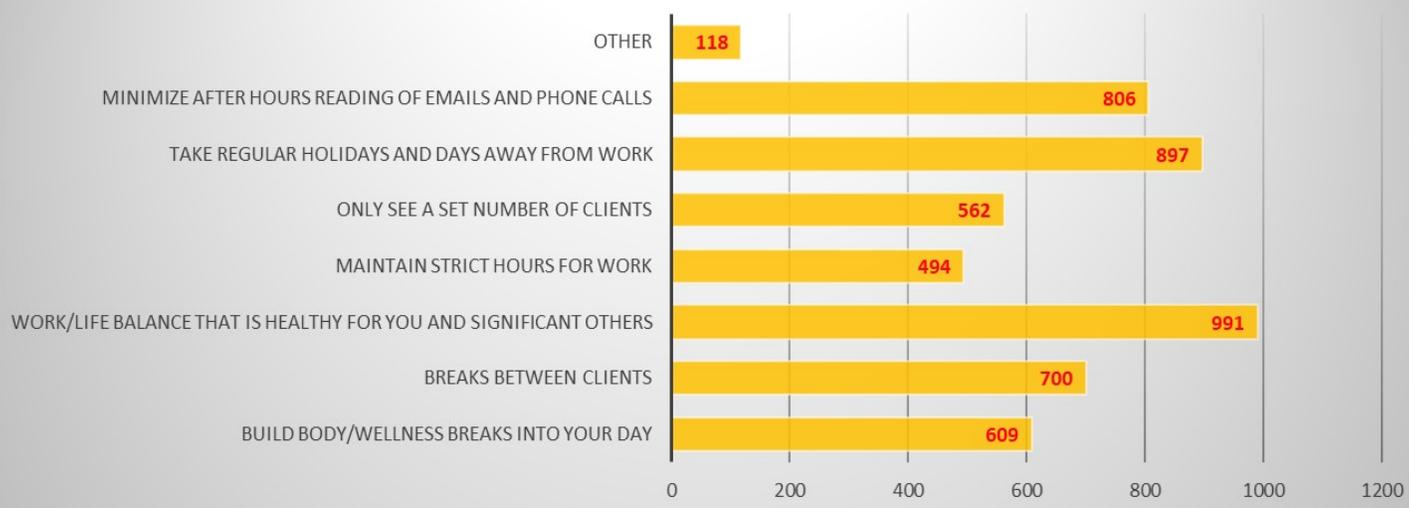


Figure 3: What You Do To Promote Good Time Management Practices

erally suggested that it is addressed during supervision and personal psychotherapy. As we see within the responses of our survey, self-care is so much more than that and reflects the person as a whole being, one that requires support in each domain; physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. Norcross & Guy (2007) have a self-care checklist that really looks at “valuing the person of the Psychotherapist”, setting healthy boundaries, focusing on the rewards, nurturing relationships including peer supports, and cautioning against working in isolation, fostering creativity and growth, restructuring cognitions and sustaining healthy escapes. In each area, there are valuable insights to help restructure the way we think about ourselves and our approaches to self-care. These scholars (Baruch, 2004; Barnett, 2014; Baratta, 2019; Shallcross, 2011; Norcross & Guy, 2007) also acknowledge that spiritual and/or religious practices including meditation and yoga are also invaluable.

As we move forward with more provinces becoming regulated, self-care and professional wellness may take on another aspect. Many regulatory Colleges have professional standards and regulations which require practitioners to engage in wellness strategies because they do see that it is imperative for professional competence. For example, the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario’s (CRPO) competency profile contains the following provision: “Maintain self-care and level of health necessary for responsible therapy”. The College of Counselling Therapists of New Brunswick (CCTNB) and the Nova

Scotia College of Counselling Therapists (NSCCT) have adopted CCPA’s Standards of Practice. In those standards, A1 General Responsibility, the following statement is made: “Counsellors maintain high standards of professional competence by attending to their **personal well-being**, by participating in continuing professional education, and by supporting the development and delivery of continuing education within the counselling profession.” Each Regulatory College has a requirement for ongoing professional development. CRPO is interesting in that every two years, it requires applicants to complete a self-assessment exercise.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

CRPO’s self-assessment tool is meant to capture a snapshot of your current knowledge, skill and judgement, and consists of two sections:

The *General Professional Obligations Inventory* will help you assess your own knowledge, skill and judgement in select competency areas related to professional regulation. It incorporates CRPO’s [Professional Practice Standards for Registered Psychotherapists](#) and addresses changes in your practice environment and advances in technology.

The *Reflection Section* consists of a series of exercises designed to help with contemplation of the more interpersonal aspects of your practice, such as your professional relationships, support systems, and safe and effective use of self (SEUS).

CCTNB and NSCCT both allow continuing education credits to be accepted from CCPA. CCPA accepts courses which concentrate on health and well-being, so long as they meet the requirements. For more information on eligible activities, please refer to the [Professional Development Activities Chart](#) on the CCPA website. Within the survey, 93.36% of respondents stated that they did not keep track of self-care and/or professional wellness hours. For those not yet regulated, it is a good time to start reflecting upon self-care strategies and beginning to keep track.

Susceptibility to compassion fatigue and burnout are a given in therapeutic work, rather than an indication of personal inadequacy. If we are mindful of this and do appropriate check-ins, we can respond effectively to stressors and their impact, and maintain personal and professional wellness. Remember to cultivate strategies which encompass the whole person including the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual, and to cultivate a community of support rather than working in isolation. Building a supportive community is especially important for those who work in toxic environments.

When thinking of self-care strategies, we often think of Work/Life balance, which is a concept many of us struggle with due to financial pressures, or the way our work placements are set up. Buckingham & Goodall (2019) have an interesting idea for rethinking work/life balance. They suggest rather than looking at work/life balance, we need to instead focus on maximizing what you love...

“Think of your life’s many different activities as threads. Some are black, some are grey and some are white. But some of these activities appear to be made of a different substance. These activities contain all the tell-tale signs of love: before you do them, you find yourself looking forward to them; while you are doing them, time speeds up and you find yourself in flow; and after you have done them, you feel invigorated. These are your red threads, and research by the Mayo Clinic suggests that doctors who weave the fabric of their life with at least 20% red threads are significantly less likely to experience burnout.”

The suggestion is to spend a week with a pencil and pad, with two columns marked “loved it” and “loathed it”. Note down during that week times when you felt “signs of love” and write down what you were doing when you found the opposite (procrastination, time dragging on, feeling bored or disengaged) in the

“loathed it” column. This may allow for some reflection on what aspects of work lifts us up and which we feel encumbered by. For those who can control how many clients are seen or for which companies, or types of presenting issue, it may allow for work to be refocused and rebalanced, and become another self-reflection tool to prevent burnout. For those who work in structured environments where they have little to no control over caseload and time management during their workday, it may be a way to refocus and frame the work that is being done.

Thank you so much for responding to the survey and for all the comments and suggestions as to how we can move forward in wellness. With many thanks to Barbara MacCallum, Chief Executive Officer of CCPA, for researching and providing information on regulatory bodies.

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Spiritual self-care

- *Go to church, mosque, temple, sweat lodge
- *yoga *practice mindfulness
- *engage in reflective practices, meditation

Professional self-care

- *engage in regular supervision , a mentorship program, a consultation process with a more experienced colleague
- *read professional journals and books
- *attend conferences, workshops, webinars
- *set healthy boundaries with colleagues, clients, staff
- *arrive to and leave work on time
- *take lunch breaks *take body breaks
- *take holidays * utilize sick time

Psychological self-care

- *write a journal *create art work
- *engage in a hobby
- *turn off work phone/ emails outside of regular work hours
- *supervision, debriefing
- *make time for friends and family
- *engage in self reflection
- *go out in nature *play *dance *laugh

Relationship self-care

- *prioritize significant relationships with children, partners, family
- *make time to attend the special events of your children, family and friends
- *eat regular meals with loved ones and significant others
- *go to the movies, spend time doing enjoyable activities together

Emotional self-care

- *engage in supportive, uplifting relationships
- *join a social group, develop supportive networks
- *connect with friends
- *feel safe expressing freely
- *spend time with animals/pets
- *practice gratitude

Physical self-care

- *develop a regular sleep routine
- *exercise regularly, take the dog for a walk
- *nurture yourself
- *eat healthy, regular meals
- *take steps to maintain a healthy body
- *relaxation
- *manage stress

Artwork By Nicola Sherwin-Roller 2016



WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

At the Crossroads of Music, Spirituality and Counselling: An Intimate Encounter with Sandie Morency

BY VICKI-ANNE RODRIGUE, MEd, CCC

*This new editorial in COGNICA sheds light on what CCPA members are doing outside their area of practice and expertise. It showcases members' personal and professional accomplishments as well as how their involvement in various initiatives are improving peoples' lives and building a better tomorrow, today! This issue's number showcases **Sandie Morency**, EAP Crisis Counsellor by day and musical extraordinaire by night! Here is her story and how her desire to be obedient led to her reaping in abundance!*

The word "identity" can yield various responses. In my first year of my graduate program in counselling, I was also seeing a therapist as I was questioning a relationship and wanted a neutral and objective view on the matter. I recall my therapist asking me during our very first sessions: "Vicki-Anne, who are you?" Her question initially troubled me because I instantly thought that she could have easily answered her own question by looking at the intake sheet. In hindsight, I think my therapist was trying to get me to think about the aspects of myself that I valued most (and not necessarily get me to itemize an exhaustive list of identity *types* or *traits*). In so doing, we would be able to identify what was most meaningful to me and determine if this relationship was actually fulfilling my needs and corresponding closely to my values, or if it was completely opposite to what I held most dear. Surprisingly enough, while my identity as a Catholic had always been at the heart of who I was, it was not the first thing that came to

mind. Rather, the story of Moses in the book of Exodus is what instantaneously popped into my mind, specifically the *burning bush* incident where God appears to Moses and identifies Himself as "I AM." Moreover, what came out of my mouth was probably very weird for both my therapists and me in that precise moment. I simply stated: "I am...ME." I had no idea at the time that God was ever so gently *pursuing me* (and my therapist probably thought that I was strange since her intervention backfired and ended at an impasse. Yup. Do not pass Go. Do not collect \$200!).

Reflecting on this same incident several years after the fact has made me realize that the LORD's gentleness is perhaps the most beautiful part of His desire in relating to us, in my humble opinion. A friend once told me that God is a *gentleman*, never forcing a relationship but rather allowing us to be completely free to follow Him or not.



Fast forward several years later and as I continued to attend weekly mass in my parish, I quickly came to realize that I was hungry for more, yearning for more, questioning whether or not there was more to life than this. Despite my propensity in questioning everything and anything about God and how to get closer to Him, my parish and its leaders did not have the tools, the knowledge, nor the expertise (or perhaps personal lived experience?) in teaching me about entering into a relationship with Him. My hunger and my thirst had become unquenchable.

But God being the good Father that He is, did not let this deter Him. I was fortunate enough to secure employment as a crisis counsellor at the end of my second year of my graduate program and had the privilege of meeting a woman who would, by the grace of God, change my life forever. This woman's name is Sandie Morency. Sandie approached me one day and invited me to lunch and opened up readily about Jesus and how He had completely changed her life. She spoke about Jesus with passion, joy, and love. Her eyes sparkled and her heart soared (or at least it surely seemed like that)! She spoke about Jesus as if they were intimately connected and instantaneously I

thought: "I want that! I want what she has!" And so began what I can only describe as a beautiful friendship (with Sandie and I, but also with God and I)!

As Sandie and I continued to meet regularly for lunch and shared a time of prayer or Bible study, my faith grew exceptionally. Sandie explained to me *how* to develop a relationship with God and I slowly started transitioning out of religion (Catholicism) and into relationship (Child of God). My *identity* therefore changed dramatically, so much so that even calling myself a *Christian* or a *Born Again Christian* was not enough. Therefore, I went from being a devout Catholic to a *Daughter of God*, madly, deeply in love with her *Father*. Even my dialogue, prayers, and outward appearance changed as a result. I came to fully realize that my *identity*, the one that truly mattered (and still matters), was that of *Child of God*. Everything else was meaningless and never brought the same sense of fullness, fulfillment, and joy as that of knowing that the Creator of the Universe wove me into existence and set me apart, just as He has for all of His children. The desire to serve Him through others brings an unspeakable joy and the desire to be obedient when He asks me to do something is ingrained deep within.

Sometimes the request can be so subtle that I inadvertently miss it; but sometimes it is so obvious that it both scares and excites me all at once. Nevertheless, knowing that He has my back makes it so worthwhile because I know that regardless of the immediate outcome, victory is His. Even in the midst of my trials and tribulations, I can confidently say that God—my God—is greater than any circumstance I might face.

The best example of God asking something of someone and how it has yielded perfect fruit can be illustrated in Sandie's own journey. Her response and ultimately obedience to God is so remarkably inspiring that not sharing it with our beautiful membership would practically be a crime! Sandie's journey and the apparent "impossible dream" that it represented simply is a testimony on how faith can really "move mountains." I hope you will enjoy her story and be inspired by it, as I have been.

Sandie Morency, a University of Ottawa alumna and Canadian Certified Counsellor with CCPA, is a dedicated Crisis Counsellor with an Employee Assistance Program. Empathy is second nature to her and when you meet Sandie for the first time, you realize you have encountered more than just a person: you have found a friend, a confidant, a teacher, a counsellor, a mother, and of course, a gifted singer, and songwriter. Sandie recently recorded an album of French gospel music. This desire was born several years after someone had the courage to share an album of gospel music with her in her teenage years. This defining moment for Sandie made it so that she embarked on her journey towards discovering her faith and in doing so developed a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus. Sandie's album has influenced many people around her. The sheer power of her voice and the depth of her lyrics have blessed many. Not only has her CD impacted so many, it has been recognized by the Gospel Music Association (GMA) and has won the GMA/Covenant award for the Best Francophone single of the year! I recently met up with Sandie to ask more about her life and her creative process, including her aspirations for her counselling and musical career.

Vicki-Anne Rodrigue (VAR): Tell us a bit about yourself (where you grew up, where you studied, what you were passionate about, how you were as a child, etc.)?

Sandie Morency (SM): Sure. I was born and raised in Montreal, QC and was extremely shy as a kid! Eventu-

ally, I went to high school where I found lots of opportunities to get out of my shell, and I started to get involved in school play dramas, singing groups and dancing troupes. Later, I moved to the National Capital Region (Ottawa) to complete my master's degree in counselling; I had planned to move back [to Montreal] after that, but I grew attached to the community and have stayed ever since!

VAR: What first got you interested in mental health/counselling?

SM: I would say that what got me started in considering pursuing counselling as a career were my own challenges with mental health as a teenager. Even though I was involved in many fun activities, I still struggled a lot at the end of the day emotionally. I wished I had had someone professional to speak to back then. In a sense, being a counsellor today is a way for me to be that person for someone else who really needs an ear and professional help.

VAR: Have you been a Christian all your life? When did you encounter Jesus for the first time?

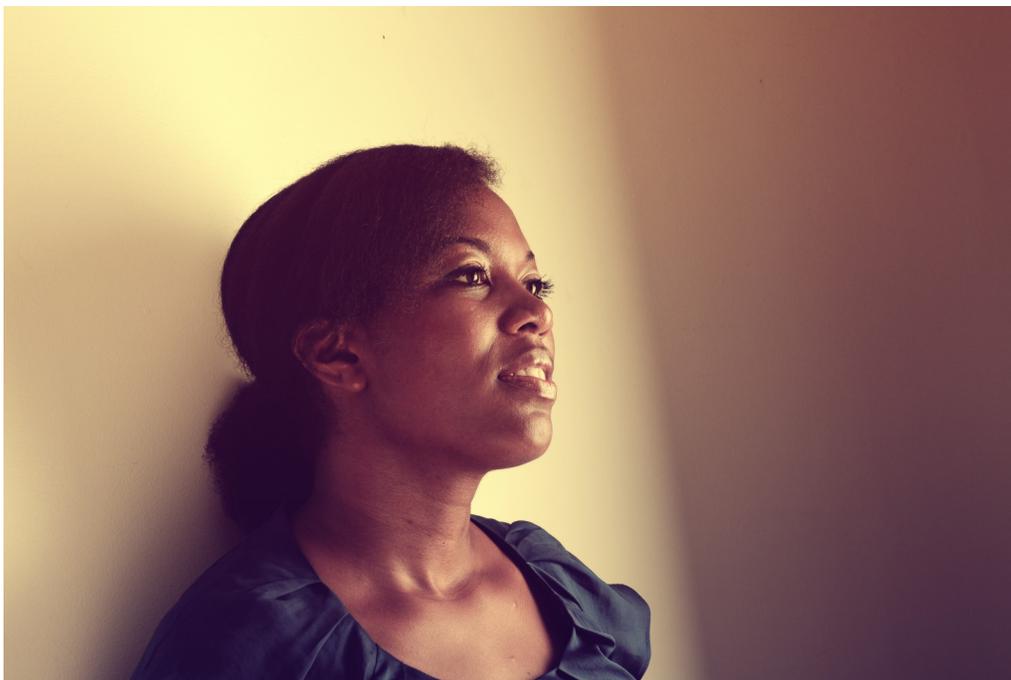
SM: I can now say that I haven't always been a Christian, but would have probably told you otherwise in my early years. Back then, I was doing a lot of the motions that come with Christianity: going to church for example, and saying certain prayers, but none of it felt personal. It didn't impact my day-to-day life, and I had a lot of questions about the belief system itself that were often left unanswered or received as offensive when I would ask. Eventually, I met someone who asked me what my thoughts were about God, but unfortunately for her, she had caught me in quite a challenging season of my life. I had just lost a family member to cancer, and I was right in the anger phase of my grief! On top of that, I was 17 years old—at the peak of my teenage years. So my answer [to her] was quite curt (not to mention, really mean), but still represented the honest way I felt at that moment. That woman did not seem offended by my attacks and rants about God and actually addressed the concerns I had. She then asked me if I had more questions for her. I took advantage to ask all of the questions I'd been wondering for a long time. I believe she spent at least a few hours with me that day just answering questions! I have to admit that that gesture alone really touched me. I could feel that she really cared. I was also given a gospel CD after that conversation; it sat on the shelf in my house for a few weeks because I had forgotten about it. One day, I remembered and started listening to it. There was something about the gospel harmonies and the musical arrangements that

I do find that there are a lot of similarities between creating music and counselling;

you have the opportunity to be a part of someone's journey toward healing, one more directly, and the other to people you never would have reached otherwise.



transpired so much life and communicated a lot of hope. At some point, I decided to pay attention to the lyrics themselves, and something really clicked. It was talking about freedom, joy, and peace available through a personal connection with Jesus. I would say I became a Christian after listening to that album, for sure. The fact that music can have such an impact on someone's life is still shocking to me. It was after listening to that gospel album that I actually chose to believe and began my journey of faith. And I've never looked back.



VAR: How has it been for you to grow in your faith? What have you learned along the way?

SM: I feel like I'm still learning and it's been over 15 years! I would say that some of the most important lessons I've learned were about identity, self-worth, forgiveness, letting go of things we have no control over, keeping the faith in the midst of suffering, humility, loving people, serving the poor and those in need... I could probably write a chapter about each one of these themes individually! But I did find a lot of valuable insights in the Bible that have significantly shaped my view of self, of people, and of the world over the years.

VAR: Why do you believe that spirituality and/or faith is so important? How can spirituality and/or faith add to the counselling profession?

SM: Well, it [spirituality/faith] can definitely be a driving force in someone's life. Many CBT studies have shown how someone's belief systems can be the determining factor of how severely they will be impacted by an event. It can be true for the big events, but also the "smaller" day-to-day challenges of life as well. Having a belief system that embrace our will-power but also acknowledges where our limitations begin can really help with not carrying the weight of

the world on our shoulders. You can release control and worry to where it belongs. I find it helpful for clients, but also for me as a Counsellor. Another big piece that spirituality/faith brings to the table for me is perspective. Starting the day with being intentional in remembering the big picture, the overall purpose

and connecting spiritually can really help with how the daily, more tedious or repetitive tasks of life get experienced. It's true as a working professional, and probably even more so as a mother of 3 young children!

VAR: I've had the opportunity to use music as part of the therapeutic process—either my own or with a client. Have you thought about incorporating music in your counselling process? If so, what might that look like?

VAR: When did you get the idea of recording a French gospel music album?

SM: I have no doubt that music can have an intrinsic healing nature in and of itself. So the idea of incorporating music and counselling together to help someone in their healing journey is definitely an approach that is getting more and more attention overall. And although music therapy is not something I have had the opportunity to personally do yet, I find it fascinating that you can help someone use their creativity, or have them identify a creative art that resonates with them and dig to get to the meaning and key emotion behind it. And all of this without any performance pressure or having to be exceptionally talented. It can just tap into someone's emotions in a way that other tools might not, which is quite interesting.

VAR: When did you get the idea of recording a French gospel music album?

SM: I have been so thankful for how gospel music has been therapeutic in my own life, but being franco-phone and growing up in the province of Quebec, I desired to hear more of that in French as well. So, believe it or not, this idea came out of a complaint! I

have to admit that some of the bigger things that I have accomplished in life came from complaints, or at least, needs that were lacking in which I decided to contribute. “Do unto others as you would have done unto you” is a quote I truly believe in.

VAR: How did you go about with your creative writing process?

SM: My creative process was quite long actually! I found myself writing a song, feeling quite satisfied with it, and then reading it again two weeks later with a fresh perspective only to find that it could be worded differently. Sometimes, I would do this several times! One song in particular, I was still changing the lyrics as I was recording it in the studio. I definitely had to learn the art of letting go, and being satisfied with a song being the best I could write with the knowledge and experience I had at that moment. I might experience something else the following day, and it would have to be a story for a different journey. As for the instrumental part, it was really fun getting to work alongside talented musicians and co-creating musical arrangements together. It was not as simple to come up with as I had expected and definitely involved more work than I thought, but the process itself was quite enjoyable and I would have no problem doing it again.

VAR: Who are some of your greatest musical inspirations?

SM: In the gospel music world, I would have to say that Kirk Franklin’s music definitely had a significant influence on me. He really has a way of speaking to people’s lives and making it personal to them: connecting with challenges and pain they might be going through, and conveying hope through it all. He takes the meaning of the word gospel (which means: good news), to its full extent, for sure. I have also enjoyed Israel Houghton’s music, and especially how eclectic he is and how successfully he’s brought different music genres and styles in worship and gospel music. I think I definitely went in these directions with my own music as well, trying to convey hope with music and presented in different musical styles. I did not want to feel limited in my expressions; one song has more of a pop style to it, another is more soulful, another acoustic... Hopefully it helps people connect with a particular song on this album, which has been the feedback I’ve gotten so far.

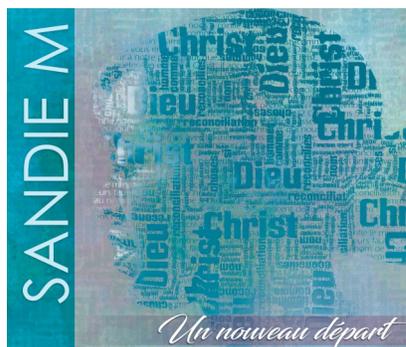
VAR: What was it like for you to win the GMA/Covenant Award?

SM: It was quite unexpected! The song *À la croix* (At the Cross) on the album is one in which I have worked

with talented musicians who really invested their heart into the song—I am glad that their passion came through! The message of this song is also deeply meaningful to me. I definitely left the Covenant Awards inspired, especially by the other artists I had met, and curious as to what that meant for the future of my musical journey.

VAR: What is your hope for this CD and for your singing/song writing career?

SM: I have to say, starting this project really made me fall in love with the process of creating music, and inspired me to write even more songs! I’m hoping that my music can have the impact that gospel music had on me, and maybe even help someone begin their own journey of faith and discover the good news—who knows. I do find that there are a lot of similarities between creating music and counselling; you have the opportunity to be a part of someone’s journey toward healing, one more directly, and the other to people you never would have reached otherwise. Overall, I was just really grateful for the community that came together on this album project: whether it were the musicians, producers, singers, my local church, friends and family. The outpouring of love and support truly moved me. I am not sure how my music journey will end, but I am surely grateful for how it began.



To download a free copy of Sandie’s album, *Un nouveau départ*, click on the CD or write to vam-rodrique@gmail.com Happy listening!

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