

The Alberta Counsellor

February 2014

Editorial



As I gathered information for this issue of *The Alberta Counsellor*, I was amazed at the vast amount of professional development being offered around our province. We are truly lucky to have the opportunity to be involved at such a high level. Varied topics, led with incredible expertise and provided in numerous formats with endless possibilities – wow!

Moving into the new year, I've been thinking about what might be a good focus for me and the students I work with. In the spirit of the interesting and useful PD discussed in this issue (including our successful annual conference), I will summarize information I gleaned from a PD session in Edmonton:

"Building Resiliency Skills to Improve Academic Engagement and Performance," presented by Melissa Schlenger from ScholarCentric.

During this session, we first discussed what we already know about students who are academically at risk (and, therefore, at risk in other ways). Often, such students have no single risk factor. They may come from a low-income, minority or single-parent family; have limited English, or learning or emotional difficulties; move frequently; or not fit in with their peers. They often have to take on adult roles and, consequently, struggle academically and fall behind, becoming disengaged from school (poor attendance, lack of involvement in extracurricular activities, behaviour problems in class, poor relationships with adults or peers).

However, not all students with these risk factors will struggle. What is it about those students who *do* succeed in school? Melissa believes that they have stronger resiliency skills. Resilient people are able to create adaptive outcomes in the face of adversity.

Six Critical Resiliency Skills

- Goal setting (specifically as it relates to education)
- Academic confidence
- Strong connections with others
- Stress management
- Balanced sense of well-being
- Intrinsic motivation

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We spent the rest of the session discussing activities that educators can use in schools and classrooms to build on these resiliency skills. The following are some examples:

- Ask students to write a letter to themselves about what they want to get out of this school year or this class.
- Share stories about obstacles you have overcome, and ask students to share theirs.
- Have students write down something that stresses them out, ball up the piece of paper and throw it in the middle of the floor. Then, pick up a piece of paper, read its contents aloud and brainstorm how to handle the situation.

Melissa's PowerPoint presentation and activities can be found at www.scholarcentric.com/events/Resiliency%20Session%20CBI%204.29.13.pdf, or go to www.scholarcentric.com and click on Presentations (under News & Events). The ideas are numerous and cross-curricular. I hope you can find some strategies that help you build on resiliency this year.

I wish you all the best for 2014!

Shelley Boan

Your annual no-cost specialist council membership will no longer expire in August. Instead, it will continue year after year until you change it. To register or change your council membership, log in at www.teachers.ab.ca with your username and password.

Specialist councils are your source for conferences, networking, publications, resources, workshops, online communities and professional development.

President's Message



As the days start getting longer, I welcome you to 2014 and the second semester. Plans for September 2014 registration, postsecondary planning, graduation, transitions and final IPPs have been in the works for a while.

Meanwhile, you have been meeting with students and their families, changing timetables, visiting with classes, working with your administration, negotiating referrals and staying current with PD – all the while creating or enacting a collaborative plan within your community. We all know how much work goes on behind the scenes in a school, and counsellors are amazing! On behalf of students and their families, I say thank you.

The Canadian Mental Health Association's 63rd annual Mental Health Week is May 5–11. We are asking counsellors across the province to take action. How?

First, we would like to post students' reflective work on our website. The topic is de-stigmatizing mental illness. Through creative narrative responses (art, media and literary responses of any format), your students will answer one or more of the following questions:

- What does mental health mean to you?
- How do we erase the stigma around mental illness?
- What can we do to create positive mental health in schools?
- How do counsellors support the mental health and well-being of your school community?

Second, we would like counsellors to submit a short action plan or story about their school's plans for Mental Health Week.

Send submissions to me at maryfrances.fitzgerald@gmail.com. Please include a signed

permission form with student work. We will post your submissions on our website, and from your responses we will build a collective submission to share with the minister of education. Please check out examples from the annual conference posted on our website (www.guidancecouncil.ca).

Depending on your school and community, the following theme days may be important to your program:

February	Black History Month
	Heart Health Month
February 2-8	Eating Disorder Awareness Week
February 17	Family Day
February 20	World Day of Social Justice (recognized by the UN)
February 26	Pink Shirt Day (antibullying)
March 1	Self-Injury Awareness Day
March 8	International Women's Day
March 21	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
April 6-12	National Volunteer Week
	National Victims of Crime Awareness Week
April 7	World Health Day
April 22	International Earth Day
May 5-11	Canadian Mental Health Week
May 17	International Day Against Homophobia
May 20-23	Aboriginal Awareness Week
May 21	World Day for Cultural Diversity (recognized by the UN)
May 31	World No Tobacco Day
June 7	Gay Pride Day
June 21	National Aboriginal Day
June 27	National Multiculturalism Day

In February, we will send out a survey asking about your PD needs in counselling. Your answers will help us organize our work for the year. Your voice is important to us.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact any of the Guidance Council executive members. We are all seasoned counsellors and are willing to respond to your needs.

Counsellors, stay resilient, stay strong, and reach out to your mentors.

Mary Frances Fitzgerald

Past President's Message



Thank you to everyone who came out to our annual conference in November. Some great PD, networking and self-care happened over that weekend!

Here, I will provide an overview of "The Future of School Counselling," a session I presented at the conference. In this second annual session, I reviewed the state of school counselling, provided an update on Guidance Council action items and allowed participants to provide feedback on the council's strategic direction.

Last year, participants identified three areas the council's energy should be directed toward:

- Updating our provincial resource *Building a Comprehensive School Counselling and Guidance Program*
- Creating guidelines for informed consent and recordkeeping for Alberta counsellors
- Advocating for Alberta Education to correct a significant error related to school counselling in the *Guide to Education*

As past president, I am pleased to report significant action in all three areas:

- The executive applied for a strategic planning grant and a special project grant from the ATA to hold a retreat for the executive and members at large. The outcome of this retreat was a framework for updating *Building a Comprehensive School Counselling and Guidance Program*. We have applied for several other large grants but, to date, have been unsuccessful.
- We have completed a draft document providing suggestions for informed consent and recordkeeping for school counsellors. The main writers are Dawn McBride (University of Lethbridge), Maggie Shane (ATA), Marv Hackman (ATA) and me. These guidelines will be completed after moving through a draft approval process.

- The executive wrote an advocacy letter to Alberta Education, highlighting the errors in the *Guide to Education* and making suggestions for ensuring that the section on school counselling reflects the breadth of supports school counsellors provide. A correction was made in the 2013 guide based on our suggestions.

Information gathered from other jurisdictions can help us improve school counselling in our own province. I undertook a comprehensive environmental scan of school counselling in every province and territory in Canada. This is a summary of what I learned:

- School counsellors in BC have successfully advocated for school counselling by producing a pamphlet for parents that discusses the benefits of having a trained and experienced counsellor in a school. Parents have, in turn, become effective advocates with schools, divisions and government regarding the importance of school counselling time. Communication and advocacy with parents is an area that could be improved on in Alberta.
- In Saskatchewan, school counsellors have had difficulty convincing the government to create a school counselling resource for provincial teachers working as counsellors (similar to our situation here in Alberta). A small group of counsellors got together and created a resource, which has been largely ignored by the government and school divisions. This is an important caveat as we update our own resource.
- The Manitoba School Counsellors' Association has produced a comprehensive document titled *Ethical Decision Making: A Resource Manual for School Counsellors*, which provides excellent support to counsellors.
- In Ontario, school counsellors are primarily used as career counsellors, and some well-developed resources on career counselling are available. While we do not want Alberta to adopt a similar career-focused approach, these resources would be useful for Alberta school counsellors.
- The Ottawa-based Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association has a School Counsellors Chapter that promotes school counselling across Canada. It has introduced a national School Counselling Award and is working to make the first week in February National School Counselling Week.
- New Brunswick maintains a guidance certification program, which allows teachers to apply to the government with their training, coursework and experience in order to become certified in school counselling.
- PEI is such a small province, but its Department of Education has managed to produce a school counselling handbook (*School Counselling Services: Standards and Guidelines*) and keep it up to date.
- Nova Scotia has a ratio guideline set by the government of 1.0 FTE counsellor per 500 students. The Nova Scotia School Counsellors Association has also recently developed a document to support case notes and record storage, with government support.
- In Newfoundland and Labrador, the government and the school counselling association have worked on a school counselling resource that will be approved shortly. A significant issue in that province is how the mandate of completing assessment of students takes up school counselling time.
- In Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and Yukon, there has been an increase in trained guidance counsellors working in schools as a result of requiring professionals with graduate work in counselling.
- Unfortunately, I was not able to get any information on school counselling in Quebec. The province is divided into English- and French-speaking education systems. I continue to wait for both organizations to contact me.

As you can see, important lessons can be learned from our school counselling colleagues across Canada. Over the next year, the Guidance Council executive will be investigating further to determine how we might learn from their challenges and use their successes to improve school counselling here in Alberta.

If you have comments on the environmental scan or other items, please e-mail me at tjnholmes@gmail.com.

Thomas Holmes

Conference 2013 Highlights

Conference Director's Report

Conference 2013: "Voices of Counselling Unite: Framing the Future" was held November 14-16 at the Banff Park Lodge. The organizing committee wanted to provide a program that would give delegates the tools they need to build their own framework for the future – be it for their classrooms, individual therapy sessions or their personal tool kits.

The many and varied sessions presented by 27 dedicated and knowledgeable speakers were

well attended, and the feedback was tremendous. Many delegates commented on the variety of topics, the expertise of the speakers, the short and long session options, and the opportunity to network. There were many opportunities to work together and share ideas. For example, delegates had the chance to be part of a plan for the future of counselling in Alberta and to share best practices in recordkeeping. They were also introduced to a model for working with traumatized children and teens in a school setting, and were reminded that maintaining personal balance is so important in our work.

Our awards ceremony and president's reception were held on Thursday evening, which allowed for a leisurely lunch on Friday, including entertainment. Laughter is an integral part of finding balance, and the improv troupe Rapid Fire Theatre did a superb job of reminding



us that we need to look after ourselves and not take our roles too seriously all the time.

Our program booklet was user-friendly and incorporated student artwork (with explanatory narratives) that demonstrated how students' lives are affected by working with a counsellor. This validation of the work counsellors do must continue to be collected and shared. We can find it through our many and varied interactions with our colleagues, students, parents and administrators.

The committee also introduced more wellness topics, with a focus on nutrition and diet and their impact on our students, ourselves and our work. The early-morning yoga session each day was well attended, and it could occupy a space at the end of the day, as well. The outdoor wellness activities helped delegates feel physically refreshed and allowed them to network with others.

Putting together a conference of this calibre would not have been possible without an excellent conference committee. I thank all the Conference 2013 committee members for their devotion, their expertise, and the time and support they lent to this conference from the day they agreed to take part. A special thanks to

"Chuk" (Mary Ann Wasylynychuk), who helped so much more than I could describe in her role as hotel liaison. Other members of the conference committee are Noreen Baker, Koreen Bennett, Charlotte Bragg, Nancy Davis, Mary Frances Fitzgerald, Chris Gifford, Keith Gilroyed, Thomas Holmes, MJ Home, Kristy McConnell, Richard McAdie, Natashya Shewchuk and Ron Ward.

Warmest regards and best wishes to Jennifer McIntee-Leinweber and her Conference 2014 committee.

*Sarah Gilroyed
Conference 2013 Director*



Keith Gilroyed, Mary Ann "Chuk" Wasylynychuk and Chris Kohlman at the registration table



Conference 2013 committee



Improv troupe Rapid Fire Theatre



A Counsellor Is a Gateway into Fulfillment

The student artwork on the back cover, along with the following explanatory narrative, was featured in the Conference 2013 program booklet.

In this image I have used different visual elements to emphasize my message, although each individual can have a different interpretation for this image. So I am here to inform you about my perspective.

I have used a set of colours that complement each other, in order to prove my message that a counsellor is a gateway into fulfillment. I have emphasized the colour red because it symbolizes compassion and love, since I believe a counsellor is very passionate to help individuals in need. I have complemented the colour red with green because it could symbolize renewal, since the job of a counsellor is to help enlighten individuals in need and to let them create a mindset that may lead them into fulfillment. Another colour, blue, is dominant in this image. I have used this colour because it is associated with freedom, strength and new beginnings. It is also emblematic of optimism and better opportunities. And, finally, the colour yellow has been used as a complement for blue because it symbolizes joy and hope.

Along with the vibrant colours, images of a city and a woman overlooking the scenery have been used. The silhouette of the woman could be paralleled with the responsibilities of a counsellor, because I believe counsellors are one of the envoys that would allow individuals to become better people. The cityscape starts from a very dark hue and slowly degrades into lighter colours. I used the changing gradient not only to show some depth and atmospheric dissipation but also to show that the city is just the beginning of the journey. The help given by the counsellor will inspire individuals to continue moving on with their lives because their journey will never stop. Many opportunities will be provided, and the worldly perspective in life will keep on improving through time and experience.

*Jose Andes Macasinag
Student, Centre High Campus, Edmonton*

Session Review: Self-Injury

As a school counsellor, I am accustomed to young people sharing that they engage in self-injury (SI) behaviour. However, after assessing for self-injury, I often ask myself, *What happens now?* — especially when students are not able to attend counselling outside the school. After attending Dawn McBride's session on self-injury at the annual conference, I feel as though I can meaningfully assist my students who are dealing with SI.

Dawn suggested that before working on reducing SI behaviour, clients need to feel understood. However, understanding why young people might choose to hurt themselves can be difficult, especially for parents. She recommended that counsellors begin by focusing on empathy bridgework. This involves meeting with parents and helping them understand SI by explicitly relating the coping behaviours that the parents themselves might use to SI as their child's way of coping.

Though there has been much controversy about SI and its connection to suicidal ideation, Dawn offered concrete guidelines for when further assessments should be undertaken. Her Bill of Rights document, which she created for her clients, reminds us that clients who self-injure do have rights, regardless of the discomfort this may cause other people. She spoke of counsellors needing to educate others on the Bill of Rights and to continue challenging the many misperceptions about SI that exist in the school and health systems.

Her session was full of treatment ideas and suggestions — too many to include in this brief overview. It has been two months since the conference, and I continue to refer to my notes from the session often. I am especially cognizant of the fact that, though I may wish to jump straight to harm reduction, I must remember that the goal of counselling is not to stop the SI behaviour but, rather, to help my students feel more in control of their feelings and actions, to always be curious, and to ensure that my focus is on connecting with my students and reducing feelings of shame and stigma.

*Jennifer McIntee-Leinweber
Counsellor, Light of Christ School, Calgary*

2013 Murray Jampolsky Award Winner: Kathie Coutts

The recipient of the 39th Murray Jampolsky Award, which recognizes an outstanding practising school counsellor, is Kathie Coutts, counsellor at Western Canada High School, in Calgary. Kathie is known for the calm and consistent manner in which she empowers students and their families. Her many accomplishments include initiating and maintaining the student mentoring program at Central Memorial High School, in Calgary; organizing postsecondary fairs; and serving as chair for the Rotary Interact student club at her school since the club's inception. At her school, she currently manages the special needs program, chairs the academic awards committee and is the Cinderella Program coordinator. She also hosts a newcomer welcome for students from various corners of the world. Kathie is a lifelong learner who is always current with professional development and willing to share with her colleagues. Many guidance counsellors, colleagues and students have credited her with

being an incredibly gifted and willing counsellor, friend, role model and mentor, as well as a constant inspiration.

Kathie has served her professional community in many ways by being an active member of the Guidance Council's Calgary Regional and by serving on the organizing committees for four provincial conferences and one national conference. Her colleagues report that her many tasks are always executed in a thorough, thoughtful and professional manner — always going way above and beyond the requirements.

Since the 1970s, Kathie has been a dedicated member of the Calgary Board of Education's Crisis Response Team. This team of highly skilled and well-trained educators provides support, grief counselling and relief during times of crisis or trauma. One can only imagine what this has meant in the wake of the Calgary floods. Kathie has become a leader in this challenging and sensitive work.

In addition to her everyday counselling, Kathie has also found time to serve on the Distress Centre Calgary board for three years. This is yet another example of her dedication to her community and social service. Recently, she was certified as a Straight Talk trainer through the Centre for Suicide Prevention.

The Guidance Council of Alberta is proud to present this award to Kathie for her decades of counselling work and for being an agent of change for those who need a champion in their life. Thank you, Kathie, for the work you have done and will continue to do.

Mary Frances Fitzgerald



Thomas Holmes, Kathie Coutts and Mary Frances Fitzgerald

Acceptance Speech

Oh my! Twenty-three years as a school guidance counsellor! It seems like such a long time. In those years, I have watched school counselling truly come of age. To paraphrase an old commercial, "We've come a long way, baby!" (You're showing your age if you can name that product.)

When I was first offered the opportunity to add counselling to my job at Bob Edwards Junior High School, in Calgary, an Alberta

comprehensive school guidance and counselling program was just an idea. Many of us didn't even know what those words meant, much less how to implement such a program. We all knew that part of a counsellor's job was to get students registered for their classes, to offer individual counselling to students in crisis, to deliver some group instruction in order to provide students with the skills needed to function effectively in social situations, and to support teachers and parents in the community. Quite daunting, yes. Where does one start?

I tip my hat to Bryan Hiebert for building the document *Moving into the Future*. I know he collaborated with many, including Garnet Millar, Stu McRae, Jayne Reynett, Marlene Bainborough, Kris Magnusson and Carole Solberg. This document helped lay the foundation for a comprehensive school guidance and counselling program in Alberta.

This tidbit of history may help you understand why it is so humbling to be standing here before you today and having my work recognized. Very few things in life are entirely the work of one person. So I must pay tribute to the contributions of my colleagues at school: Deb Ingram (who put together my nomination), Ed Oke, Mike Kufeldt, Jayme McDonald and Kim Hackman (our principal). They happily allow me my time to laugh, tease, tap dance, sing and shed the occasional tear. (Well, maybe not too happily, since they have all heard me sing.) Deb gave me a copy of the nomination package, to take home and digest. I must confess that I had a good cry as I read those words of support.

Also, I want to say thanks to the many people who offered me sage advice along the way, many of whom have been honoured in the past with the Murray Jampolsky Award – Linda Mason, Jane Stollery, Marie Trottier, Elliot DeWolf, Dev Drysdale, Della Tillie, Brenda Murray, Don Gordon, Marlene Donnelly, Susan Spellman-Cann and Helen MacKinnon. These are just a few. How many times did we meet for a glass of wine or coffee just to talk about the profession and school life?

I would like to thank Mary Frances Fitzgerald, Thomas Holmes and the rest of the executive for choosing me.

Finally, I want to recognize my dear friends, d'Arcy and Al Gamble. I've known d'Arcy since Grade 1. She probably knows more about me than I do. I thank both of them for allowing me to hone my counselling skills on their children.

None of this would have been possible without all the people I have made connections with. This award is as much for them as it is for me.

Most of us graduated from a master's program in which you complete your practicum at a mental health agency and then come back into the school environment. Since I came out of the teaching ranks, I wanted to be seen as credible and capable from the beginning. I remember looking at teachers when they were talking about a student and thinking, *Please let something intelligent come out of my mouth*. And then thinking, *If a real counsellor were here, he or she would know what to say*. Now I know that this is typical imposter syndrome behaviour, which is common to anyone transitioning into a new role. It is normal and universal – and, luckily, it passes. Standing before you is a real school counsellor!

Many of us have had experiences as a student, teacher or parent that have led us to school counselling. We have a strong sense of community, not just within our schools but in our town or city, our family and the broader community of others who do what we do. For most, school counselling goes beyond a job. School counselling is a career in the truest sense of the word.

I remember my first conference at the Banff Springs Hotel. I was just as excited to be in the hotel as I was to attend the conference. What I wasn't prepared for was the significance of the experience. I met so many guidance counsellors who shared a passion and dedication to the profession we love so much. How many times did I come home from a conference or workshop saying (to anyone who would listen) that I could hardly wait to try this or that, only to realize that I already had a lot going on and could not possibly add another thing?

Nevertheless, I came away from these events enlightened, excited and energized. Through workshops and my counselling colleagues, I was able to plan and implement social awareness

days, girls' programs, drug-intervention programs, peer-mentoring programs and teacher advisory programs. Along the way I stopped to acquire specialty credentials in teacher stress management, crisis management in schools, trauma counselling, grief counselling and, most recently, adolescent suicide awareness (as a trainer for the Centre for Suicide Prevention). I spent three years on the board of directors for Distress Centre Calgary. For 10 years, I worked closely with AADAC and the Peer Support Association, offering training programs to new members. I also worked with some pretty incredible people on planning various conferences, both provincially and nationally. That work can make it tough to maintain a work-life balance, but it can be extremely rewarding.

I've always believed that career planning should start not with what a person wants to do for a living but, rather, with how a person wants to live. If you do what you love, then everything else will follow.

I am proud to be a professional school counsellor. One thing I have come to realize is that whenever I am with other guidance counsellors, I feel energized and at home. School counsellors instill in me hope for the future. Supporting students' academic achievement through a school counselling program is a huge responsibility. Ensuring that the work we do contributes to student success can be somewhat daunting.

Yes, 23 years is a long time, and those years have been wrought with many changes in our profession. Some changes have been wonderful and have moved us forward, but some recent developments have set us back. I remember sitting on three separate advisory committees to defend the school counselling program and the

role of a school counsellor as an integral part of the school curriculum and student success. Once again school counsellors are vanishing. It is so disheartening.

So, what have I learned in my 23 years as a counsellor that has made it possible to continue in this high-stress field? What sage words of advice do I have? Actually, several! And it would be so unlike me if I didn't share them.

- Take care to manage your own professional development, because no one else is going to do that for you.
- Give back to the profession. Become involved in the provincial Guidance Council and its regionals. And mentor new counsellors. It reminds you of just how much you really do know.
- Take care of yourself. School counselling, like housework, is a job that is never done. It could consume you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Establish regular professional and personal renewal – without feeling guilty about it.
- Make sure school counselling is your passion.

My most meaningful success is knowing that people leave my office different (and, hopefully, better) than when they walked in. Not because of any magic I worked or theory I used but because they are more confident (or more aware or more determined) because of the work they did while they were with me.

I consider myself so fortunate to have won this year's Murray Jampolsky Award. It is such a great feeling to be up here. Every time I look at this award, I will be reminded of this moment and how much it means to me. I am accepting this award not only for me but also on behalf of my fellow school counsellors. Thank you all!

Kathie Coutts

Conference 2014

November 13–15, 2014, has been chosen as the date for the next Guidance Council annual conference.

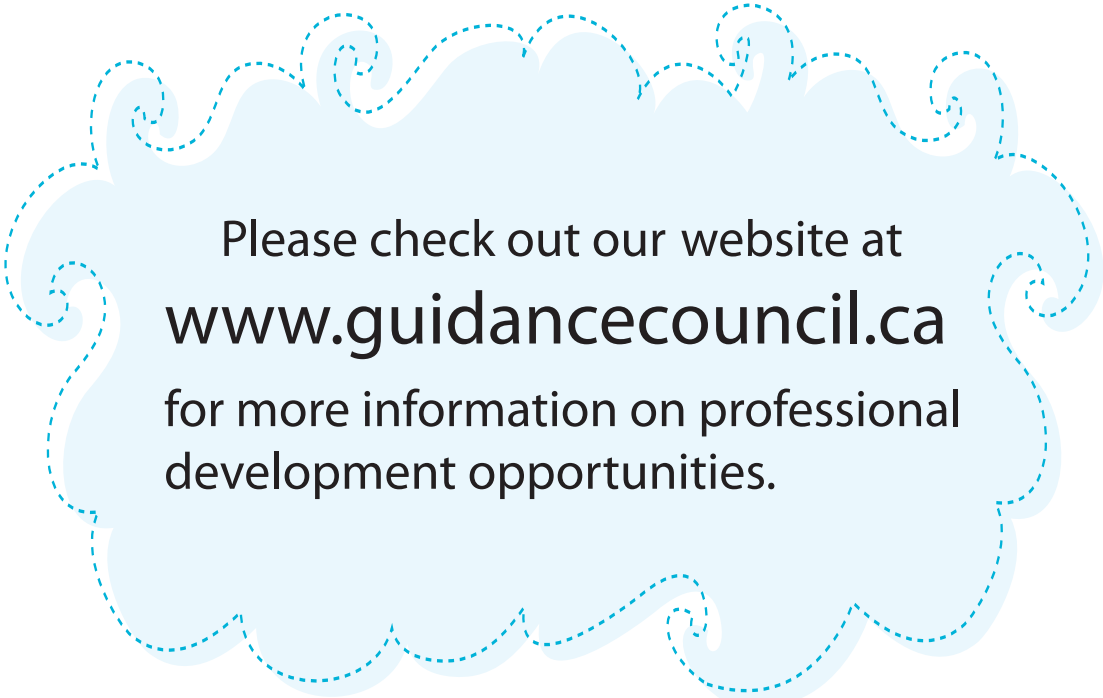
The first planning committee meeting was held on January 7. Committee members chose roles, brainstormed ideas and learned about the logistics of serving on the committee. The members are Jennifer McIntee-Leinweber, Sara Dean, Charlene Lipoth, Tonya Macgillivray, Kristy McConnell, Mary Ann “Chuk” Wasylynchuk, Cori Brandt, Christine Turner, Amber Capstick, Heather Spackman, Helen Mackinnon and Natashya Shewchuk. Our next meeting will be held February 4.

The conference theme is still being decided on and will be shared soon.

We are looking for interested council members to present at the conference. This is a great opportunity to share your expertise with your colleagues. If you are interested, please contact me at jennifer.mcintee-leinweber@cssd.ab.ca.

We are also looking for organizations and companies interested in sponsoring the conference (this could be as simple as sponsoring a speaker) or having a display booth. What a fantastic way to promote your company or organization while networking with mental health professionals from Alberta and across western Canada! If interested, please e-mail me at jennifer.mcintee-leinweber@cssd.ab.ca.

*Jennifer McIntee-Leinweber
Conference 2014 Director*



Please check out our website at
www.guidancecouncil.ca
for more information on professional
development opportunities.

Regional Reports

Calgary



On December 9, the Calgary Regional welcomed two speakers from the Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary. Michael Zwiers spoke about the *DSM-5* and its implications for school

counsellors and other school-based mental health professionals and psychologists. Kelly Schwartz presented on school refusal behaviour. He provided insight into the development of school avoidance behaviours and how best to address such behaviours in the school setting. Though Calgary was in the midst of yet another snowstorm, this session at the St Paul Alternate Education Centre was well attended by over 50 people.

On January 24, we welcomed Shayna Jackson, clinical consultant, child and adolescent mental health, with Healthy Minds/Healthy Children, who spoke about mental health supports and programming available through Alberta Health Services for the Calgary region. This session was held at Chinook Learning Services.

Our spring PD session will focus on learning about specific counselling methodologies to strengthen our practice as guidance counsellors and school-based mental health professionals. Details will be coming soon.

A needs assessment survey will soon be e-mailed to members. Be on the lookout for this!

Jennifer McIntee-Leinweber

Edmonton



In the fall, Mary Frances Fitzgerald and I represented the Guidance Council at the Beginning Teachers' Conference in Edmonton. We presented to new teachers, with the goal of having them walk away with strategies to

better support the students, parents and teachers in their schools. What a great group of enthusiastic teachers! They were positive, confident and full of insightful questions. Not only did we get to share our knowledge and passion but we also acquired new insights, perspectives and strategies. It was a win-win for all of us.

Speaking of insights, while perusing CBC Radio podcasts, I stumbled on an interesting demographic statistic:

School is a bit daunting for some students in the aboriginal community. By 2015 Edmonton will be home to more aboriginal people than any other city in Canada. It's a growing population with about half under the age of 25. So education is going to be critical for the next generation. (www.cbc.ca/player/Radio/Local+Shows/Alberta/ID/1848755701/?page=22&sort=MostPopular)

I kept this information in mind as I attended a number of Aboriginal-focused workshops at the Guidance Council's annual conference in November. Taking part in these workshops was a wonderful opportunity to learn, reflect, and gather valuable resources and counselling strategies. As well, I met some amazing people in the field, which has enhanced my list of professional contacts who provide support to the counselling field. I want to thank the conference organizers for bringing in speakers who shared personal stories of their work with Aboriginal students. Like many of you, I am looking forward to improving my connections with our First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) student population to support them in developing their own stories and resources for success.

I trust that you all topped up your energy reserves over the holiday break as you prepare to head into the second part of the school year!

Koreen Bennett

Mid-Central



Greetings from the Mid-Central Regional. We have been busy over the last few months and are looking forward to an exciting time ahead, with more professional learning events and activities planned.

On November 5, in collaboration with Red Deer City Local No 60, the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights (DEHR) Committee hosted an information fair that included more than 40 social, community and family outreach programs. The purpose of the fair was to attract as many administrators, teachers, counsellors, FNMI support people and community stakeholders as possible, with the goal of educating everyone about the resources available to support at-risk, marginalized and minority students in Red Deer. The particular focus was service agencies that help children and families facing poverty and poverty-related issues. Many agencies attended, including the Domestic Violence Unit, Mental Health Services, Safe and Caring Schools, Kids Help Phone, the John Howard Society, the Women's Outreach Centre, the FASD Network, the Family-School Wellness Program, the Central Alberta Sexual Assault Support Centre, Catholic Social Services, Family and Community Support Services, Community Corrections, and the Loaves and Fishes Benevolent Society. Next year this event will be held at Hunting Hills High School on September 18 from 4 to 8 PM. If you would like more information or would like to set up a booth, please contact me at chantel.walker@rdpsd.ab.ca.

In December, a number of Red Deer Public school counsellors attended the Evolution of Psychotherapy conference in Anaheim, California. Participants not only got to hear amazing presenters but were also able to collaborate with counsellors and psychologists from all over the world. The presenters included Salvador Minuchin, Donald Meichenbaum, Peter Levine, Francine Shapiro, Michael Yapko, Paul Ekman, Violet Oaklander, Harriet Lerner, Jack Kornfield, Martin Seligman, Irvin Yalom, Daniel Siegel and Judith Beck (who interviewed her

father, Aaron Beck). This conference will be held again in four years. More information about this and other professional learning events can be found on the Milton H Erickson Foundation website (<https://erickson-foundation.org>). Handouts can be accessed at www.evolutionofpsychotherapy.com/handouts/.

A few counsellors and Red Deer Public Schools staff have been involved with MORE (Mental Health Online Resources for Educators). These modules are a joint effort of Alberta Health Services, the Alberta Children's Hospital and the University of Calgary. They are designed to increase the skills and confidence of school staff so that they can more effectively address the mental health needs of their students, as well as to promote linkages between school staff and mental health professionals. The upcoming modules can be viewed at www.albertahealthservices.ca/9167.asp.

A Google group has been developed for the Mid-Central Regional. Counsellors can access webinars, resources, apps, PowerPoint presentations and newsletters, as well as share tips and strategies. Please e-mail me at chantel.walker@rdpsd.ab.ca to be added to this group.

Sharing Session

A sharing session has been planned for February 20 in Red Deer and is open to anyone who wishes to attend. Several counsellors from Red Deer Public Schools will share their learnings from the Evolution of Psychotherapy conference. The session will be held at Red Deer College (room to be announced) from 9 AM to 3 PM and will include a presentation, a video from the conference, mini-lectures, and the sharing of information and resources obtained at the conference. Please e-mail me at chantel.walker@rdpsd.ab.ca if you would like to attend.

Trauma Workshop

In March, Claire Malcolm (MSc, Registered Psychologist) will come to Red Deer and present Working with Traumatized Children and Teens (a four-day clinical skills workshop) and a one-day workshop on progressive counting. Claire is a family counsellor with the Student Health Partnership, Child and Adolescent

Mental Health program, at Alberta Health Services, and is the founder of the Child Recovery Centre, in Calgary. She has 15 years of direct experience in clinical work with families and has attended workshops with trauma expert Ricky Greenwald.

Participants will gain an understanding of child trauma theory and how trauma affects daily functioning. They will also learn the skills necessary for building a healing relationship that gives children the safety required to process their traumatic experiences, helping families understand trauma and support their traumatized children, and moving toward the resolution of trauma.

Progressive counting is a fairly new research-supported trauma treatment that is effective, efficient, well tolerated by clients and relatively easy to master. This hands-on clinical skills training can be used with clients of all ages who have been exposed to significant trauma or loss. The method was developed by Ricky Greenwald, and the training program involves lecture, demonstration and hands-on practical tools to facilitate understanding and application of progressive counting in trauma resolution.

The four-day workshop will be March 24–27 and will include progressive counting (\$500 per participant). For those who have already taken the four-day clinical training in trauma, Claire will offer a one-day progressive counting workshop on March 28 (\$200 per participant).

Registration is limited to ensure a small group size and allow ample supervision and training. To register, contact Claire at 403-990-7523 or claire.crc@gmail.com.

FASD Workshop

On April 17, an FASD Success in Schools workshop will be held, in collaboration with the Central Alberta FASD Network. There will be no cost for this workshop. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) is one of the most common preventable causes of developmental disability

and is currently a pressing public health concern in Canada. FASD refers to the range of physical, mental, behavioural and learning disabilities that may be acquired as a result of maternal alcohol consumption. Prenatal exposure to alcohol leads to numerous primary and secondary disabilities, which can result in poor long-term outcomes. Health Canada estimates the rate of FASD to be 9 per 1,000 births. Children and youth with FASD have difficulty understanding the consequences of their actions and learning from past mistakes, which makes them vulnerable to high-risk behaviours and affects their ability to be successful in school.

This workshop will provide educators and support staff with current information regarding FASD and will identify possible physical, sensory and brain functioning issues that may be translating into difficulties with learning and other behaviours. The OBD (Organic Brain Dysfunction) Triage Institute's three-step plan of action will be used as a format to assist educators in strength-based strategy development based on a child's physical, sensory and learning abilities. Real-life examples will be discussed, and participants are encouraged to bring their own classroom experiences in order to design intervention and prevention techniques for immediate use in the classroom.

The workshop will be presented by Liz Lawryk (BSW, MSc Health Sciences, RSW). Ms Lawryk provides premedical screening assessments and subsequent explanation of the medical diagnosis to families, educators and systems staff caring for children, adolescents or adults living with FASD.

A registration form has been included with this newsletter.

The next meeting of the Mid-Central Regional will be at 3:30 PM on February 20 at Red Deer College (room to be announced). Please contact me at chantel.walker@rdpsd.ab.ca if you have any questions.

Chantel Walker

University Reports

University of Lethbridge

The University of Lethbridge's Faculty of Education invites students to explore their greatest potential, create professional foundations and build exceptional knowledge through our graduate programs.

The following cohorts are commencing this summer:

- MEd (Counselling Psychology) (special focus on addictions and mental health counselling)
- MEd (General) (special focus on curriculum and assessment)
- MEd (General) (special focus on inclusive education and neuroscience)
- MEd (Educational Leadership)
- Master of Counselling

In the summer of 2015 we will be admitting cohorts into the following programs:

- Our MEd (Educational Leadership) reflects recent shifts in the knowledge base and in the restructuring of educational leadership programs worldwide, using a 21st-century professional practice competencies approach that integrates theory and practice. This program is completed in 25 months through a blended format.

- Our MEd (General), with a special focus on curriculum and assessment, is designed for educators who want to explore how the increasingly symbiotic relationship between theories of curriculum and assessment can be applied to enrich learning cultures in their classrooms, schools and school districts. Courses are offered over three years, using a blended-delivery model.
- The MEd (General), with a special focus on literacy in globalized Canadian classrooms, invites educators to consider how current literacy and language research in English, English as a second language and English as an additional language, and multiple literacies can support effective literacy instruction, social action and agency, as well as curriculum design and policy decision making. Courses are offered over three years, using a blended-delivery model.
- Our counselling psychology programs are designed to prepare you for a career as a Canadian certified counsellor or registered psychologist:
 - The MEd (Counselling Psychology) is a two-year, full-time program. Courses are offered on campus during the daytime.
 - The Master of Counselling (MC) is offered in a blended format over three years.

The application deadline for 2015 intakes is **December 1, 2014**. Information on the programs offered by the Faculty of Education can be found at www.uleth.ca/education/people/future-grad-students.

Kerry Bernes

How Can the OCYA Help You?

As a guidance counsellor, you may come across challenges and barriers within the systems that support vulnerable children and youth. Teachers and education staff see these children daily and are often in the best position to hear about problems. Part of my role as a public education specialist with the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA) is to help professionals understand the special circumstances these young people face, what their rights are and what supports are available.


The OCYA stands up for young people (age 0–22) who are in government care, who are receiving assistance from Human Services or who are involved with the youth criminal justice system. Our focus is on supporting these vulnerable young people with special advocacy issues and concerns, and making sure that they

have the information they need to make healthy and informed decisions. We also provide legal representation for young people under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* and the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act*.

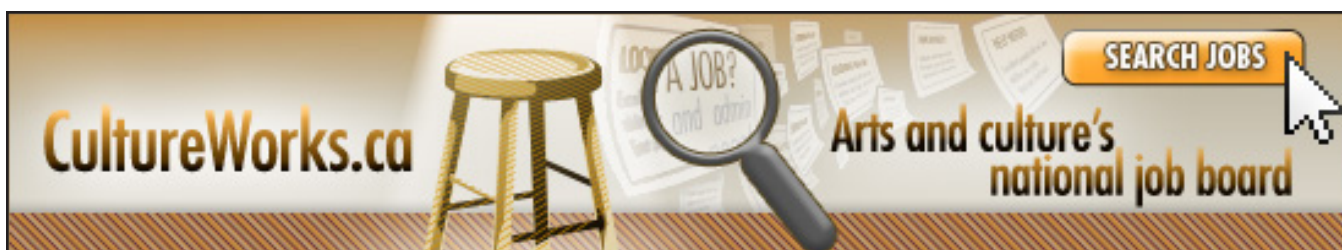
A young person may have an issue with her caseworker or probation officer or with her placement. You may assess that a student's educational needs are not being met, or he may tell you that he does not like being in government care and wants to go home to his parents. These are just a few examples of when a young person may need help from our office, or when you may have questions. In your role, you can help a young person to call our office for information and advocacy. We also take referrals from significant adults, including professionals, involved with the child or youth.

If you would like more information about what we do or to book a presentation for your staff, please contact me at 403-297-3693 or melanie.mcintosh@gov.ab.ca.

*Melanie McIntosh
Public Education Specialist, OCYA*



Please check out our website at
www.guidancecouncil.ca
for more information on the advocacy
work of the council.



Careers in the Arts

The Cultural Human Resources Council (CHRC) is a federally funded sector council that works on human resources in Canada's cultural industries. It offers apprenticeship programs and engages in research, and has also published *The Art of Managing Your Career*, a how-to guide for young people who want a career in the arts. The council also administers CultureWorks, where young people can search for jobs in the arts and where employers can post job openings.

Careers in Culture

www.culturalhrc.ca/careersinculture/

CultureWorks

www.cultureworks.ca

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CULTURE**

Help young
people learn
about
careers in
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Arts**

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Recording**

**Visual Arts and
Crafts**

**Writing and
Publishing**

Guidance Council Publications

To support and inform the work of school counsellors, the Guidance Council has two publications: our professional journal, *The Alberta Counsellor*, and our newsletter, *The Alberta Counsellorletter*. Guidance Council members are encouraged to submit articles for these publications. Editorial advice and assistance will be provided.

The Alberta Counsellorletter

The Alberta Counsellorletter contains information about council activities, school counselling programs, reports of regional meetings, and announcements of and reports on professional development opportunities.

We want to hear from you!

Tell us about guidance and counselling projects or initiatives at your school. Everyone would like to read about your approaches to improving high school completion, dealing with bullying, improving your students' academic and social/emotional adjustment and achievement – in fact, anything from the wide world of school guidance counselling.

Framework for a Counsellorletter Article

To help you, here's an outline:

- What is your name, your school's name and your teaching/counselling assignment?
- What is your project/initiative? What are your practices?
- What was the impetus for your project?
- What did you hope to achieve?
- What did you need to do to put the project in place?
- Where did you get the time/funding for your project?
- Who else in the school/community is involved?
- What has been accomplished by your project?
- What is the future of your project?

We are also interested in publishing book, film or resource reviews; sample lessons; or reports on professional development activities you have attended.

The newsletter is published three times per year – winter, spring and fall – so please send your submission soon to Shelley Boan at shelley.boan@epsb.ca. Deadlines for submissions are **September 15**, **January 10** and **May 1**.

The Alberta Counsellor

The Alberta Counsellor is a professional journal for guidance counsellors and related professionals. The journal publishes research and practical articles; book reviews; case studies; discussion of trends, issues and policies; and reviews of new programs and materials. *The Alberta Counsellor* is not refereed. The final decision to publish any article is the editor's.

Guidelines for Authors

- Manuscripts may be up to 3,000 words long.
- Follow the author-date style for citations.
- Manuscripts should be submitted electronically, in Microsoft Word format.
- For photographs and diagrams, black and white is preferred.
- Obtain permission for the use of photographs and diagrams.
- Identify people in photos.
- Include photo credit.
- Manuscripts and photographs will be returned at the author's request.

For more information, please contact Michael Lupart at mlupart@rvschools.ab.ca, or at 403-932-2542 or 403-932-6131.



Diversity • Equity • Human Rights Diversity • Equity • Human Rights

We are there for you!



The Alberta
Teachers' Association

www.teachers.ab.ca

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Diversity • Equity • Human Rights Diversity • Equity • Human Rights

Specialist councils' role in promoting diversity, equity and human rights

Alberta's rapidly changing demographics are creating an exciting cultural diversity that is reflected in the province's urban and rural classrooms. The new landscape of the school provides an ideal context in which to teach students that strength lies in diversity. The challenge that teachers face is to capitalize on the energy of today's intercultural classroom mix to lay the groundwork for all students to succeed. To support teachers in their critical roles as leaders in inclusive education, in 2000 the Alberta Teachers' Association established the Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee (DEHRC).

DEHRC aims to assist educators in their legal, professional and ethical responsibilities to protect all students and to maintain safe, caring and inclusive learning environments. Topics of focus for DEHRC include intercultural education, inclusive learning communities, gender equity, UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network, sexual orientation and gender variance.

Here are some activities the DEHR committee undertakes:

- Studying, advising and making recommendations on policies that reflect respect for diversity, equity and human rights
- Offering annual Inclusive Learning Communities Grants (up to \$2,000) to support activities that support inclusion
- Producing *Just in Time*, an electronic newsletter that can be found at www.teachers.ab.ca; Teaching in Alberta; Diversity, Equity and Human Rights.
- Providing and creating print and web-based teacher resources
- Creating a list of presenters on DEHR topics
- Supporting the Association instructor workshops on diversity

Specialist councils are uniquely situated to learn about diversity issues directly from teachers in the field who see how diversity issues play out in subject areas. Specialist council members are encouraged to share the challenges they may be facing in terms of diversity in their own classrooms and to incorporate these discussions into specialist council activities, publications and conferences.

Diversity, equity and human rights affect the work of all members. What are you doing to make a difference?

Further information about the work of the DEHR committee can be found on the Association's website at www.teachers.ab.ca under Teaching in Alberta, Diversity, Equity and Human Rights.

Alternatively, contact Andrea Berg, executive staff officer, Professional Development, at andrea.berg@ata.ab.ca for more information.



Enhancing Success in the Classroom!

Presented by Liz Lawryk, BSW, MScHS, RSW

**RDPSD Central Office, April 17, 2014, 9:30 AM–4:00 PM
Lunch Provided—All Are Welcome to Attend**

**This training seminar is being offered in collaboration between
Red Deer Public School Division and the
Central Alberta FASD Network**

Together We Can Make A Difference!

**To learn more about the Organic Brain Dysfunction
Triage Institute, visit www.obdtriage.com
or e-mail the Institute at liz.lawryk@obdtriage.com.**

**For resources and publications on FASD, please visit
www.FASD.alberta**

See inserts in this issue of *Counselletter*.

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Personal information regarding any person named in this document is for the sole purpose of professional consultation between members of The Alberta Teachers' Association.

