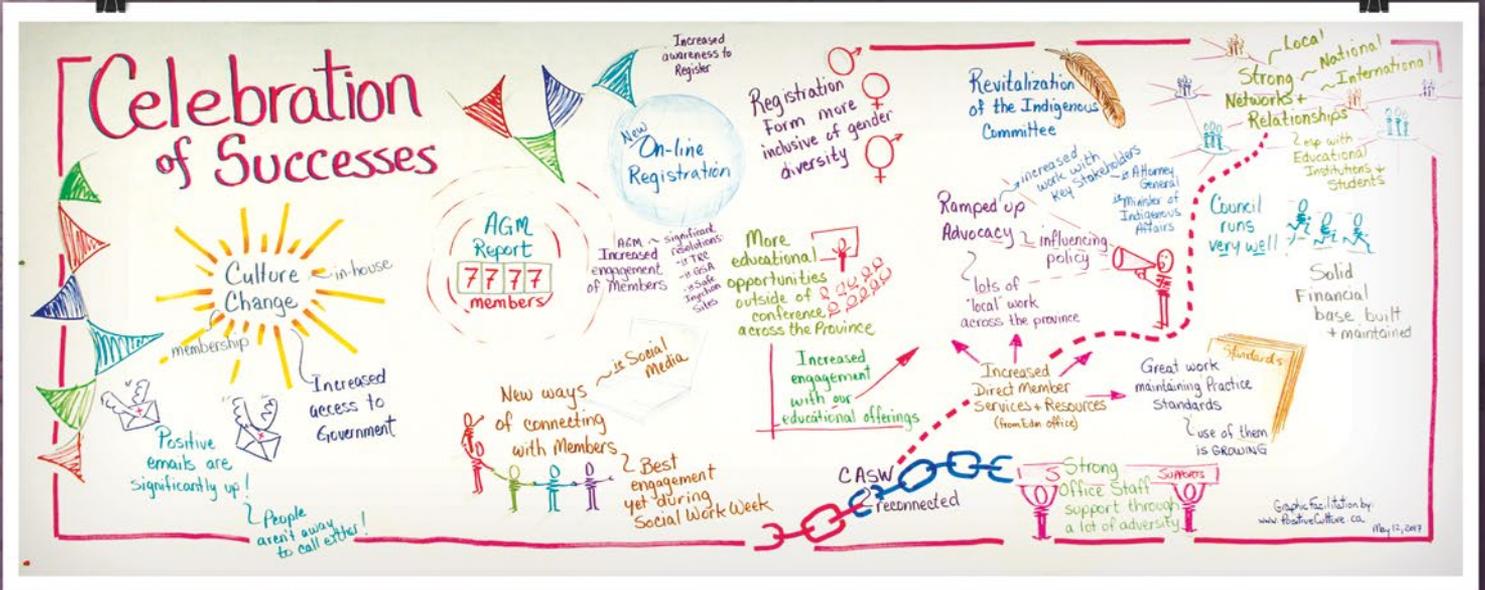


the ADVOCATE

VOLUME 42 | ISSUE 3

ALBERTA COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORKERS



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Around our province

by Charity Lui, MSW, RSW

ACSW Interest Group Influences Significant Change

The ACSW Northern Alberta Gerontological Social Work Interest Group met with the Honourable **Lori Sigurdson, MSW, RSW**, Minister of Seniors and Housing, in the fall of 2016. This led to a meeting with the director of the Seniors Financial Assistance Programs. The group then drafted a letter with suggestions for changes to the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program. Changes suggested by the group, in particular that social workers be included in the list of health professionals that can write medical notes for services required by low-income seniors, were implemented in the latest review of the program. These changes will reduce delays and make the program more accessible for all low-income Alberta seniors. This is a real, practical example of how social workers can influence change!

ACSW Activities

Bruce Llewellyn, MSW, RSW, ACSW's Manager of Regulatory Practice / Complaints Director, attended the University of Calgary / Wood's Homes announcement of the Wood's Homes Research Chair in Children's Mental Health on May 19th. **Angelique Jenney** has taken on this position.



Dr. Jane Matheson, Dr. Peggy Rodway and Bruce Llewellyn

The ACSW Northern Alberta Gerontological Social Work Interest Group hosted the workshop, "Changing How We Think About Older Adults Experiencing Addiction" on May 11th. Presenters **Carmen Lang, R. Psych** and **Haley Gardiner** engaged over 70 social workers.



Joy Anderson, Rosaly Palchevskaya, Carmen Lang, Haley Gardiner and Joanna McGill

CHARITY LUI is the Membership Activities Coordinator for the northern part of our province. You can contact her at Charity@acsw.ab.ca regarding submissions for the *Advocate*.



AROUND OUR PROVINCE

Edmonton Category A Day was held on May 25th and was hosted by the ACSW Edmonton Area Coordinators. Participants had the opportunity attend the following workshops:

- Exploring Mindfulness Meditation for Self-Care with **Sherri Tanchak, MSW, RSW**
- Working Effectively with Hope in Therapeutic Conversations with **Dr. Larsen, PhD, R. Psych**
- Supervision and Social Work Practice with **Lana Bentley, MSW, RSW**
- Working From A Racial Equity Lens with **Kaitlin Lauridsen**
- Blanket Exercise with **Michelle Nieviadomy**

The Alberta College of Social Workers has recently hosted two Blanket Exercises: on April 20th facilitated by **Sharon Pasula** and with elder **Dr. Leona Makokis**; and on May 25th with **Michelle Nieviadomy**. A Blanket Exercise is an interactive learning experience as it relates to Canadian-Indigenous history, from pre-contact to present day. These workshops are being offered throughout Canada. We encourage everyone who has the opportunity to participate in a Blanket Exercise.



Julie Mann-Johnson, Melissa Campbell, Naalia Ali, Shreya Pejavar, Andre Tinio and Sharon Pasula

On May 30, **Julie Mann-Johnson, MSW, RSW**, Professional Practice Support Team Lead and **Raveena Parsons**, Promotions Coordinator, participated in the seventh annual YOUTH Power job, career and education event in Edmonton.

The ACSW Camrose Area Coordinators hosted a workshop featuring the Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of the Seniors Advocate on June 12. **Chad Bouman** of the Office of the Ombudsman presented an overview of the role of the office, and provided participants with the hands-on tools for writing decisions with administrative fairness. **Dr. Sheree Kwong See** with the Office of the Seniors Advocate gave an overview of that office and discussed effective communication with older adults.

Social workers and social work students from across the province have participated in various Pride Week activities.

On June 10th, members of the ACSW Sexual and Gender Diversity Interest Group, the Edmonton Social Justice/Social Action Interest Group and the Edmonton Area Coordinators hosted a Pride brunch and watched the Edmonton Pride Parade together. ACSW's Associate Registrar **Suzanne MacKinnon, MSW, RSW**, and **Tamara Gross**, Competency Coordinator, attended.



Edmonton Pride Parade



Khatidja Khalfan, Jeanette De Vries, Margaret Brown, Fantasia Barnes and April Leblanc

AROUND OUR PROVINCE

In Lethbridge on June 24, members of the ACSW Sexual and Gender Diversity Interest Group, ACSW Membership Activities Coordinator **Heather Johnson**, SW Dip, RSW, and others walked in the 9th annual Lethbridge Pride Parade.



Lethbridge Pride Parade

Keyano College social work students **Teila Rowsell** and **Breanna Wallace** initiated a Fort McMurray Pride Committee when their social work instructor told them that their city had never had a Pride parade. The committee organized a Pride float in the Fort McMurray Canada Day Parade and is also organizing Fort McMurray's first ever Pride parade on August 26. We are so proud of the initiative of these two social work students and others involved in this work!



Fort McMurray Pride Float



ACSW had a short video created to celebrate National Aboriginal Day on June 21st. In the video, elder **Dr. Leona Makokis** outlines that in Cree, the translation of 'social worker' is 'a good relationship builder.' **Derek Chewka**, MSW,

RSW, chair of the ACSW Indigenous Committee, talks about *minopimatasiwin*, a Cree word meaning 'the good life.' Take a look at the video on our site, at acsw.ab.ca, click on Advocacy/Publications, then on Videos.

On June 22, the ACSW Medicine Hat Area Coordinators presented a Daring Way™ Workshop with **Dr. Gail Eastman**, R. Psych. Over 30 participants received an introduction to the work of **Dr. Brené Brown**, Ph.D, which focuses on shame resilience.

The ACSW Social Workers in Health Interest Group hosted a Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) workshop in Red Deer on June 24th. MAID Navigators **Lise Lalonde**, RN, BN, and **Tanya Paquette**, RN, BN; Junior Clinical Ethicist **Nikoo Najand**, PhD; and **Jennifer Willes**, daughter of the late **Dr. R. Wayne Nelson** who recently used medical assistance in dying, led a thoughtful and emotional workshop.

Central Alberta Social Work Conference

"Finding Our Way: Social Work on Shifting Ground" was the theme for the 2017 Central Alberta Social Work conference at Red Deer College held June 15th and 16th. Indigenous Elder **Brenda St. Germain**, MSW, RSW, opened the conference. The keynote speaker was **Dennis Edney**, the lawyer who represented **Omar Khadr**, the Canadian citizen detained in Guantanamo Bay for ten years during his youth.



Brenda St. Germain



Elaine Spencer, Heather Brock, and Jolene Spies

ACSW hosted a Meet and Greet on June 15th. Members of ACSW Staff, Council, and Area Coordinators were there to talk with members and future members about registration, renewal, continuing competency, and all things social work!

Christine Archibald – A life ended too soon

ACSW joins the international social work community in grieving the sudden passing of **Christine Achibald** in the June terror attack in London. Christine had completed her social work diploma in 2015 at Mount Royal University in Calgary. British newspaper The Guardian shared this statement from her family: “Please honour her by making your community a better place. Volunteer your time and labour or donate to a homeless shelter. Tell them Chrissy sent you.”



Christine Archibald

Upcoming ACSW Events

September 14, 2017
**ACSW Council Meet
and Greet & ACSW
Private Practice
Annual Meeting.**
RSVP required.
Calgary

October 25, 2017
**ACSW Lifelong
Learning & Completing
Your Portfolio,**
Edmonton

September 29, 2017
**Deadline for Call for
Proposals for the
ACSW 2018 Annual
Conference.**

November 30, 2017
**Edmonton Holiday
Social**

December 7, 2017
Calgary Holiday Social

October 12, 2017
**ACSW Standards of
Practice Workshop,**
Edmonton

March 22 - 24, 2018
**ACSW Annual
Conference**
Double Tree Hotel,
Edmonton

August 31 - October 27, 2017

Nominations open for ASCW Student Bursary.
All ACSW student members and registered
social workers are eligible. For more details,
see the student page on acsw.ab.ca

THE ADVOCATE EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Advocate* is the official publication of the Alberta College of Social Workers (ACSW) and is published quarterly for members of ACSW and other interested parties. The *Advocate* Editorial Board encourages submissions from all social work practice areas and perspectives, including: social work research, theory, practice, and education; professional affairs; social issues; the work of the College; member activities; continuing education and job opportunities; reviews of books, journals, and other media of interest to social workers.

Articles of up to 1000 words and letters of up to 500 words will be considered, but publication is not guaranteed. Writing from social workers who are ACSW members will be given preference. Copy may be edited to fit the space available or for legal or other reasons. Please contact the ACSW office for full submission guidelines.

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE AND DEADLINES

Spring issue:	January 1 deadline for general submissions (articles, letters, etc.)	January 15 for advertising
Summer issue:	April 1 for general submissions	April 15 for advertising
Fall issue:	July 1 for general submissions	July 15 for advertising
Winter issue:	September 15 for general submissions	October 15 for advertising

ALL SUBMISSIONS

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THE BIG PICTURE

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



RICHARD GREGORY is the president of ACSW Council. He is also chair and instructor of the Social Work program at Medicine Hat College. You can contact Richard at acswpresident@acsw.ab.ca.

As I write this, I am reflecting back on the past month which has been filled with debate and controversy across Canada. It is an interesting time in our country and it is an important time for social workers to reflect on our Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice when contemplating controversial issues.

I am proud to be Canadian. I recognize that much of Canada's history is fraught with examples of discrimination and wrongdoing, but I want to believe that our identity as a country has the potential to be more than our history of colonization and discriminatory practices. I believe that Canada is the best country in the world. This does not mean Canada is perfect – not at all. But we are capable of becoming a place where every person can achieve their maximum potential. To achieve this, we have to work together and we have to go back to some of the basic premises of social work, which are about building relationships, respecting differences, and understanding one another.

Canada Day celebrations saw protests and conflicts as First Nations peoples expressed their frustration with the lack of acknowledgement of the First Peoples and the absence of any understanding that the First Nations people were here for an estimated 13,000 years before Europeans arrived. Although it is true that 'Canada' is 150 years old, it is important to be truthful about the relationship that Canada has had with the First Peoples. I contend that before we can have reconciliation, we must have truth. In order for healing to occur, there needs to be acknowledgement of the horrific treatment that the First Nations peoples experienced as the country of Canada grew.

History needs to identify broken promises, cultural genocide, and other atrocities. While we celebrate confederation, we need to recognize that our first Prime Minister was the architect of the Indian Act, which served as the cornerstone for assimilation and cultural genocide. It is imperative that we acknowledge that this country that we have come to celebrate as 'Canada' is on the traditional territories of many First Nations, on land that was taken from them mostly through manipulation, deception and force.

It is also important to recognize that there were Europeans here for over 200 years before Confederation and that for the first several years, the relationship between the settlers and the First Nations was more respectful and conciliatory. History tells us that the relationships soured when the Europeans got greedy and egocentric.

I want to continue to celebrate Canada Day – but, more importantly, I believe we need to acknowledge history and build relationships. I believe that this is good social work practice.

It seems like we moved from the Canada Day controversy to the Omar Khadr story. What an explosion of nastiness erupted from this situation! I felt fortunate that I had just attended the Central Alberta Social Work conference a few weeks earlier, where Dennis Edney, Omar's lawyer, was one of the speakers. Mr. Edney was appointed as Foreign Attorney Consultant by the U.S. Pentagon to participate in the legal defense of Omar Khadr at Guantanamo Bay. He committed himself to this case, and working for no fee, he tirelessly defended Omar, searching for justice. As social workers, we should all share in this commitment.

Continued on page 11

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & REGISTRAR



LYNN LABRECQUE KING is the executive director and registrar for ACSW. Contact her at LynnLK@acsw.ab.ca to share your thoughts on this or any other topic.

ACSW Strategic Plan

I love strategic planning. There's just something energizing about reviewing where we are, envisioning results and putting ideas into connected parts to help us achieve something that was not there before or strengthen that which we care about. This is what the May 12 Council Strategic Planning day brought. Council invited members of ACSW committees and staff liaisons to participate in the brainstorm. Together we identified several successes for the past three years including: implementation of a new online registration system, increased educational opportunities created for members throughout the year, engagement on social media, higher participation of members at our Annual General Meetings, very active member interest groups, and strong networks and relationships in several sectors including educational institutions, national and international coalitions.

*As social workers,
we care about
child intervention
services.*

Consideration to member feedback throughout the year as well as organized strategic planning conversations are only part of the process. The updated draft strategic plan has been on the ACSW website over the summer, with all members invited to weigh in with comments. The

2018 strategic plan is anticipated to be confirmed in October 2017. Thank you to all for participating in the creation of our new plan!

Child Intervention Panel

As social workers, we care about child intervention services. Advocating for policies, programs and services for public interest is part of our mandate. I appreciated the opportunity to make a presentation to the Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention at the Alberta Legislature on June 14. Five key areas were identified for consideration by the panel as they prepare their recommendations to the Alberta government. We strongly recommended incentives that encourage completion of social work education for all those in child welfare roles, even in the case where alternate or related degrees are recruited. We suggested that professional regulation be recognized as an opportunity to strengthen structures for dedicated support services with special attention to working conditions and supports for front line staff, including a focus on the critical role that professional supervision plays in the quality of services. Recognition and leadership in addressing funding disparities for Indigenous children was recommended. Ongoing support for addressing root causes through evidence-informed best practices and alliances for collaboration with social workers, supervisors, Indigenous communities and multi-discipline teams was also recommended.

Acknowledgement and thanks goes to Julie Mann-Johnson, ACSW Professional Practice Support Team Lead for her work

THE BIG PICTURE

and commitment in preparing the formal paper on behalf of ACSW. We look forward to the panel's recommendations.

In July, a report by the Child and Youth Advocate was released. The report was titled 'Three Young Children: An Investigative Review'. I commented on the report in support for the recommendations on CBC Radio's Calgary Eyeopener on July 20th. Check out the ACSW Facebook page or Twitter feed to hear that discussion.

Conferences Conferences Conferences

Following the ACSW Conference, President Richard Gregory, Associate Registrar Suzanne MacKinnon and I attended the Association of Social Work Boards spring meetings focusing on emerging themes in continuing competence. More and more we are confirming that a professional body's continuing competence program is just one part of a continuum of activities that contribute to career-long competence. We can also be assured that our program in Alberta offers flexibility with a range of activities comparable to programs in other jurisdictions.



Lynn King, Executive Director & Registrar, ACSW with Professor Lena Dominelli, IFSW European Conference 2017

The International Federation of Social Workers European Conference was held in Reykjavik, Iceland this year. I was so pleased to meet Professor Lena Dominelli (Durham University, UK). Many of us have benefitted from her work and writings; I particularly enjoyed her themes of anti-oppressive

practice and resilience. Currently, she represents social work at the United Nation's Framework Convention on Climate Change and at the United Nation's International Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction. As a keynote, she spoke about

opportunities for social work as a profession that is well-positioned to evolve into the frontier of tackling global and environmental issues.



Lynn King, Executive Director & Registrar, Elder Rod Hunter (Elder Morley); Richard Gregory, President, ACSW, Jan Christianson-Wood, President, CASW

The Alberta College of Social Workers was honoured to host the national meetings of the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW), the Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators (CCSWR) and the Intersectoral Committee that includes CASW, CCSWR and the Canadian Association of Social Work Regulators. The meetings, held in Banff over four days, were very successful, in

that professional associations across Canada had opportunity to meet over common issues, set goals for national advocacy activities and celebrate the contributions of long-serving members as well as our linkages at the national level.

At the CCSWR table, topics included a review of our national structure and bylaws. There was an opportunity to showcase our coalition's new website at ccswr-ccorts.ca.

The opportunity of conferences is the gift of learning and networking with colleagues, a proven way for enhancing and maintaining professional competence. I hope that you will take time to attend an event relevant to your practice and share your inspirational experiences with your professional colleagues too.

Lynn Labrecque King, MSW, RSW

ACSW Hosts the Canadian Association of Social Workers Federation Meeting



Canadian delegates attending CASW meeting



Jan Christianson-Wood, President, CASW & Fred Phelps, Executive Director, CASW



Linda Golding, past President of ACSW receives recognition from Jan Christianson-Wood, President, CASW for her term on Board of Directors



Morel Caissie, past President of CASW & Fred Phelps, Executive Director, CASW

A message from the President

Continued from page 8

At the base of this controversy was the announcement of a settlement in the law suit that Omar had filed against the Government of Canada. I was very upset with the presentation of 'alternative facts' that was being asserted by some politicians and new reporters.

I was moved to dig deeper into this story. **To read the results of my research, please visit acsw.ab.ca, and click the Advocacy/Publications tab.** As social workers and as Canadians, we have much to learn from this controversy.

Richard Gregory, MSc, RSW

Employer Obligations Under the *Health Professions Act*

by Sheryl Pearson, MSW, RSW, LLB

This article is not meant to bring doom and gloom! It's simply intended to provide clarity in an area which can sometimes lack it.

Under section 57(1) of the *Health Professions Act* “if, because of conduct that in the opinion of the employer is unprofessional conduct, the employment of a regulated member is terminated or suspended or the regulated member resigns, the employer must give notice of that conduct to the complaints director” of the appropriate regulatory body. This includes social workers.

From time to time, employers and members confuse this regulatory requirement to give notice to the Alberta College of Social Workers (ACSW), with the employment law distinction between dismissal with or without cause. Employers need only give notice to the ACSW if the termination or suspension was for reasons of unprofessional conduct.

When I receive a notice of suspension or termination from an employer, I am required to treat it as a complaint and I will follow-up with the parties involved to find out what happened. In many cases I am advised the dismissal was due to the end of a probation period or “lack of fit”, in which case I dismiss the complaint on the basis of insufficient or no evidence of unprofessional conduct. If I am advised there were issues of unprofessional conduct, however, I may appoint an investigator to gather additional information and reserve my final decision until the investigation is complete.

Similarly, social workers also have an obligation on their annual renewal to make a positive declaration if they have been fired, suspended or resigned in place of being fired or suspended from any position in the scope of social work practice since their last renewal. When a positive declaration from a member is received, an explanation is requested. Depending on the explanation provided, you may hear from me with a request for additional information.

“Whether it is an employer obligation or the declaration on your renewal, social workers have the distinct privilege of being held to account for their conduct.”

Whether it is an employer obligation or the declaration on your renewal, social workers have the distinct privilege of being held to account for their conduct. Be proud and honour the privilege of self-regulation!



Exciting News for Alberta's Clinical Social Workers

The title Clinical Social Worker has been a protected title in Alberta since the *Health Professions Act* was first enacted in 2003. Similar to the way the title *social worker* or *registered social worker* can only be used by people who are members of the ACSW, the title Clinical Social Worker can only be used by social workers who have gone through the application process to be accepted onto the Clinical Social Work Registry. While the restricted title does not restrict clinical social work as an area of practice, the granting of the designation does provide recognition of advanced skill and practice in this area.

In the fall of 2016, Schedule 27 of the *Health Professions Act* was amended to include the following protected titles: Registered Clinical Social Worker and RCSW. This amendment does not expand the scope of the designation, but rather provides use of logical derivations of the title and makes clear that the designation is in fact regulated. For more information about this legislative amendment, please contact Sheryl Pearson, Manager of Regulatory Practice (North), at the ACSW.

Schedule 27 Profession of Social Workers

Use of titles, etc.

2 A regulated member of the Alberta College of Social Workers may, in accordance with the regulations, use any of the following titles, abbreviations and initials:

- (a) social worker;
- (b) registered social worker;
- (c) clinical social worker;
- (c.1) registered clinical social worker;
- (c.2) R.C.S.W.;
- (d) S.W.;
- (e) R.S.W.;
- (f) Soc. Wkr.

SHERYL PEARSON is a Manager of Regulatory Practice for the Alberta College of Social Workers.



Setting Your Course in Private Practice: Lessons Learned (part 2 of 2)

by Teresa Winfield, MSW, RSW interviewing Evelyn Wotherspoon, MSW, RSW

Last month, Evelyn Wotherspoon shared the story of how she began in private practice and built a niche as an expert witness in infant mental health. This issue, Evelyn shares the top lessons she learned while building her practice.

1. **Get a mentor or cultivate a support network.** Most of us in private practice are willing to give some of our time and expertise to colleagues starting out because we were on the receiving end of the generosity of others. Most of us will freely share our advice, retainer agreements, forms, etc. Be careful that you do not overtax your network, however. You should probably set up a formal relationship with a clinical supervisor and expect to pay a fee for their time. I still have a paid clinical mentor, even after 35 years of experience, ten in private practice.
2. **Think about your referral sources.** Who will send you clients? How will people make their way to your door? I get most of my referrals from lawyers who recommend me to their clients and colleagues. I have done many free 'Learn at Lunch' events for law firms and other referral sources. I give presentations at conferences, workshops and more. I continue to offer events to law offices as a public education service and as a way of generating interest and referrals. I attend many networking events and belong to several networking groups. Ask yourself if you are prepared to 'pound the pavement' to create a referral network.
3. **What is your area of expertise?** Is your expertise marketable? Do you have the training and experience to describe yourself as an expert in this area? Straying from your area of expertise is a common path to trouble for private practitioners. How are you keeping current in your area of expertise? I read a new book or piece of research in my area weekly. I receive regular updates on new research from a variety of sources. I attend at least one major training or professional development event every year, usually more often.
4. **Get accounting and legal advice, and have a lawyer on retainer.** You will want to look at things like whether and when to create a company, how to limit your liability, and the tax implications of different options. One of my good friends is a tax accountant and she helped me set up my company in the most advantageous way from a tax point of view.
5. **Think about your budget.** What do you need to earn and when? How does that break down to an hourly rate? Remember your hourly rate must cover your pay, office overhead, computer, office supplies, disability insurance, holiday pay, non-billable activities, bookkeeping and other services, plus much more. Plan on a full year before you turn a profit. Keep your overhead low by doing your own books, sharing office space or renting by the hour, etc. My husband is retired and is my bookkeeper/assistant. He books my travel, and takes care of many details such as my taxes and annual reports.
6. **Private practice can be lonely.** Think about whether you have a good network of colleagues and friends to offer professional and personal support when you need it.
7. **Think ethics.** Make sure your practices, reports and forms adhere to the ACSW Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics. If you are unsure, ask. The ACSW is highly supportive of its members, but they cannot help if you don't seek guidance.

TERESA WINFIELD is a clinical social worker in private practice with seventeen years of experience. She specializes in working with youth who have demonstrated sexually concerning behaviours and the families who care for them.



Shifting the Dial on Homelessness

by Julie Mann-Johnson, MSW, RSW

In our last issue of the *Advocate*, we featured an article on social work approaches and perspectives to end homelessness. This article included details on the efforts from the City of Edmonton's plan to end homelessness by 2019. Recently, Minister of Seniors and Housing, Lori Sigurdson, MSW, RSW, announced a new provincial housing strategy for Alberta. This plan is detailed in the document, *Making Life Better: Alberta's Provincial Affordable Housing Strategy*. If you have not had the opportunity to review this document, I encourage you to have a look. This strategy recognizes the importance of integrated supports to ensure individuals have varied and flexible support to access housing, and to maintain stable housing once they are able to access it. The plan further includes strategies to ensure ongoing viability of affordable housing infrastructure.

“As social workers, we see firsthand that homelessness is complex.”

What is most encouraging in this strategy is an indicator of the shift in discourse on housing. We have typically seen a neo-liberalist, privileged approach to housing. This is an attitude that housing is earned and maintained by good behaviour and by good choices. However, as social workers, we see firsthand that homelessness is complex. We suggest that housing is a human right and all citizens have a right to safe, affordable and accessible housing that meets their physical and social needs.

Social workers in every field of practice encounter homelessness and the challenges that the lack of availability of affordable and accessible housing brings for the individuals we work with. Whether it is in the community,

acute care, high risk youth, child welfare, or with seniors, the issues of housing is one that comes to our attention regularly. What we also know from this work is that barriers to housing are complex and we must recognize the unique needs and social challenges of some individuals who struggle to find housing.

A group of more than thirty social workers in the Edmonton area are addressing affordable housing in a “boots on the ground” approach – literally! A major Habitat for Humanity build is underway in South Edmonton with social workers volunteering for at least three different building dates and events. This initiative shows us that as social workers, we take ACTION!

Speaking of action, attention all social workers interested in social justice and social action in the Fort McMurray area. Interest has been expressed in a local ACSW Social Justice/ Social Action Member Interest Group in the Fort McMurray area. This is an opportunity to meet with like-minded individuals in solidarity and to discuss action on social justice issues important to your community and local area. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact me at julie@acsw.ab.ca for more information.

I am happy to report that with the creation of this additional Social Justice interest group, we will have Social Justice Member Interest Groups in five local areas across the province! These include Lethbridge, Calgary, Red Deer, Edmonton and now Fort McMurray! If you are interested in joining any of these groups, feel free to contact me for more information.

JULIE MANN-JOHNSON is the Professional Practice Support Team Lead with the Alberta College of Social Workers. She can be reached at julie@acsw.ab.ca.



ISWC, TRC and UNDRIP

by Derek Chewka, MSW, RSW

Tawnshi!

Tawnshi is the greeting used among the Metis people. Just as we should take a moment to learn simple salutations of newcomers who have come to our country, it is equally important for us as social workers to learn how to say hello in one of the many Indigenous languages spoken Canada. Each month, the ACSW Indigenous Social Work Committee (ISWC) will endeavor to share our knowledge of Indigenous language. Our Elders have taught us that culture is embedded in the language. To know your language is to know your culture.

I wanted to provide a quick update on the activities of the ISWC. The committee, which serves in an advisory capacity to ACSW Council on matters pertaining to Indigenous Social Work practice. Last month ICSW began work on our Strategic Plan that will guide and focus our energies for the next year. We emerged from the Strategic Planning day with four main priorities:

The first is to **reach out and engage with Indigenous Social Workers** from across the province to ensure we represent the diversity of Indigenous culture. Our efforts to date have been to recruit to the three treaty areas, the Metis Nation, the Inuit community and to have a cross-reference of rural and urban Indigenous social workers. We are exploring ways in which we can best achieve that goal.

Second, we are progressing on the **creation of Indigenous Standards of Practice** that specifically address the concepts and competencies that are essential when working with Indigenous children, youth, families and communities.

Third, ISCW is committed to **ensure more Indigenous content at the ACSW Annual Conference as well as throughout the year** for members, allowing for the exchange of knowledge to be shared, and safe environments and opportunities created in which members can ask questions and complete critical reflection of their own values, attitudes and beliefs.

To know your language is to know your culture.

Our fourth priority is two-fold. The first part pertains to the **Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)**. We have been advocating government bodies to address the *Calls to Action*, we have created an open dialogue in which ACSW can address reconciliation, and we will continue to provide opportunities for our members and the public to learn and gain a deeper understanding of the *Calls to Action*. You can access the 94 *Calls to Action* by going to the TRC's website at www.trc.ca.

The second part of our fourth priority is a result of a motion from the last Annual General Meeting. I am not sure who the individual was that made the motion but they deserve credit. Well done! It takes a great deal of courage to stand up and urge a professional body of 7000-plus members to continue to work with and on the **United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**.



As members, we need to hold people accountable to the work they have agreed to do. The basic premise of UNDRIP is that it *outlaws discrimination against Indigenous peoples. It states that Indigenous people have a right to fully participate in all matters that pertain to them. It speaks of not only individual rights but also the collective rights of a Nation.* This last part causes confusion for social workers. Our Code of Ethics talks about the self-determination of an individual, but how do you apply that to an entire nation? And what is the significance in doing so? ISWC hopes to provide some clarity for social workers on this matter.

The work of UNDRIP and the TRC's *Calls to Action* go hand in hand. We cannot complete one without the other. As we move forward, ISWC will begin to bring these bodies of knowledge together to make it more meaningful to apply to your practice.



You can access the UNDRIP at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>.

DEREK CHEWKA is the chair of the ACSW Indigenous Social Work Committee.



Making a Chinese Connection

U of C Faculty of Social Work and Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou sign agreement

by Don McSwiney



Dora Tam and Siu Ming Kwok at the Faculty of Social Work's Lethbridge campus



The University of Calgary delegation met with several schools looking to create mutually beneficial partnerships and to support Chinese efforts to train three million social workers by 2021

“The scale of China is almost incomprehensible to most Canadians,” says Siu Ming Kwok, PhD, RSW, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Social Work’s Southern Alberta campus, matter-of-factly because, in this case, the facts actually do speak for themselves. “Guangzhou, in southern China, has a population of about 14 million – which is more than the population of Ontario, in a city with roughly the same area as Toronto. Guangzhou is the capital of Guangdong province, which has a population of around 120 million.”

For centuries, social work was truly something of a ‘foreign’ concept to China. The largely rural, agrarian population relied on extended family for social support. However, this has changed over the last three decades in what some observers have called one of the largest movements of humanity in history. 500 million people have moved from the countryside to China’s existing major centres and the ‘instant’ cities along the southern coast– factory boomtowns recently created as manufacturing hubs, which drive the Chinese government’s economic reforms.

“Many migrant workers from rural and remote areas have come to the urban areas to work,” says Dora Tam, PhD, RSW, also a University of Calgary Social Work professor and researcher. “These young people have to deal with isolation, and have had to make many other adjustments. Economic growth brings many other issues. At the same time that some people are becoming wealthy, many others are being marginalized because they don’t benefit from the economic growth.”

Not surprisingly, Chinese governments have suddenly found themselves looking for solutions to issues they really have never faced on such a large scale. As a result, they are actively building a uniquely Chinese social work system on what is an unprecedented scale. “China has declared that they are going to train *three million* social workers by 2021,” says Kwok with a laugh, letting the incredible number hang in the air. “They’re



Jackie Sieppert, Dean of the University of Calgary Faculty of Social Work and Professor Zhang Yingjiang, Dean of the School of Sociology and Anthropology of Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou signed a formal agreement supporting student and faculty exchange programs and to further collaborative research

going to address all the social problems that have been created because of economic development. Because of that, there's been a huge expansion in social work education.”

As a result, China is looking to schools like the University of Calgary to help advance their social work education, to create partnerships and to help develop a generation of social work leaders in the country. The goal isn't, as Tam and Kwok both emphasize, to import the Canadian model, but rather to form a mutually beneficial partnership as China builds their own solution.

“We would not say that we know how to handle the situation they're dealing with better than they do,” says Tam. “But there is a lot of experience we can share and we can work with them to develop an indigenous social work model and practice in China.”

Kwok and Tam, who are a husband and wife team, have forged a number of Chinese partnerships and exchanges over the years and have been involved – directly and peripherally – since social work education began in mainland China around 2000.

The two recently travelled to Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, with Faculty of Social Work Dean

Jackie Sieppert, PhD, RSW, and Associate Dean Ellen Perrault, PhD, RSW, as part of a delegation that signed a formal cooperation agreement with Sun Yat-sen University, one of China's largest southern universities, for student and faculty exchange programs and collaborative research.

“China has declared that they are going to train three million social workers by 2021”

“Our social work profession, and University of Calgary, has an incredible opportunity to learn from the way the Chinese government has launched almost a *million* social work professionals into their neighbourhoods over the past six years,” reflects Ellen Perrault, Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning. “Our Faculty aims to provide support to our burgeoning international profession and to our multitudes of new colleagues in China.”

The *miyo ohpikinawasiwin* Project: Growing our Children Well

by Sharon Steinhauer, MSW, RSW

The social work profession is called by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommendations to right a wrong – to address the large numbers of Indigenous children in government care and to honour Indigenous wisdom and culture in a restorative journey. This is happening in the North Central Region through a partnership project between Children's Services and University nuhelot'jne thaiyots'į nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills (UnBQ) to improve outcomes for Indigenous children. In a pipe ceremony in 2014, Elder Leona Makokis and President Vince Steinhauer acknowledged the shared vision and united the partners in their collective intention to offer more meaningful interventions for families. A leadership team drives the efforts in the *miyo ohpikinawasiwin* project (growing our children well) to establish relationship-based service delivery which acknowledges the strengths and abilities that each party brings to the table. Social workers engage families through a guided process to 'lift them up' to immediate and long-term success rather than impose government solutions.

UnBQ is situated in a former Indian Residential School and offers a wide range of seminars and activities for anyone wanting to explore the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and understand contemporary realities. All Child and Family Services (CFS) staff and contracted agencies in the region can regularly access *Joining*



University nuhelot'jne thaiyots'į nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills, located in a former Residential School

the Circle, a two-day seminar with a tour and sweat lodge ceremony which opens the relational dialogue. This workshop is followed two months later with a day to discuss how the first two days influenced the way that CFS staff understands and works with Indigenous people, and also extends knowledge about historic and intergenerational trauma. A critical point is made that knowledge and skills around safety were removed from Indigenous families in residential schools and a restorative relationship would work at putting that knowledge back into family systems.

Social workers engage families through a guided process to 'lift them up' to immediate and long-term success rather than impose government solutions.

In July 2016, CFS provided funds to contract a part-time cultural guide for staff and families in Cold Lake, Bonnyville, and St. Paul as a next step to strengthen relationships. Dr. Leona Makokis conducted a pipe ceremony in each

community and meets regularly with staff to increase cultural understanding and facilitate connections to cultural supports for families. Additionally, the staff in these three offices attended an intensive four-day workshop titled *omanitew* to learn about helper-client relationships characterized by mindfulness, warmth and generosity. An ongoing project component is the development of program indicators that would accurately assess the impact and value of services by and for Indigenous people and service agencies. Among these are: Indigenous identity, social inclusion, traditional parenting, trauma, healing and ceremony.

A restorative approach is one that requires us to 'do what we can to redress the harm and make changes to ensure it does not happen again' (Reconciliation in Child Welfare: Touchstones of Hope for Indigenous Children, Youth, and Families, 2006)

A *restorative approach* requires a relationship-based process, with defined protocols, to bring together those who have caused harm through their wrongdoing with those they have directly or indirectly harmed. A *restorative approach* engages families to build immediate safety plans as the focus for collective vision and sustained action, and then facilitates a transition into healing or family wellness plans through extended families and community support.

The *miyo ohpikinawasiwin* project aligns with current Ministry practices and the *Signs of Safety* approach, which works best when the spirit and intent of this approach is understood as circle practice. Circles hold everyone equal and bring collective minds together to determine what is in the best interests of children while holding parental rights and responsibility as a cornerstone of accountability. Facilitating circles is an essential skill that social workers use, or delegate to circle keepers, at all gatherings throughout the

process. The language used to describe the intent of a circle may vary - safety planning, family circle / meeting, family decision-making or family group conferencing - but circle process is the foundational practice and the protocols of circle engagement are held as the primary principles for dialogue and action.

Circles hold everyone equal and bring collective minds together to determine what is in the best interests of children while holding parental rights and responsibility as a cornerstone of accountability.

The *miyo ohpikinawasiwin* project is strengthening the relationships in the northeast between social workers and those they serve, and is moving into a second year of influencing restorative change. The inspiration and intentions of this project help illuminate and confirm that meeting the recommendations of the TRC is both substantial and possible.

Blackstock, C., Cross, T., George, J., Brown, I., & Formsma, J. (2006). *Reconciliation in Child Welfare: Touchstones of Hope for Indigenous Children, Youth, and Families*. Ottawa, ON, Canada: First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada / Portland, OR: National Indian Child Welfare Association.

SHARON STEINHAUER, MSW, RSW, is Program Lead for the Diploma of Social Work program at University *nuhelot'ine thaiyots'j nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills* near St. Paul.



Asking is an Intervention

by Holly Budd

Every social worker, whether they specialize in the area or not, works with people impacted by domestic violence, says Dr. Gaye Warthe, PhD, RSW, the incoming Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning, with the Faculty of Health, Community and Education at Mount Royal University.

“We’re all dealing with it. We all see it. Alberta has one of the highest rates of domestic violence in Canada and the physical and emotional consequences of abuse for individuals, families and communities are significant,” said Warthe. “If we’re not asking about abuse and violence, we may think that it is not an issue.”

It can be a difficult subject, one that some social workers may feel ill-equipped to deal with but three experienced Alberta social workers believe asking questions is the only way we’ll create true change in the number of people affected by domestic violence.



Dr. Gaye Warthe

Warthe spent several years developing domestic and sexual violence screening protocols for more than 60 different agencies and organizations on behalf of the Calgary Domestic Violence Collective. She said in the mid-90s, it was uncommon to ask directly about the experience of violence and that unless people self-identified domestic violence as an issue, it wasn’t addressed.

The practice of implementing screening about domestic violence was initially met with resistance. The goals of screening are to increase awareness, provide resource information, and to prevent further abuse through early intervention and prevention. The initial pilot screening projects focused on groups that were thought to be less at risk for

intimate partner violence, yet the disclosures were happening at a higher than expected rate, demonstrating that no group is safe or immune to experiencing violence in the home.

“If we’re not asking about abuse and violence, we may think that it is not an issue.”

The success of asking has contributed to screening for domestic violence in emergency departments and other social service agencies in Calgary. If you visit an emergency department, it’s likely you’ll be asked about the experience of violence in your life. The assessment may sound like this: “Violence and the threat of violence in the home is a problem for many and can affect their health. Abuse has many forms: physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, financial and neglect. We ask all patients and families about maltreatment and violence in their lives. Is this a concern for you or your children?”

Today, screening has its critics but Warthe says that the consistency of universally asking the question creates an assessment opportunity that doesn’t target specific groups or rely on indicators of risk that may or may not be apparent.

“Screening is about letting people know that the issue is so common, we ask everyone. By opening it up that way, we have an opportunity to intervene in a very different way.”

Warthe says she teaches students that every assessment should include an assessment of dating, domestic and sexual violence.



There may be some reluctance on the part of social workers to ask questions as they are unsure of how to deal with the fallout resulting from a disclosure.

Warthe says social workers don't need to have all the answers, that there are many resources specializing in domestic and sexual violence in every community, including 24/7 support lines at shelters. "It is our obligation as social workers to be familiar with resources," she said. "Domestic violence shelters are a good resource for information for professionals and for clients. If you do not have access to a shelter in your community, shelters can be accessed by phone and information is available on their websites."

Another cause of reluctance may be the addition of children to the equation. Some social workers might avoid asking the question because they don't want to add to the victim's stress by having to initiate a child welfare referral.

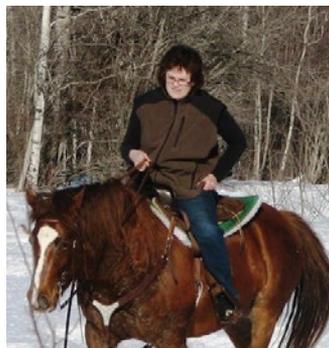


Cindy Haugen

"A child welfare report needs to be made if there are children in the home witnessing violence," says Cindy Haugen, BSW, RSW, Emergency Social Worker at Edmonton's Royal Alexandra Hospital. "This can be a key result of asking about violence in the home.

Asking IS an intervention, because it may result in mandated supports for the victim and the children in the home."

Assessment is only one of many challenges Cindy sees. She recounts the story of an emergency room client who was severely assaulted by her intimate partner, and because of her lack of a permanent address, was unable to access domestic violence shelter space. Cindy recalls the situation with frustration at the lack of resources for this vulnerable victim, and remembers it as 'heartbreaking'.



Jacquie Aitken-Kish

Jacquie Aitken-Kish, BSW, RSW, is the Executive Director of PACE (Providing Assistance, Counseling & Education), a community support, sexual assault and trauma centre in Grande Prairie. She has worked in the area of domestic violence and sexual abuse for nearly four decades and was a

founding member of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, the Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Centres and the Grande Prairie and Area Prevention of Family Violence Network. She believes the fear of asking tough questions not only eliminates the possibility of a good assessment but also the opportunity to intervene or stop a situation that is affecting not just the victim but children as well.

“The failure to address family violence and battering leaves children vulnerable to issues for the rest of their lives. It’s well documented that children exposed to domestic violence have higher rates of physical and emotional problems,” Aitken-Kish said. In addition, there is a high correlation between child abuse and children exposed to domestic violence. In a family where there is domestic violence, 30 to 60 per cent of the time, the children are also abused.

The initial challenge is identifying situations where domestic violence is a problem. Aitken-Kish says one of her biggest concerns is very few social workers have had the training on how to do an assertive intervention in determining if there is domestic violence.

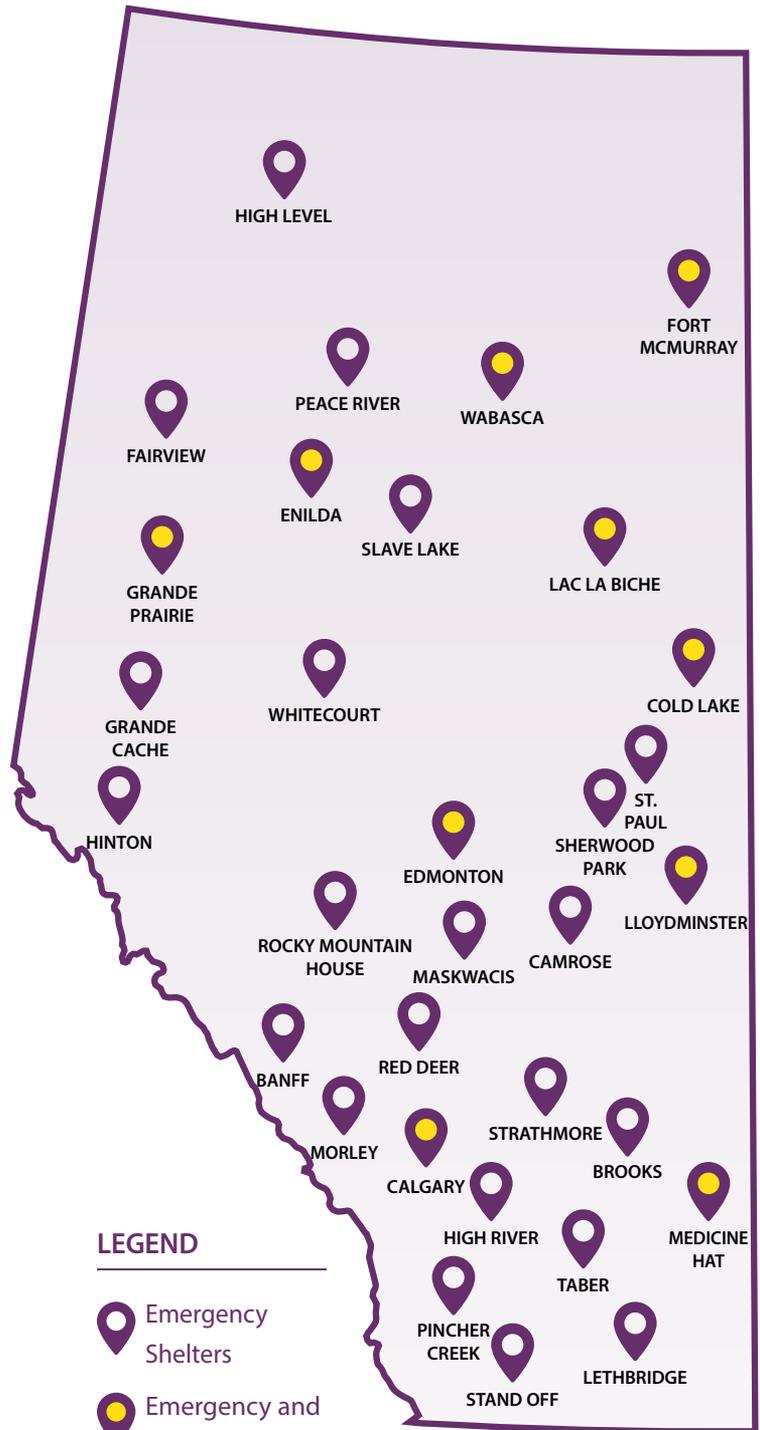
Aitken-Kish thinks some social workers avoid tough, direct questions because of what they may discover.

“I think we want to avoid violence. We want to make things nicer than they are. If I do not ask the questions and am not ready for any answer, my client is going to protect me from that knowledge,” she said. “We’re too afraid to ask the person what’s going on in a relationship. We don’t want to be judgmental or hurtful.”

“Asking IS an intervention, because it may result in mandated supports for the victim and the children in the home.”

“We know a lot but we’re not using that information to do good intervention. Our fear of looking at what is going on in that relationship directly prevents us from getting good information. If we haven’t even asked, we can’t do a good risk assessment.”

ALBERTA COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S SHELTERS MEMBER SHELTERS



Map from: www.acws.ca/shelters

Warthe reflects on her early years as a social worker and says it's the questions she didn't ask that she regrets, "There were many times I could have been more helpful and better supported women who were trying to parent under extraordinarily difficult circumstances without telling anyone they were dealing with domestic violence. I'd like to think new social workers are better prepared to identify, intervene and prevent domestic violence."

I'd like to think new social workers are better prepared to identify, intervene and prevent domestic violence.

Post-secondary institutions in the last few years have been working diligently to develop and implement sexual violence policies, a move Warthe applauds but is concerned that the focus on sexual violence marginalizes other forms of domestic or dating violence. She would like to see the development of dating, domestic and sexual violence policies that offer a range of activities associated with prevention and early intervention. This would increase awareness of risk, resources, consent, response to disclosure and strategies for bystander interventions.

Warthe says after years of research and learning about domestic violence and sexual violence, it's time to start applying what we know to reduce domestic violence and its impacts. Nobody is better placed than social workers to lead this change.

If we don't ask questions, we might miss it," said Warthe, "We're social workers. Assessment and intervention is what we do. We're good at it."

Journey to a Domestic Violence Shelter

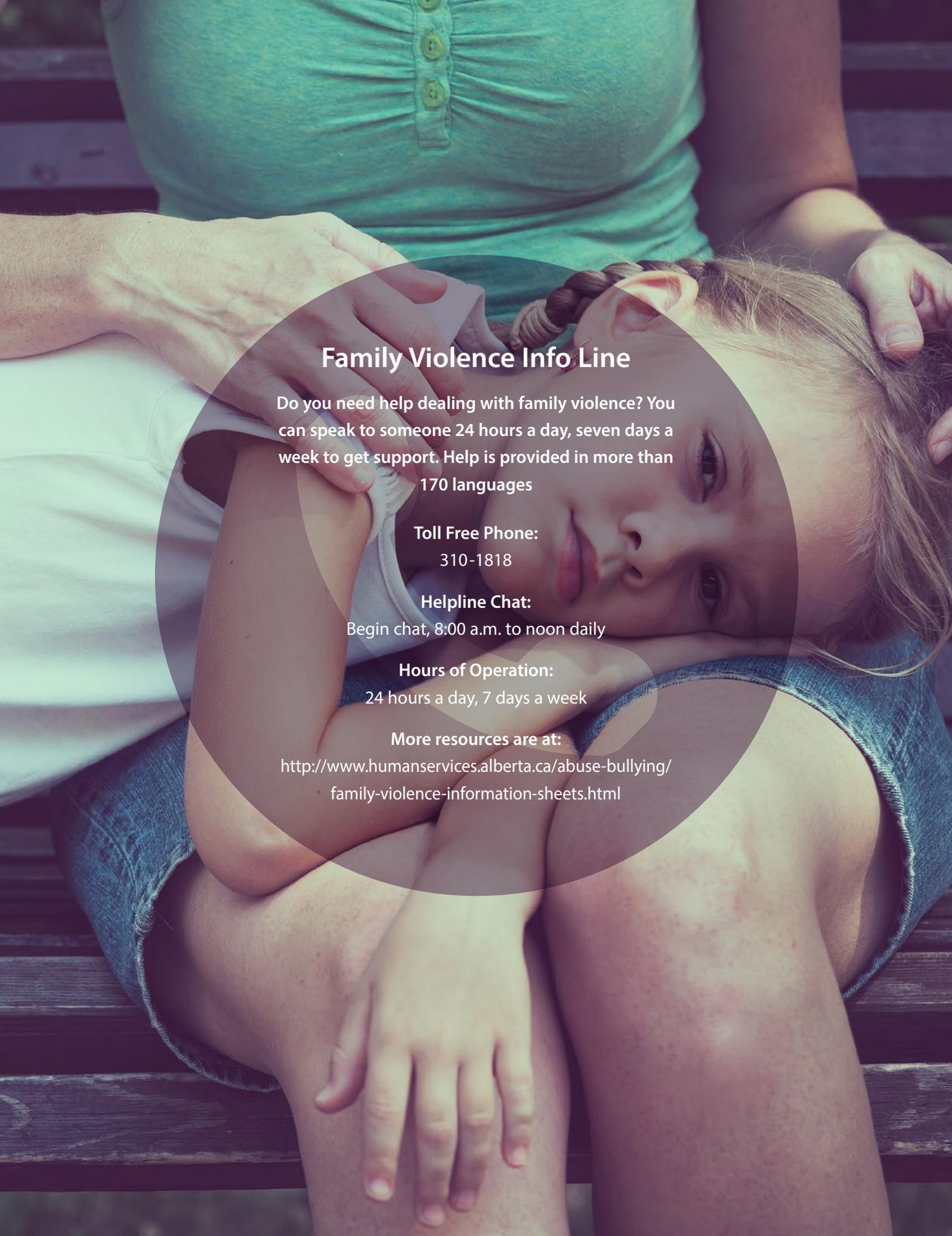
by Shannon Conner, BSW, RSW

*the dreams of "us" are now long gone
and I feel weary as a worn out rag
but you will never have another chance
to use me as your punching bag*

Shannon Conner is a social worker who has a passion for supporting victims of domestic violence. This is an excerpt from a poem she wrote to honour the healing journeys of those victims.

HOLLY BUDD is a communications professional who loves living and working in Edmonton.





Family Violence Info Line

Do you need help dealing with family violence? You can speak to someone 24 hours a day, seven days a week to get support. Help is provided in more than 170 languages

Toll Free Phone:
310-1818

Helpline Chat:
Begin chat, 8:00 a.m. to noon daily

Hours of Operation:
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

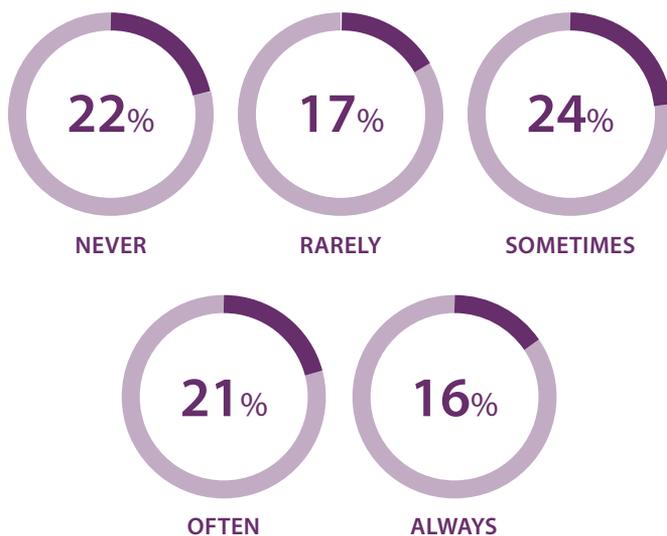
More resources are at:
<http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/abuse-bullying/family-violence-information-sheets.html>

Feminist Identity and Social Work Heroes

by Mary Valentich, PhD, RSW

In your workplace, do you refer to yourself or present yourself as a feminist?

I asked the audience this question during my keynote address at the 2017 ACSW Conference. Here are the results collected from those in the audience who wished to participate:

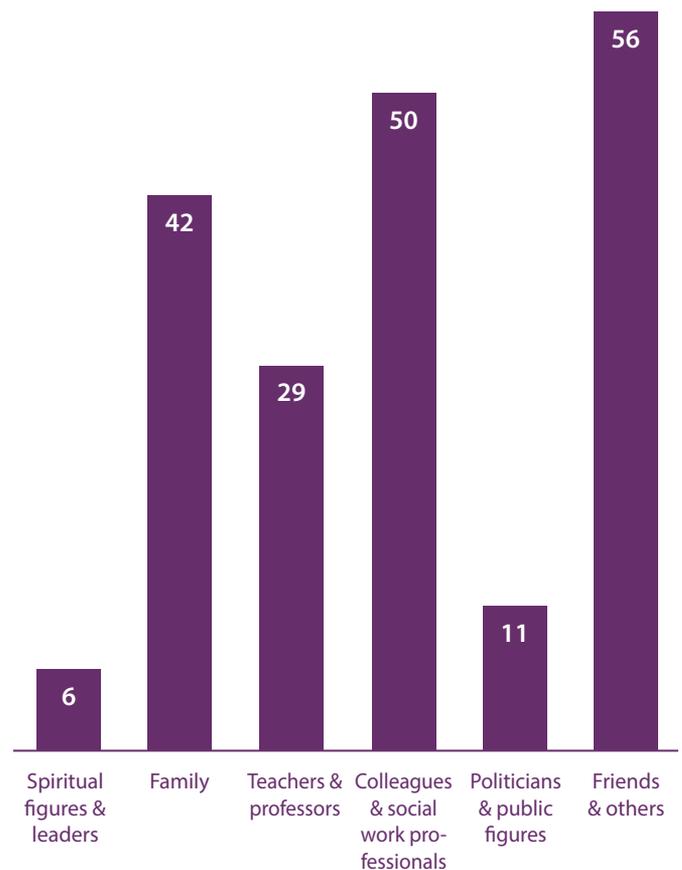


REFLECTING ON THE RESPONSES:

...Some persons favour feminist perspectives, but have not incorporated a sense of themselves as a feminist in their identity. Some workplaces have clearly identified a feminist set of principles and values as guidelines for staff; others have not. There is, of course, no prescription within social work regarding one's identity, personal or professional. However, given the influence of feminist perspectives on most areas of practice, from clinical to policy to research, one's views about feminist beliefs and practices are worthy of exploration.

Who are your social work heroes?

This was my second question during the keynote. I identified three of my heroes in terms of my career development as a feminist practitioner. There were many responses posted on a bulletin board during the conference. Here is just a sampling of the types of heroes that inspired the social workers in the audience.



I appreciate all who chose to identify their heroes, and hope that social workers will let those people know how much they mean to you.

Advocacy After Retirement

by George Jason, MSW, RSW

Throughout our careers, social workers often advocate for clients, and challenge practices and policies. Our responses might be instinctual but are usually attuned to the Canadian Social Work Code of Ethics, which unambiguously states that

"Social workers promote fairness and the equitable distribution of resources, act to reduce barriers and expand choice for all persons...."

Each career stage has its own window through which advocacy takes place. As our professionalism builds from the beginning, through the middle and to the end of our careers, we develop increased experience and competence. In retirement, with no formal connection with work and with no organizational allegiance to an employer, there is an opportunity in surprisingly informal and ad hoc ways to expand the scope of our advocacy. To have skills practiced in a social work career lie dormant is not to acknowledge gifts which are often in short supply. Very much like a jazz player who knows the formal structure and the discipline involved in music, the retired social worker is free to improvise with ears attuned to years of listening and engaging others.

I anticipated retirement six months before it took place by flexing my advocacy muscles on a grand scale. I had little to lose, I thought. Reprimands might occur perhaps, but I was concerned about the distressingly long wait times in a particular health region. This same issue surfaces often now. Seniors have to wait in active treatment hospitals until a bed is available in their community. Being absent from their communities and families, even though treatment had been concluded, can be distressing and significantly impact their quality of life. So off went a letter to the local MLA, with copies to the regional health director and the placement coordinator.

The reaction took longer than I expected. First there was a phone call from the regional health manager's assistant inquiring who I was. When I told her I was a social worker, the conversation went no further. My impression, paranoid as it might have been, was that as a social worker there was no need to address my concerns further. I did not have the presence of mind to press my concerns further during the phone call. My organization's response included an enquiry and a comment on my employee file. Weeks later, the remarks on my file were withdrawn, I assumed by a possible supporter. I chose not to ferret out my benefactor. Later I received an anonymous brochure of alternate housing planned in that region.

Each career stage has its own window through which advocacy takes place.

A jazz musician's role after active employment, like a social worker's, is to enjoy the pleasure of skills developed over a lifetime, with less caution in trying new things and greater freedom and time to explore options. There is time to talk to people virtually of any rank, if you are purposeful, determined and informed. And it's not "fake" news that you are gathering but substantive information about how to make a difference on a small or large scale.

GEORGE spent most of his career working within mental health counselling and treatment settings. In retirement, he became involved in the Edmonton and Red Deer Social Action /Social Justice interest groups. Originally from South Africa, small town Central Alberta has become his home.



Understanding Underutilization of Counselling in Immigrants

by Courtney Ng, BSW, RSW

Counselling is an underutilized service among high-risk and gang-involved immigrant youth. I learned this during my involvement in a university-community collaborative project that provides wraparound support to those groups. I have seen the validity and effectiveness of counselling so I wanted to understand what prevented immigrants from reaching out, and whether there were gaps within counselling services. This inspired me to review the academic research, in hopes of providing awareness and support for social workers, and allowing our profession to aid these vulnerable populations.

As I engaged in the body of literature and conversations with youth workers, I was reminded of my own experience. Years ago, I asked my mother, an immigrant from China, if she would ever consider counselling. Even though she acknowledged the good counselling could bring, she said no. She explained that rearranging her work schedule would be too complicated. I remember feeling frustrated by this response, as it seemed so trivial. She reminded me that providing for the family was of far greater importance to her than what she could experience in counselling. She said she could not allow her own problems to hinder her ability to provide for the family.

My mother's perspective lends support to how cultural beliefs and values may impact one's decision to seek counselling. Indeed, Asian cultures emphasize family, emotional control and saving face, which can conflict with Western values of individual growth and self-determination (Loya et al, 2010), or Western methods of expressing emotional vulnerability. Due to limited culturally competent services, immigrants and racialized individuals anticipate a disregard towards their cultural and religious beliefs.

For example, some African American youth see counselling as an activity for the white middle class, and would not trust white counsellors to be able to understand their lived experiences and be credible sources of support (Duncan & Johnson, 2007; Thakore-Dunlap & Van Velsor, 2015). I believe that this speaks to the social and systemic barriers that have created the sense that certain groups are more entitled to receive help, which exposes the lack of inclusivity in services.

“Social workers need to create open dialogue with culturally diverse clients about the nature of counselling”

Counselling hesitancy has also been attributed to the lack of understanding about counselling, existing social stigma, and the need for emotional protection. A long-standing misconception is that counselling should be a last resort. The pervasive stigma against those seeking counselling support has led to the belief that the use of counselling services equates to inferiority and weakness. For some individuals, the hesitancy to seek counselling can be a defense mechanism to avoid anxiety-provoking memories or emotions. For others, such hesitancy can come from the need to protect the integrity of the family by avoiding disclosure and admittance of dysfunction.

In addition, immigrants are less likely to be familiar with, or even know how to access counselling. There is an overarching fear among immigrants that by accessing counselling services, authorities would misuse the information and bring harm to their families. Many do not know what counselling is, feel like they do not have a need for it, and are more concerned about meeting their own basic needs.

In order to engage more immigrants in counselling services, social workers need to create open dialogue with culturally diverse clients about the nature of counselling, and convey that it is a safe place to discuss personal issues. I realized that when we work with immigrants, there is a need to accommodate and adjust our services to meet the needs of immigrant families. While not always possible, meeting in a location where the family feels comfortable has the capacity to remove barriers. School and home settings should be considered, as counselling that takes place in an office can create the perception of power and dominance. Prior to meeting in person, I recommend connecting by phone to answer questions informally and develop familiarity and rapport. In doing so, families can address their concerns before committing to counselling.

My review of the research, along with my own family experience, has taught me that social workers must first recognize the significance of addressing basic needs and resources for immigrant clients; there is no room for these families to consider their emotional and mental well-being until they have the necessities to thrive. Social work must strive to build bridges that meet these vulnerable populations more than halfway, in order to share the benefits of counselling.



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Breaking New Ground: Social Workers As Designated Capacity Assessors

by Cardinal Fomradas, MSW, BSW

In 2009, the Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act (AGTA) came into force. This act instituted new regulations about capacity assessments and who can perform them in Alberta. The AGTA established that capacity assessments can be completed by all family physicians, psychologists and psychiatrists as well as by designated capacity assessors (DCAs). This was a major change for the profession of social work in Alberta. Registered social workers are now eligible, with training, to become designated capacity assessors, as are registered nurses, registered psychiatric nurses, and occupational therapists.

What is capacity and capacity assessment?

The AGTA has defined capacity to be “the ability to understand information relevant to making a decision about a personal matter and the ability to appreciate the reasonably foreseeable consequences of the decision”. Capacity is not global; rather, it has multiple domains, including: health care, accommodation, choice of associates, participation in areas such as legal matters, social activities, education or training, employment activities, and financial matters. A client may have capacity in some of these domains, and not in others.

If an individual has been assessed as lacking capacity in any of these domains, the assessor completes a capacity assessment report (form #4) and submits it before the courts as part of a guardianship or trusteeship application. An individual may have a private guardian or trustee, typically a family member. A guardian has decision-making power about an individual in the domains where the individual has been deemed to lack capacity. A trustee has decision-making power about an individual's finances, or in other words, control of their money. For those individuals without anyone available or willing to be their guardian and/or trustee, the court may appoint a public guardian and/or a public trustee.

Losing decision-making autonomy can have far-reaching consequences for clients. It means that the client is no longer able to make their own decisions in the domains where the individual has been assessed to lack capacity. The individual will now have a guardian, or a trustee, or both, who will now be making decisions for them. For example, a guardian can direct that the client be placed in long term care. A trustee will now control a client's money. A capacity assessment can change a client's life forever, as a court uses the clinical assessment of the DCA, or assessor, to decide whether the client has the capacity to make their own decisions.

“Losing decision-making autonomy can have far-reaching consequences for clients.”

How does a Social Worker become a DCA?

Every year, the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT) holds a three-day designated capacity assessor training class. Applications are posted on the OPGT web site (www.humanservices.alberta.ca/guardianship-trusteeship/resources-for-capacity-assessors.html). The selection process for the training is very competitive. Applicants submit their résumé and an explanation why they are a good candidate, along with a reference from their manager. Each year the training class is held in a different community.

Once accepted into training, participants learn a very specific methodology for completing a capacity assessment, including a structured clinical interview in which the DCA evaluates the thinking process of the client and determines if the client has capacity through evaluating the responses of the client. At the conclusion of the training, participants must write and obtain a passing score on the capacity assessment examination.

The DCA designation is valid for two years. In order to renew the DCA designation, a DCA must have completed three capacity assessments within those two years. As well, the DCA must rewrite and pass the capacity assessment examination.

Performing Assessments

If a DCA is assessing the capacity of a client who has had a brain injury or a stroke, a neuropsychological assessment may provide additional clinical data. A Mental Status Examination (MSE) is another tool familiar to most social workers in the mental health field that can give a picture of the client's current mental functioning as well as determine if the client is orientated in all spheres.

A DCA may perform capacity assessments through their work place, or as part of a private practice. The OPGT has established a fee guide for DCAs doing private practice assessments. A DCA may charge up to \$700 for completing an assessment for both guardianship and trusteeship, or up to \$500 if the assessment is for either guardianship or trusteeship, not both. A DCA may charge extra for other incidental costs such as mileage if traveling to a rural area, and can also petition the court to charge a higher fee if the assessment is going to be very complex.

Only in Alberta and Ontario are social workers able to become designated capacity assessors. A social worker who is also a DCA has the same authority as a physician, psychologist or psychiatrist in matters of capacity assessments. In conclusion, social workers gaining authorization to become designated capacity assessors is a huge leap forward for registered social workers and the social work profession in Alberta.

It is important to note that ACSW has not established any guidelines for social workers who are completing capacity assessments. The capacity assessment methods discussed in this article are not guidelines from ACSW.



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CARDINAL FOMRADAS has a B.Ed, BSW and MSW and is a social worker with Alberta Health Services. He is one of the few social workers in the province who is also a Designated Capacity Assessor.



Welcome to New RSWs

Total Membership as of July 10, 2017: 7,997

New Registrants

Ayan Abdirahman	Destiny Rose Felker	Darcee Rae Marose	Savanah Marie Schmidt
Keri Adams	Katelyn Elizabeth Gannon	Kimberly Ann Masliuk	Cheryl Ann Marie Schwalfenberg
Purna Nanda Adhikari	Nicole Gartner	Mahersha Massey	Amanda Sears
Donna Lee Ahkimnachie	Bipul Gautam	Amrit Kaur Matharoo	Deena Starlene Katherine Seaward
Lindsay Alfaro	Rebekah Marie-Lise Joy Gauthier	Jehan Mawani	Jason Alan Seaward
Naaila Rukshana Ali	Kaitlyn Gillard	Brendan George McCauley	Veedha Seeburuth
Kim Allenby	Natasha Eileen Gillis	Kelly Jilleen McKeeman	Jasmyn Raquel Miller Shedden
Sindujah Ananthakumar	Marita Gronberg	Kelsey Milligan	Kendra Donelle Shewchuk
Evan Nathan Arthur Anderson	Stephanie Lynn Gruninger	Aurelie Delphine Minka Ndem	Kristen Amy Skagen
Heather Andrew	Kirsty Marie Hagan	Lisa Marie Montgomery	Bruce Clinton Skorobohach
David Owusu Ansah	Alana Lauren Hansen	Ashley Mooney	Alysha M. Smith
Lorna Rose Anthony	Shelley Anne Hansen	Winnett Paidamoyo Motsi	Randi Lee Smith
Abelt Leke Asong	Anna V Harpe	Suraya Mustamandy	Shannon Dawn Smith
Chauntel Auktor	Katelyn Harry	Carrie Grace Nanimahoo	Keiara Dawn Solomon
Paige Jeanne Aulenback	Ella Yin Man Ho	Hanneke Nap Dewit	Kathleen Anne Soucy
Sandra Ifeyinwa Bank-Imudia	Andrew Hoffman	Dalyn Shelby Naylor	Kayla Desiree Spelliscy
Emily Barber	Katrina Lee Holmlund	Courtney Noel Ng	Monique L. St. Denis
Lauren Barker	Ana Sarah Hrinco	Isabella Lekonia Ngumula	Madison Dorothy Steele
Jenna Leigh Beck	Shalene Randalyn Hughes	Angela Faith Nieuwenhuis	Aneta Stojneva Cicovska
Michelle Anne Bennison	Shirley Marie Hutchison	Erin Nobles	Amanda Stone
Amos Bere	Charlotte Terumi Ikuta	Laura Nyaboke Nyamweya	Cynthia Louise Stone
Bethany Blois	Nadine Frances Jackson	Brie-Anne Jade Opdendries	Alice Styles
Cora Jeanette Bolt	Kristen Marie Janostin	Brightina Opoku Yeboah	Victoria Svanda
Annette Bourque	Douglas Ryan Johnson	Quincy Kiyomi Palmer	Angella Jacqueline Tembo
James Brothers	Makayla Margaret Johnson	Natasha Paquette	Jill Susanne Thompson
Verlean L. Buziak	Debbie Annette Johnstone	Morghan Parratt	Sarah Dawn Thompson
Sabrina Cabrera	Carolyn Kaldy	Lorinda Elizabeth Patterson	Trena Michelle Thompson
Georgia Raven Calligan-Dyck	Judy Kamau	Mary Florentine Payne	Su Xia Tian
Destinee Campbell	Francis Brian Kelly	Marla Lindsay Peecheemow	Andre Michael Tinio
Melissa Campbell	Lisa Marie Kemp	Shreya Pejavar	Sarah Carol Todd
Sherry Lee Cardinal	Meghan Kate Keswick	Marylinda D. Peters	Kerry Colleen Tolman
Elise Tressa Marie Chamberland	Christie Kijewski	Tut Yut Phot	Mike Tran
Dunia Clemente Moctezuma	Taneil Renee Kolsza	Clayton Michael William Pobereznay	Derk van Deelen
Natalia Clovechok	Olimpia Katarzyna Korzeniewski	Ernest Peter Poitras	Annette Maria Vandekerkhove
Crystal Pamela Combdon	Evelyn Krabbendam	Abdur Rahim	Jessica Marie Vinson
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Laura Anne Devlin	Kathy Le	Taylor Rae Robinson	Tracy Elaine White
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Zetilda Ellis	Ramona Consuela Madar	Christopher Daniel Schmidt	
	Alyssa Mantello	Natasha Diana Schmidt	

For your information

2017 Alberta Hospice Palliative Care Association Roadshow

This Thing Called Grief: It's Complicated

October 13

High Prairie

Presented by High Prairie & District Holistic Palliative Care Society

A hands-on, full day workshop for caregivers, family members, community volunteers and healthcare professionals.

Details at www.ahpca.ca.

2017 Responsible Gambling Symposium :

"Multiculturalism – Bridging Gaps"

September 26

Edmonton

Sponsored by Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, Alberta Health & Alberta Health Services

This event brings together stakeholders to share best practices for responsible gambling and the prevention and treatment of problem gambling. Contact Responsible.Gambling@aglc.ca for attendance details.

Children are our Sacred Bundle Conference

November 1 & 2

Calgary

Sponsored by Kamotaan Consulting

This conference focuses on the most important resource in every Indigenous community, the children.

Visit CAOSB.ca or call 1-800-445-8601 to register.

Primary Health Care (PHC) Integration Network

Coalition for Integration

The PHC Integration Network is focused on improving transitions of care between primary health providers and acute care, emergency departments, specialized services and other community services. The Coalition of Integration is being established to stimulate innovative thinking and solutions to integration challenges.

If you are interested in the Coalition for Integration, contact Jacquie Lovely, Director of Integration and Innovation, Primary Health Care, at JeanJacque.Lovely@ahs.ca.

The Advocate's For Your Information section gives preference to Alberta-based educational opportunities and non-profit events for social workers. Send your submissions to Raveena Parsons at raveenap@acsw.ab.ca.

Visit the ACSW Events Calendar to find more training, events and workshops, at acsw.ab.ca, Social Workers tab, Calendar of Events.

ACSW's Partners in Advocacy

Alberta Alliance on Mental Illness
and Mental Health

aamimh.ca

Edmonton Social Planning Council
edmontonsocialplanning.ca

Friends of Medicare
friendsofmedicare.org

Public Interest Alberta
pialberta.org

Parkland Institute
ualberta.ca/parkland

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of the *Advocate* is
SEPTEMBER 15, 2017

All editorial inquiries to Charity Lui
Charity@acsw.ab.ca

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for the **WINTER 2017** issue
of the *Advocate* is
OCTOBER 15, 2017

All ad inquiries to Raveena Parsons
raveenap@acsw.ab.ca

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A panoramic view of the Edmonton skyline, featuring several prominent skyscrapers and a mix of modern and older architecture. The foreground shows a park area with trees in autumn colors.

Call for Proposals

DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 29, 2017

SOCIAL JUSTICE & RESILIENCE: MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER 2018 CONFERENCE

ACSW 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE: SOCIAL JUSTICE & RESILIENCE: MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

MARCH 22ND, 23RD & 24TH

DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON HOTEL – EDMONTON

CALL FOR PROPOSALS: DEADLINE SEPTEMBER 29, 2017

LOOK FOR CALL FOR PROPOSALS AT ACSW.AB.CA – SOCIAL WORKERS – ANNUAL CONFERENCE