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MAGAZINE

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- **Dani Huff**

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Canada needs to invest in mental health supports for rural youth, says 4-H CEO

By Marco Vigliotti, courtesy of iPolitics

Young people in rural Canada are far less likely to access mental health services than those living in larger cities, largely because of limited options and poor access, MPs heard Tuesday.

But even when services are available, rural youth are still less willing to use them, possibly because of confidentiality concerns and the difficulty in maintaining “anonymity in small communities,” interim CEO of 4-H Canada Erin Smith told the House agriculture and agri-food committee.

“We know that rural and agriculture youth, when compared to their urban peers, face additional risk factors and barriers,” she said, noting that Canadians under the age of 20 living in rural communities are four-to-six times more likely to take their own lives than those in urban areas.



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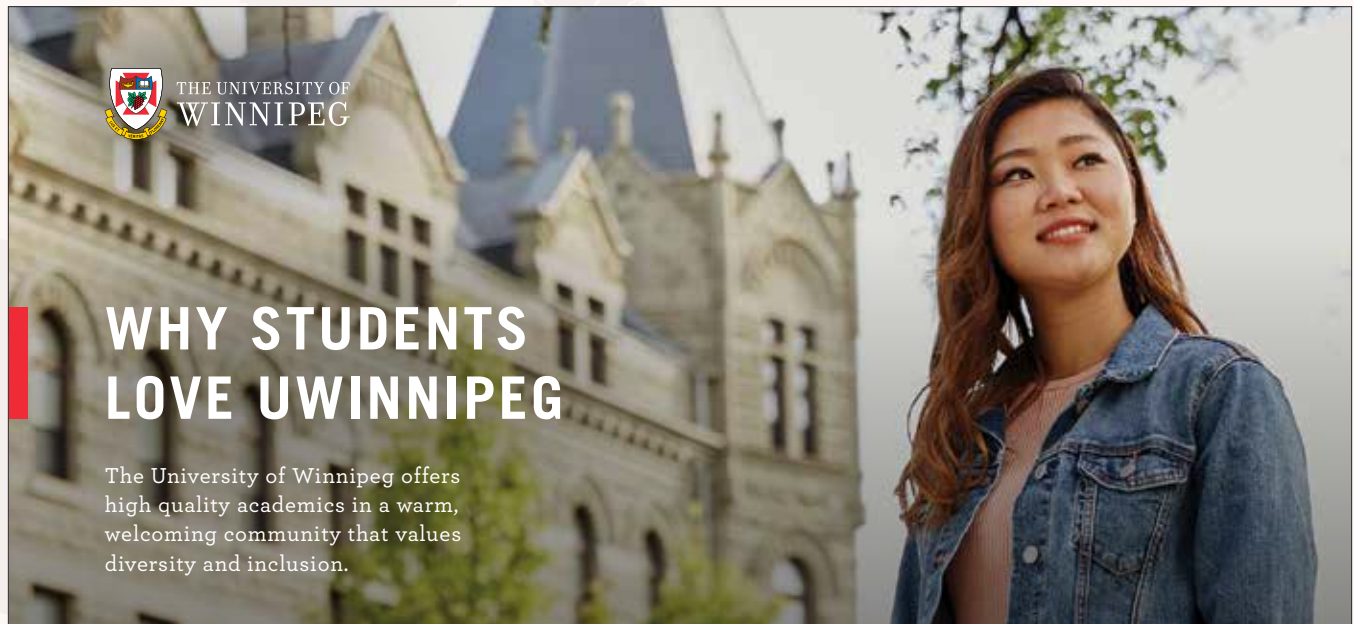
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Smith was there to brief committee members on the work of the farming-oriented youth development organization in the mental health space, as part of the committee’s study on the mental health challenges facing Canadian farmers, ranchers and producers. 83% of 4-H youth

members live in rural and agricultural communities, including 51% that live on farms, according to Smith.

Conservative MP Earl Dreshen successfully moved a motion at a committee meeting last November to



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“We know that rural and agriculture youth, when compared to their urban peers, face additional risk factors and barriers. Canadians under the age of 20 living in rural communities are four-to-six times more likely to take their own lives than those in urban areas.”

hear from 4-H representatives, as well as officials from Farm Credit Canada and Farm Management Canada.

It came after Agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay announced that Crown corporation Farm Credit Canada would be working with

4-H Canada and industry groups to create a national program to support the mental and physical health of 4-H youth, much to the surprise of several committee members.

As part of the announcement, the FCC pledged \$55,000 for the National 4-H Healthy Living Initiative, which will be made available to more than 7,700 volunteer leaders and 25,000 4-H members across Canada.

The initiative will be rolled out in three phases each focusing on a “different area of well-being,” Smith explained to members. The first phase, already underway, aims to equip 4-H leaders with the resources to identify mental health issues and connect young people with the necessary supports, she said.

Smith said the other phases would be launched later this year and focus on active living and nutrition, with 4-H opting to take a “holistic” approach to improving mental health. She also noted that 4-H Canada was pleased to see the Trudeau government appoint a new rural economic development minister and see the portfolio as an opportunity to invest in rural youth.

Smith said consultations with 4-H youth members across Canada identified mental health as one of their biggest challenges and called for greater support and resources in this area.

Young members, Smith said, had told 4-H leadership they are “stressed out about being stressed out,” and feel “discouraged” about discussing their own stresses, when compared to the issues facing adults.

With more than half of 4-H members saying they want to find employment in the agriculture sector, Smith added that Canada “couldn’t afford not to invest meaningfully in the well-being” of the country’s rural youth. 🍁 CSC

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Pilot program aims to help Island youth become leaders

By Jessica Doria-Brown, courtesy of CBC News



Women's Network P.E.I. is putting on a new pilot project to help Island youth become leaders in their communities.

The Hub P.E.I. is a series of workshops where high school students meet once a month to talk about the issues they are passionate about. They'll learn skills on how to communicate their ideas, such as public speaking and how to make a presentation.

Jillian Kilfoil, the executive director of Women's Network P.E.I., said the goal is to help youth become leaders now, not just in the future. She said the messaging will come from the youth, and the topics and issues they'll be addressing will come from their lived experiences.

'Youth-led, youth-centred'

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"And it's really about us creating those connections for them to have the opportunity to share their knowledge, share their passion with other groups of people, including adults."

youth-centred," she said. "And it's really about us creating those connections for them to have the opportunity to share their knowledge, share their passion with other groups of people, including adults."

Charlottetown is one of six locations in Canada that got funding to put on a pilot project. 

The workshops started in February and will last until spring. Anyone interested can go to the Women's Network P.E.I. website for more information:

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Photo: Cylla von Tiedemann

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'Changing lives through law' goal of new outreach program for Indigenous youth in Thunder Bay

Program brings together law students and elementary school students in justice education project

By Cathy Alex, Courtesy of CBC News



Lisa Del Col, Director of Programs

A Canadian charity, Level, has launched an education and mentorship program at a Thunder Bay elementary school to help children, between the ages of 11 and 14, learn more about the justice system, and maybe even consider a career in law.

The mission of the national organization is to drive change by disrupting prejudice, building empathy and advancing human rights, said Lisa Del Col, the director of programs at Level, which states it's "changing lives through law" on its website.

She explained that the grade six and seven classes at Kingsway Park Public School are taking part in the Indigenous Youth Outreach Program (IYOP).

A volunteer – in this case a student in the Faculty of Law at Lakehead University in the northwestern Ontario city – will run a variety of workshops on the Canadian criminal justice system, "but acknowledging right off the bat this is a colonial system," she said.

Therefore, Indigenous legal traditions and teachings will be incorporated into the program as well.

"We do a mock sentencing circle, we do smudging and we incorporate the eagle feather into the curriculum as well," said Del Col.

Recent Statistics Canada numbers show that Indigenous young people account for 8% of the Canadian population, but make up 46% of incarcerated youth, said Del Col, who is of Algonquin, Italian and Finnish descent.

"We feel [those numbers] are unacceptable and really speak to the systemic issues faced by Indigenous communities across Canada," she said, adding that the IYOP is an attempt to reduce those statistics.

'Build relationships, reduce alienation'

Thunder Bay was chosen as a site for the project, in part because of its history of systemic problems between Indigenous people and the justice system, said Del Col.



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"We all know there are some really negative impacts of the justice system on Indigenous communities and youth, so we're trying to build those relationships and really involve the youth in the justice system in a positive way in the hopes of advancing reconciliation and reducing alienation," she said.

Those problems have been highlighted in reports published in December 2018 by the provincial Office of the Independent Police Review Director, who examined how city police investigate the deaths and disappearances of Indigenous people, as well as report on the actions and attitudes of the Thunder Bay Police Services Board, prepared by Senator Murray Sinclair on behalf of the Ontario Civilian Police Commission.

They were also noted through the recommendations of a coroner's inquest examining the deaths of seven young Indigenous people, who had left their home in remote communities to attend school in Thunder Bay.

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Goal is 'to walk beside each other, to listen'

Del Col said she wants volunteers to approach the program from the mindset of being an ally "because they're going to learn just as much from the youth, as the youth are going to learn from them."

The goal of the program is "for people to walk together, to walk beside each other, to listen to each other, to learn from each other." 

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Beats 2 Borders brings cultures together through hip hop

Newcomer teens express themselves through the art of hip hop

By Dave Molnar, courtesy of CBC News

Nearly 90 newcomer teenagers from around the world are coming together at the New Canadians' Centre of Excellence in downtown Windsor to share in a common interest.

It's not social media or sports. It's hip hop.

The program is called Beats 2 Borders. It's a collaboration between the centre, a non-governmental agency in the U.S., the U.S. consulate and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

"This is an opportunity for youth to come together, explore the universality of hip hop and explore other elements of themselves like leadership, conflict transformation and

"This is an opportunity for youth to come together, explore the universality of hip hop and explore other elements of themselves like leadership, conflict transformation and entrepreneurship."

entrepreneurship," said Jillian Toman, youth programs service manager for the New Canadians' Centre.

The youth spend two days in workshops learning hip hop dance, beat making and emceeing.

The instructors are all from Detroit and accomplished artists in the music industry.

They travel the world putting on Beats 2 Borders workshops as part of a cultural diplomacy and exchange organized through the Meridian International Center, a non-profit organization headquartered in Washington D.C.

"I think our primary goal is, we see the need for young people to feel comfortable in their own skin," said Junious Brickhouse, director of Next Level, an initiative of the Meridian

International Center which recruits the hip hop artist ambassadors.

Most of the kids taking part in the Windsor workshops come from Africa and the Middle East, and it's the first time they have either tried break dancing or beat making - creating electronically synthesized rhythm tracks used in hip hop music.

"They're doing amazing and well beyond my expectations," said Jaci Caprice Clark, vocalist, producer and host of online radio show The Soul Studieux, who was teaching the students the art of beat making using computers.

"It's a good way to get experience in something you really like," said 19 year-old Catholic Central High School student Samuel Obiwale, who has been in Canada for only three months.

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Obiwale never tried beat making before but would like to do it for a living some day.

"I like how we all came together," said 19-year-old Westview High School student Issane Abdallah who came to Canada from Sudan in 2014. She had never danced hip hop before but liked it so much she wants to be a professional dancer.

The kids had a chance to show off what they learned at the Beats 2 Borders Block Party held at the Capitol Theatre. Professional hip hop artists also performed and put on demonstrations. 

How an at-risk youth program is using a \$468K grant to fill a gap left by the city

Mehari Hagos says city-run programs at Water World don't give kids in the area what they truly need

By Sanjay Maru, courtesy of CBC News

If you've ever doubted if good things truly come to those who wait, Mehari Hagos is sure to make you a believer.

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A decade after the 31-year-old Windsor man launched a fitness program for at-risk youth, Hagos ran into some good fortune — nearly half a million dollars in grant money from the province's Ontario Black Youth Action Plan.

The fitness program, called the MH100 Teen Bootcamp, is free and goes beyond the limits of physical fitness. Take "Money Mondays," for example. That's when kids learn about financial literacy. MH100 also offers nutrition education as well.

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The program lives on the upper level of Water World, located in Windsor's Glengarry neighbourhood where there's a population of at-risk youth.

Hagos used to rent the space from the City of Windsor every month, but the grant from the province's Ontario Black Youth Action Plan has allowed him to renovate the space and lease it for a full year. "When we first started, we had 20 kids. And then we grew to over 65 kids. And after the grant, we're up to 150 youth now," said Hagos.

How MH100 is changing lives

MH100 was the turning point for 15-year-old Loay Aly, who moved to Windsor from Egypt in June 2016. Aly said within two weeks of moving to Windsor, he joined the program. At the time, Aly admits he weighed a little more than he does today. When he joined Catholic Central High School as a ninth grader, he tried out for the school's junior basketball team — but he didn't make it.

However, the guidance and motivation of Hagos prevented him from being discouraged. "I have homework club after school, so I do my homework and presentations and

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"My biggest goal from the start was to make sure that kids don't end up in jail, because that's what was happening in Glengarry ... I wanted to stop that." - MH100 founder Mehari Hagos

assignments — and then I come here around using MH-100's workout facilities. Since joining "5 [p.m.]," said Aly, adding he works out every day MH100 two years ago, Aly said he's lost about

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"30 to 40 pounds." And when he tried out for the basketball team again this year, the result was a little different. "I made it."

MH100, however, doesn't just offer kids a place to work out. It also gives them the resources they need to pursue their dreams. "There's some people that don't find basketball shoes, backpacks and stuff like that. So Mehari's the type of person who helps us. He buys it for us," said Aly, adding his parents couldn't afford to buy him new, athletic wear. "He does giveaway days for people that are working hard. Thank God he gave me shoes and my bag."

Hagos said there have been a number of teens from MH100 going on to receive academic and athletic scholarships. "My biggest goal from the start was to make sure that kids don't end up in jail, because that's what was happening in Glengarry," said Hagos. "I wanted to stop that."

Why existing city-run programs aren't enough

MH100 sits on the top floor of Water World. But on the main floor below,

city staff currently run three programs of their own:

- An after-school program which runs daily during the school year from 3:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Lunch time fitness for people who work downtown.
- EarlyON activities for families and their children

According to Water World's managing supervisor Scott Bisson, the after school program serves to complement MH100. He said the city program is targeted toward elementary youth. "We deliver after-school programming and give things for kids to do, and as they get older and are looking for different experiences, his program has been able to fill that role."

But according to Hagos, none of the city's programs are tailored toward the struggles of at-risk youth in the city. The city program, for example, finishes at 6 p.m. But according to Hagos, kids in the area who play in their respective school's basketball teams aren't freed up from practice until 7 p.m. or 8 p.m. Additionally, the city program doesn't run during the summer—when at-risk youth have more time on their hands.

Hagos said he grew up in a home close to Water World, so he knows what kinds of services the neighbourhood youth need. And the city is "missing that one part" with its program. "It's hard for somebody to come and run a program in a neighbourhood where they never grew up in."

The City of Windsor says an average of 25 and 30 participants attend the city's after-school program at Water World daily – about one-sixth of MH-100's attendance numbers.

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The future of MH100

Hagos has been able to install state-of-the-art workout equipment, like turf, dumbbells, punching bags and exercise bikes using money he's received so far. The grant has also allowed him to hire three employees to assist with program operations, as well as a mural artist who is designing inspirational artwork on one of the facility's walls.

The grant is paid to Hagos in monthly installments of \$13,000 for three years, meaning he'll have received \$468,000 by April 1, 2021. Once the funding is a thing of the past, Hagos said he plans on using his connections around the city to keep the program alive. After all, that's how Hagos did it for the first 10 years.

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Sudbury researcher helping youth develop mindfulness through arts-based activities

Courtesy of CBC News with files from Robin De Angelis



Laurentian University researcher, associate professor Diana Coholic has developed a program that teaches young people about the concept of mindfulness using arts-based activities.

Diana Coholic is teaching children how to be more mindful.

The Laurentian University associate professor and researcher has developed a program that teaches young people about the concept of mindfulness, using arts-based activities or methods.

"...children involved in the 12-week holistic arts-based program learn to regulate their emotions and develop self-esteem. Many people today live distracted lives, and Coholic says mindfulness is important to develop from a young age."

Mindfulness is a practice that encourages people to be self-aware and pay attention in the present.

Coholic says children involved in the 12-week holistic arts-based program learn to regulate their emotions and develop self-esteem. Many people today live distracted lives, and Coholic says mindfulness is important to develop from a young age.

"When you're living like that, if somebody says something to you and it makes you angry, or something happens and you start to get anxious, you may not be able to make a choice about that. You might just react," she said. "That's what happens to a lot of these youth in school. They get in trouble because they haven't learned... to identify what these things are, and then to make choices about them."

Youth and other adults who have come through the program report higher self-esteem, improved moods, and better focus for their school or work.

Program funded by national research agency

Coholic's program is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The federal agency, which funds research across the country, is celebrating its 40th anniversary on Wednesday.

According to Coholic, her research has grown over the last 10 years due in part because of funding from the research council. "A lot of our work is really about creating change in people, in communities and even society," she said. "We're just really fortunate that we have a body that funds this kind of work." 



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Be a Counsellor for Everyone

By Sean Dolan



Troy, Sean and Lucas (left to right). It must be Wednesday.

It really happened naturally. Our school has a large Planning for Independence Program (PIP) with a pretty sizeable cohort of special needs students. All “on the spectrum,” these students tugged on my heartstrings with their authenticity and innocence. I also enjoyed engaging with these kids – whether it was on lunch duty or passing them in the hall.

Things changed one day when one of the boys, a burly teen named Troy, waved me over and said, “You know what? You’re old. I am going to call you old man.” And from that day forward, every time he saw me, he’d say, “Hey, old man!” – that is until the day his teachers put a stop to it. They thought it was disrespectful. However, Troy being Troy, he found me in the hall one morning shortly after the old man ban and explained, “I can’t call you old man anymore. My teachers don’t like it.” Then, after a pause, he added, “Instead, I’ll call you grandpa.”

The opening two paragraphs should reveal two things about me: first, I am a pretty good natured guy who enjoys humorous exchanges with students; second, I am old. I am not only in the twilight of my career, I am months away from retirement. Put a fork in me, I’m done – 30 years of service (almost) in the books. To add insult to injury, I look older than I am (a mere 54 years of age) thanks to the white hair gene passed down to me via my Irish heritage. Troy exploited both of these facts.

After about a semester of "Hey grandpa!" greetings in the hallway, Troy and his posse decided to descend on my office every day at lunch. He'd show up with his main man Lucas and a cast of special needs characters (sometimes as many as six kids) that were an absolute joy to be around. They'd huddle into my office for about a half hour and listen to music, watch YouTube videos, and socialize. Eventually, Troy, the most extroverted of the gang, decided that, because I'm so old, he would take over my office because I'd be gone soon. I assume he meant gone to retirement. He even put up a sign that said TROY'S OFFICE to declare his claim for the space the moment I was no longer part of the community.

Of course, I played right along with all of this. I got a huge kick out of how comfortable our special needs students were with coming into Guidance and taking over my office. I am not saying it wasn't taxing – because, at times, it was – but I felt really happy with the fact that these kids had branched out from their regular haunts to hang out in the Guidance Department.

As the "Hey grandpa" semester rolled along, Troy would end his visits with a parting salutation: "Bye grandpa! Love you!" To which I would respond, "Love you too, son." Everyone would giggle (especially the Guidance secretary and the other counsellors) and off went Troy, with Lucas in tow, leaving me to get back to the grindstone* doing various school related chores. This went on for the balance of the semester and was eventually interrupted by summer break.

When Troy came back in September, he told me that his teachers thought it would be better if he limited his visits to once a week. There were a few indicators that this might happen the previous spring. These kids need to understand a few boundaries and I wasn't doing a very good job of establishing those boundaries. Thankfully, the special needs teachers stepped in and did what was best for Troy (and, by extension, me).

Now Troy and Lucas come to visit every Wednesday. Our school puts together a pretty tight daily video announcement program and posts it on YouTube. I reserve Wednesday as the day that I record the Guidance announcements for the show with Troy and Lucas by my side. The students more or less expect that, if Mr. Dolan is on the announcements, Troy and Lucas are going to be with him.

I am telling you this lengthy story to illustrate the main lesson that Troy and Lucas and all of the other special needs students have taught me: I am a counsellor for all students. I am a counsellor for the students who come by things easily and the ones who have a hard time; the ones who excel at sports and the ones who struggle in every game they play; the ones who love the arts and dread the sciences and the ones who delight in the sciences and shy away from the arts. I am a counsellor for kids with needs and kids with special needs.

If Troy didn't decide to reach out with his unsolicited observation regarding my advanced age, I probably would have maintained an arms-length but amiable relationship with the special needs students at our school. Instead, he dubbed me "old man" and did me the honour of allowing me to graduate to the elevated status of "grandpa." This is something I cherish not only because of the endearing nature of our relationship but because it has taught me to be a counsellor for every student I connect with each and every day. ♣CSC

**Back to the grindstone! Only a guy on the verge of retirement would use such an archaic phrase. Fun fact: In days gone by, the expression "back to the old grindstone" referred to the grinding of wheat against a stone until it was converted into meal or flour – a tedious but necessary process for our ancestors. Perhaps this is something I will take up in my retirement. I'll have to ask Troy and Lucas if they think this is a good idea.*

As Sean Dolan will be retiring in June, Canadian School Counsellor magazine is now searching for a practicing Canadian High School Counsellor to take over the Counsellor's Corner column. For more information contact: production@marketzone.ca

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Sean Dolan taught for 20 years before moving into Guidance and Career Education six years ago. He is currently working as a high school guidance counsellor at St. Marcellinus Secondary School in Mississauga, Ontario.

THE RISE OF Smart Phone AND THE FALL OF Student Literacy

By Alison Zenisek



©GettyImages/skynesher

When students in France returned to school in September, they had to leave one of their most precious possessions at home... their smartphone. The French government has banned the use of smartphones, tablets, and smart watches for students 15 and under during the school day, according to the Agence France-Presse. This includes breaks and mealtimes. The new law went into effect on August 5, 2018.

The French government is concerned that these devices are creating dependency and distracting students from their studies. "Our main role is to protect children and adolescents. It is a fundamental role of education, and this law allows it," says education minister Jean-Michael Blanquer. He hailed the legislation as "a law for the 21st century," and said that it would improve discipline among France's 12 million school children.

In Canada, the discussion among educators is often about the benefits and dangers of these ubiquitous devices and the ever consuming social media and games they provide. The question is how attachment and even dependence on these mobile devices contribute to the declining literacy among the young, most notably seen in their poor writing skills. Experts have pondered whether proper English grammar may be on the road to extinction in the brave new world of emoticons, texts, tweets, and short Facebook posts.



The question is how attachment and even dependence on these mobile devices contribute to the declining literacy among the young, most notably seen in their poor writing skills. Experts have pondered whether proper English grammar may be on the road to extinction in the brave new world of emoticons, texts, tweets, and short Facebook posts.

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Some social media shortcuts, such as gr8 and lol, do find their way into essays in secondary and postsecondary settings, according to professors and high school educators. There is little research available to suggest that social media shorthand alone is seriously impacting the writing skills of students. Most young people know the difference between what happens on social media and what is expected in formal writing. Perhaps a serious examination of the reasons for the overall decline of youth literacy is required, because adequate knowledge of grammar and writing skills are rapidly going the way of the dinosaur.

For decades there have been complaints from professors about the poorly written essays handed in by students in their first year at university. A closer examination has shown that this lack of literacy in our youth can be traced to the confluence of at least three events: the rise of smartphones and social media, the creation of addictive video games, all of which have crowded out time spent in reading. The failure of the public schools to teach the basic rules of grammar and punctuation has also contributed to the problem. The confluence of these events has led to a crisis in literacy in Canada. And yet being literate is understood to be fundamental to all facets of life.

Writing in primary school has widely been taught through what is known as the “process method.” Students are asked to generate ideas, plan their writing, and then they engage in the act of writing. Feedback is sought by peers,

but grammatical errors in this method are not initially addressed. Their work is then 'published' by making them into individual small books. This pedagogical style emphasized that the child's authentic text could provide what was needed for comprehension. The method helps young learners gain self-confidence, but as students progress through the public education system they are often unequipped to understand and apply the rules of grammar. It inevitably impeded the development of their writing skills.

Many Canadian educators in primary and secondary school are hesitant to stress the rules of grammar and punctuation. This hesitancy can be traced to a pedagogical model that emerged in the 1980's which discouraged an emphasis on grammar. The prevailing thought was that it undermined the creativity in students' writing. Rather than diminish creativity, learning the skills (and rules) in other arenas of endeavour such as musical theory, sports, and chess actually heightens students' engagement and creativity. Keeping students engaged when teaching grammar can help them learn. It's more fun for a student to learn the rules of grammar in the context of a quote by Taylor Swift than from a textbook. Unfortunately, neglecting lessons in grammar has left many high school students unable able to make themselves clearly understood when asked to write a formal paper. A re-introduction of teaching the rules grammar in the primary grades concurrent with the process based writing instruction may be a solution.

The editors of the essay collection, Best Practices in Writing Instruction cite studies that reveal that "the writing of approximately two thirds of students in middle school and high school is below grade level proficiency. Moreover, one in five first year college students require a remedial writing class, and more than half of new college students are unable to write a paper relatively free of errors." This negative outcome should be understood as empirical evidence of pedagogical failure. At Simon Fraser University, which Maclean's ranks as Canada's top comprehensive university,



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all students are mandated to take two courses that are designated as "writing intensive." Many of their students have no idea why or how to use a colon, semi colon, apostrophe, or comma. Ontario's Waterloo University is one of the few post-secondary institutions in Canada to require the students to pass an exam testing their English proficiency. Almost a third of those students are failing this entrance exam.

Student writing has been demonstrated again and again to have deteriorated

since the rules of grammar were no longer emphasized and there has been little effort to reintroduce them. Today the average college graduate has spent less than 5,000 hours of their life reading, but over 10,000 hours playing video games. Reading plays a vital role in literacy as it forms the templates of correct grammar and spelling in our minds. The quality of reading material matters. Social media certainly provides less than what students need to become proficient writers, yet much of their time is spent reading on the social media platforms. Ironically many of these "technology natives"



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will not be the leaders in this new age of innovation and artificial intelligence. The top jobs will go to the literate.

France has made a good first move in addressing the distraction, negative

reading habits, and time wasted by students on these technological devices. The misuse of punctuation or the overuse use of emoticons can mean sudden death for a term paper or a career. There is no reason for

these devices to eclipse so much of the school day. Changing pedagogical direction, after years of neglecting the rules of punctuation and grammar, will be a more challenging job. But it will be well worth it. *csc

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WHERE TO FIND HELP?

Suggestions to help determine which residential camp or program is the right fit for a troubled teen.

By Sean Dolan



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When parents and caregivers are at their wits end, they are pretty much willing to try anything to help their children. Whether we are talking about a parent of a daughter with a substance abuse problem or a son with an emotional disorder, once a situation has become untenable, they just want to see their child get back on track and for life to take on some semblance of normalcy.

Enter the counsellor

Enter the high school counsellor. Often the first resource these distraught parents turn to is the school guidance counsellor because the behaviours that are causing concern at home are reflected at school as well. At this point, the counsellor is asked to provide guidance to a parent who is looking for an answer to the problem of extreme anxiety, depression, anger or substance abuse – all troubling behaviours that can cause a parent to feel utterly alone and desperate for a solution.

Certainly, preliminary steps would need to be taken: conferences with teachers, referrals to the school learning team, appointments with mental health and medical professionals. However sometimes these efforts come up short. Sometimes, if parents and caregivers want action, and the timing works, a residential camp or program for at-risk or troubled youth might be the ticket.

Often the first resource these distraught parents turn to is the school guidance counsellor because the behaviours that are causing concern at home are reflected at school as well.



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The search

Guidance counsellors who are in a position to help a distraught family find a residential camp or program for their son or daughter are bound to face some challenges. The fact of the matter is that there aren't many camps and programs out there, making the prospect a good fit a daunting task. A web search of "camps for troubled teens" will lead many parents, caregivers and counsellors to an organization called Our Kids. This company was founded in 1997 as a directory for private/independent schools and soon added camps to their

repertoire. They have since become the definitive database for Canadians in search of learning opportunities for kids outside the realm of the regular school system. While the database is impressive, it is easy to get lost in the sea of choices that are available. Enter the search words "troubled teens" into the Our Kids search line and a cluster of choices will appear, with only two or three directly catering to teens with behavioural problems (and the person searching really has to navigate through the list to find them).

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Selecting a camp or program

Once the parent and counsellor narrow their search to a few reliable choices, it is time to determine the camp or program that best fits the needs of the young person. This is where the parent and the counsellor can work together to evaluate the needs of the troubled youth and the camps and programs available.

According to *Our Kids*, a residential camp or program should be carefully researched and examined using the following criteria:

- **Values and Philosophy** – any reputable camp or program should have a clear mission statement and be able to explain the values that guide their curriculum, their treatment options and their philosophy of education.
- **Leadership and Governance** – camps and programs should have a leadership structure and some kind of oversight that keeps the staff accountable to the young person and their parents and caregivers. Great care should be given to examining the credentials of the program's director and the staff.
- **Activities and Programming** – make sure the activities and programming are appropriate for the young person in question. For example, an outdoor, adventure camp might fit one person better than it might fit another. Most camps and programs use a holistic approach that combines activities that highlight a person's physical and mental well-being.

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- **Environment and Facilities** – visit and ask serious questions about the environment and facilities used by the organization. Don't let a fancy website make a camp or program be the determining factor - visit the facility.
- **Safety and Accreditation** – this is a big one. Conducting a web search of news surrounding a camp or program is essential. Sometimes a little research will reveal that the camp or program has had some problems – like financial and/or legal troubles. Also, accreditation is an important avenue to pursue. If a camp or program is saying they are offering counselling and therapy, what kind of credentials do those conducting the sessions have? Is there an oversight body whose guidelines the camp or program follows? If the camp or program is offering high school credits, are they being inspected by the province's ministry of education?

A few camps and programs to consider

Navigating through the world of camps and programs for troubled teens requires research, thoughtfulness and money to pay the enterprise offering the services. Keep in mind that these options can be very costly. However, some camps can advise applicants regarding government assistance. Here are a few outfits that have managed to stand out.

- **Outward Bound Canada** operates across the country with a host of outdoor adventure options. Their focus is on "leadership, connections and compassion through inspiring and challenging journeys of self-discovery in the natural world." Outward Bound programming targets young adventure seekers and nature lovers. Vulnerable youth are invited to sign on for any trip they wish to attend. These camps encourage all participants to find out who they are and what life is about while communing with nature. An important point: Outward Bound employs a "challenge by choice" model when it comes to their camps; no one is forced to do anything they are not comfortable doing. This camp would be ideal for the troubled youth who is dealing with typical teen struggles (maybe anxiousness or mild drug or alcohol use) that are starting to get away from them. An Outward Bound trip will encourage a process of self-discovery that will help the young person manage their difficulties in a more holistic and natural way. In other words, for this camp, it is the experience of nature, and not necessarily the staff, that provides the therapy.
- **The Pine River Institute** was established to help youth overcome addiction problems. The Pine River program emphasizes three pillars: learning, practicing and maturing. The average stay in the Pine River program is 12 to 14 months – a huge time commitment, suggesting a significant addiction problem. The troubled teen spends the first six to eight weeks of the program participating in a rigorous outdoor education program in Algonquin Park before transferring to Pine River's main campus in Shelburne, Ontario. Their time at the main campus is composed of school work and therapy. At the end of the process, youth are discharged to their parent's care with a comprehensive aftercare program administered by the Pine River staff.

➤ **Venture Academy** describes itself as Canada's leading program for troubled teens. It offers a wide-ranging list of services for their clients including clinical assessments, intervention, therapy and treatment for at-risk youth. They pretty much cater to any young person with a challenging behaviour or situation. Venture Academy's 30 day Assessment and Intervention program is designed to stabilize the

mental and physical health of troubled teens. They offer behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse and online gaming addiction treatment programs. While Venture Academy highlight assessment, therapy and community, they also focus on life skills, physical fitness, healthy living and academics. Their programs vary in length from 30 days to over a year. They also offer specific summer programs.

School	Location	Target group	Cost	Connect
Outward Bound Canada	Across Canada	All youth (with provisions made for vulnerable youth)	\$800 – \$2000 / week	outwardbound.ca
Pine River Institute	Shelburne, Ontario	Youth dealing with addiction	\$650/month (government funded); \$460/day for a private bed; \$430/day for aftercare	pineriverinstitute.com
Venture Academy	Kelowna, British Columbia; Red Deer, Alberta; Barrie, Ontario	Troubled youth dealing with everything from substance abuse issues to gaming addiction to emotional struggles	Tuition varies depending on the program	ventureacademy.ca

These camps and programs are by no means the only ones available for troubled teens. However, they do offer a good starting point for parents and caregivers looking for a residential option outside the family home. In the end, families need to see the search for a camp or program for a troubled teen as one requiring time, research, communication and money. 🍀 [CSC](#)

For a detailed list of camps for troubled teens, go to Our Kids at www.ourkids.net/camp/troubled-teens-camps

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How today's front-line crisis volunteers are using text messaging to support distressed kids.



Three hundred and sixty-five days a year, intensively trained crisis line volunteers are talking with troubled youth across Canada, even if talking involves no verbal communication at all.

Volunteers like Ivy in Saskatoon, Jean* in Victoria and Xufan in Calgary are among the dedicated corps ready to listen and respond when a young person reaches out for help through written rather than spoken words.

At regional youth crisis lines, such as Calgary's [ConnecTeen](#) and [Youthspace.ca](#) in B.C., support services offered via text and live online chat have proven popular given many young people's preference to communicate that way. Last year, the well-known national service Kids Help Phone trained some 800 volunteer crisis responders for its new, bilingual text service which operates 24/7/365.

Demand for crisis line services has grown in lockstep with the public's heightened awareness of mental health issues generated by high-profile ad campaigns and increased media attention, as well as celebrities sharing their own stories and struggles on social media.

Aider en silence

Le textage comme outil d'intervention auprès des enfants en détresse

By/Par Laurie Nealin



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Chaque jour, des bénévoles qui ont suivi une formation intensive écoutent des jeunes en difficulté partout au Canada. Même s'il s'agit souvent d'être à l'écoute de mots écrits.

Ivy, Jean* et Xufan, respectivement à Saskatoon, à Victoria et à Calgary, font partie des troupes dévouées qui écoutent les jeunes qui appellent à l'aide et leur répondent, par écrit plutôt que de vive voix.

Aux centres régionaux d'aide aux jeunes en crise, comme ConnectTeen, à Calgary, et Youthspace.ca, en Colombie-Britannique, les services offerts par textos et clavardage sont très populaires, étant donné la préférence de beaucoup de jeunes pour ces moyens de communication. L'an dernier, Jeunesse, J'écoute, service pancanadien très connu, a formé quelque 800 bénévoles de première ligne à son nouveau service de textage bilingue, qui fonctionne 24 heures sur 24, tous les jours de l'année.

La demande augmente à mesure que le grand public est sensibilisé aux problèmes de santé mentale grâce à de grandes campagnes médiatiques, à l'attention accrue des médias et aux témoignages de célébrités qui racontent leur histoire et leurs combats dans les médias sociaux.

School counsellor signs on

Ivy, a high school counsellor and resource room teacher, signed on as a volunteer text responder with Kids Help Phone last fall. She works from her home in Saskatoon, but the kids with whom she chats on the text crisis line could be anywhere in Canada.

"I was looking for a position where I could help people who are in crisis and, in particular, youth," said Ivy, who previously worked at a sexual assault centre and is pursuing her masters in social work.

She fields text messages that come through an online portal. All volunteers respond under the supervision of mental health professionals who monitor the exchanges as they unfold. Typically, Ivy communicates with more than a dozen young people during her four-hour shift.

"We're trying to help the person come from a hot moment to a cool calm. In the moment of crisis when they need someone to talk, we're there. For the more long-term, professional counselling we offer the phone and online chat services," Ivy explained.

"We stay on the line with the texter until they are able to enact coping strategies, until we help them feel a little better. There isn't a time limit per se (for each interaction.)"

In cases where the texter is at risk of immediate harm or has been subject to abuse in the past, a supervisor will take the necessary action

Une intervenante scolaire répond à l'appel

Ivy, intervenante scolaire et auxiliaire d'enseignement, s'est engagée l'automne dernier pour répondre par écrit aux interlocuteurs de Jeunesse, J'écoute. Elle travaille chez elle, à Saskatoon, mais les jeunes avec lesquels elle clavarde peuvent être partout au Canada.

« Je cherchais un poste qui me permettrait d'aider des gens en crise. Des jeunes, en particulier », explique Ivy, qui a déjà travaillé dans un centre d'accueil de victimes d'agression sexuelle pendant sa maîtrise en travail social.

Elle répond aux messages envoyés sur un portail en ligne. Tous les bénévoles répondent sous la supervision de professionnels de la santé mentale, qui suivent le déroulement des échanges. Ivy communique en moyenne avec plus d'une dizaine de jeunes pendant ses quatre heures de travail.

« Nous essayons d'aider nos correspondants à retrouver le calme après une crise. Quand survient la crise, ils ont besoin de parler et nous sommes là. Pour une aide à plus long terme, nous offrons les services traditionnels de conseils au téléphone et en ligne, par clavardage », ajoute Ivy.

« Nous restons en ligne avec les texteurs jusqu'à ce qu'ils soient capables de mettre en pratique les moyens que nous leur suggérons; jusqu'à ce qu'ils se sentent un peu mieux. Les interactions ne sont pas assujetties à une durée précise. »



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to ensure the person's safety. Regional services have similar protocols in place. Otherwise, the service users are guaranteed anonymity.

Many youth using the Kids Help Phone text service are sharing their issue with someone for the first time, and on-going support is often recommended.

"We want to make sure the texters are able to reach out to the supports they have, either parents or other adults, school counsellors," Ivy said. "We can also provide resources such as referrals to community supports, online articles or apps they can download. We want to empower the texter to talk to others and use coping strategies that will help them, as well."

Demand spikes

Generally, crisis responders are most in demand in the evenings when young people find themselves alone and in need of someone to talk to, to hear what's troubling them, to help them cope and move towards a healthier mental state.

Jean, a Youthspace.ca volunteer who has been on the job in Victoria for six years, noted that the volume of contacts increases around exam times and during school holidays. Youthspace has also found that anxiety-inducing world events can cause a spike in demand, while ConneCTeen reported suicides by public figures – such as rock singer Chris Cornell, fashion designer Kate Spade and celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain – also have an impact.

Si u texteur semble courir un danger immédiat ou a déjà été victime d'abus, un superviseur prend les mesures nécessaires pour assurer sa sécurité. Les services régionaux suivent un protocole semblable. Autrement, l'anonymat des usagers est garanti.

Nombre de jeunes qui utilisent le service de textage de Jeunesse, J'écoute parlent de leurs problèmes pour la première fois. Il leur est donc généralement recommandé de chercher une aide à plus long terme.

« Nous devons nous assurer que les texteurs sont en mesure de profiter de l'aide de leur entourage, qu'il s'agisse de leurs parents, d'autres adultes ou d'un intervenant scolaire », précise Ivy. Nous pouvons aussi les aiguiller vers des services de proximité, des articles en ligne ou des applications à télécharger. Il faut donner au texteur la force de parler à d'autres et d'utiliser de bonnes stratégies pour faire face à ses difficultés. »

Périodes de pointe

En règle générale, c'est le soir que la demande est la plus forte, quand les jeunes se retrouvent seuls et qu'ils ont besoin de quelqu'un à qui parler, de quelqu'un qui sera attentif à ce qui les trouble et les aidera à faire face et à retrouver un bon état de santé mentale.

Jean, qui travaille bénévolement à Youthspace.ca, à Victoria, depuis maintenant six ans, note que le volume d'entrées en communication augmente pendant les périodes d'examen et les vacances scolaires. Youthspace a constaté en outre que les événements d'envergure mondiale très anxiogènes font

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Problems with friends or family, relationships and isolation are the most common factors behind the mental health issues – anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicidal thoughts – that prompt young people to contact the three organizations.

More recently, Jean has noticed an increase in chatters contacting Youthspace about eating disorders and matters related to transitioning as a transgender youth.

Youthspace offers its service users – teens and adults to age 30 – the option to connect using online chat or text. Volunteers work together in one location.

“The most challenging calls are ones in which people give one word answers. They don’t tell you much. Harder calls are when there is child abuse going on. That’s very difficult for me. The most rewarding ones are people who come in with high anxiety, having had a really bad day and by the end of the chat they say they’re feeling better and they thank you,” said Jean, who holds a degree in psychology and currently works in the technology field.

“I thought the Youthspace opportunity was cool because of the amount of training, getting to actually chat with people even when not being a (professional) counsellor,” added Jean, who has now decided to pursue a master’s degree in clinical or counselling psychology.

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augmenter la demande en flèche. De même, ConneCTeen rapporte que le suicide de personnalités publiques a des effets semblables. Ce fut le cas à la mort du chanteur rock Chris Cornell, de la créatrice de mode Kate Spade et du cuisinier vedette Anthony Bourdain.

Les problèmes avec les amis ou la famille, les relations amoureuses et l'isolement sont les facteurs les plus communs à l'origine des troubles de santé mentale (anxiété, dépression, automutilation et pensées suicidaires) qui incitent les jeunes à communiquer avec les trois organismes.

Depuis peu, Jean a remarqué une augmentation du nombre de clavardeurs qui communiquent avec Youthspace au sujet de troubles de l'alimentation et du fait d'être une personne trans.

Youthspace offre deux options à ses usagers, pour la plupart adolescents et adultes d'au plus 30 ans : le clavardage et les textos. Les bénévoles travaillent ensemble, au même endroit.

« C'est particulièrement difficile quand les réponses tiennent en un mot : ce n'est pas beaucoup. Le plus dur, c'est de répondre à un enfant victime de mauvais traitements. Pour moi, c'est très dur. Mais le plus gratifiant, c'est quand une personne qu'une très mauvaise journée a rendue très anxieuse dit se sentir mieux après le clavardage et me remercie », résume Jean, qui est titulaire d'un grade en psychologie et travaille actuellement dans le domaine de la technologie.



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More help for kids across Canada

There are myriad youth and adult crisis help lines across Canada. Comprehensive listings of these organizations can be found here suicideprevention.ca/Need-Help. Organizations offering text and online chat are listed under the Resources heading here youthspace.ca

Peer support unique

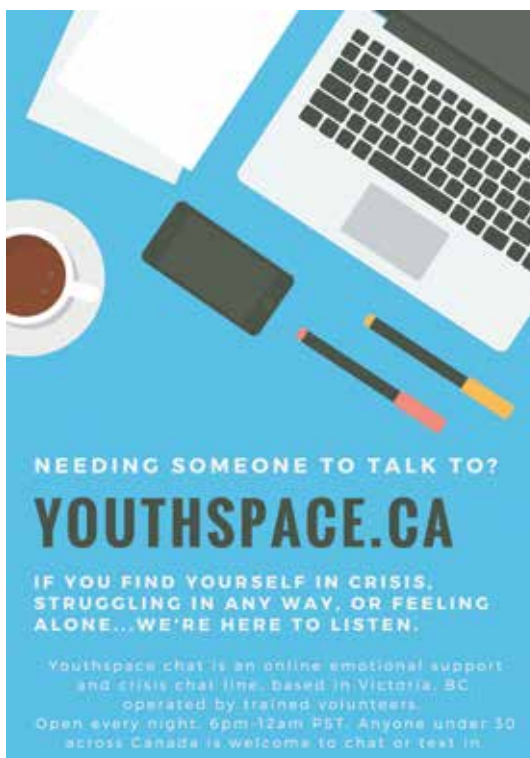
ConnecTeen's peer support service relies on some 60 responders (ages 15 to 20) who work via text, chat and phone lines, providing valuable and effective counsel to their peers. Some professionals even refer clients to ConnecTeen, believing that peer support would benefit them.

In 2017 twenty-year-old Xufan joined ConnecTeen's volunteer ranks. The third-year microbiology student at the University of Calgary often found himself helping friends in crisis and decided to put his innate skills to work in a more formal way.

"It feels good being there for someone when they need someone to talk to the most. Talking on these lines, you get what you could call instant gratification because with the text you can see the effect of what you've done. It feels good doing that and lets you practise these skills and improve. You notice yourself slowly getting better at comforting people and communicating," said Xufan, who plans to go into medicine.

"Every once in a while you get a curve ball with an issue you're not sure how to deal with. There's other people in the call centre – supervisors and other volunteers – who we can consult for advice. Whenever I feel I don't have a complete grasp on what's happening I'll reach out for some advice. You want to make sure you're giving the chatter or the caller the best help that you can."

A big part of ConnecTeen's crisis resolution is to create an action plan for the client, recognizing the person could benefit from seeing a counsellor, accessing other resources or talking with a trusted family member.



« Ce poste à Youthspace m'a paru génial, étant donné toute la formation nécessaire et la possibilité de clavarder avec des gens même si je ne suis pas une intervenante professionnelle », ajoute Jean, qui a maintenant décidé de faire une maîtrise en psychologie clinique ou en psychologie du counseling.

Le soutien par les pairs : une relation unique

Le service de soutien par les pairs de ConnecTeen repose sur quelque 60 intervenants âgés de 15 à 20 ans, qui, par textos, clavardage ou téléphone, fournissent des conseils précieux et efficaces à leurs jeunes interlocuteurs. Certains professionnels leur envoient même des clients, estimant que le soutien par les pairs leur sera profitable.

Xufan, 20 ans, a joint les rangs des bénévoles de ConnecTeen en 2017. L'étudiant, maintenant en 3e année d'un programme de microbiologie à l'Université de Calgary, se retrouvait souvent à aider des amis en crise. Il a donc décidé d'employer plus officiellement ce talent naturel.

« C'est bon d'être là pour une personne quand elle a le plus besoin de parler. La gratification est immédiate, je dirais, parce qu'avec le texte, on voit tout de suite l'effet de notre intervention. Ça fait du bien, ça permet de mettre cette habileté particulière en pratique et de l'améliorer. D'ailleurs je deviens progressivement de plus en plus habile à reconforter les gens et à communiquer », observe Xufan, qui prévoit faire des études de médecine.

« Il arrive qu'on soit surpris par une question inattendue, qu'on ne sait pas trop comment prendre. Heureusement on peut consulter d'autres personnes au centre d'appel, qu'il s'agisse du superviseur ou des

Autres services au Canada

Il existe beaucoup de services d'écoute téléphonique pour les jeunes et les adultes en crise dans tout le pays. Vous trouverez une liste assez complète de ces organismes à l'adresse suicideprevention.ca/Archive-Directory.

The written word

Xufan estimates that only about one in 10 youth who contact ConnecTeen call on the phone. Most text or use the instant messaging (live chat) function on ConnecTeen's website.

Communicating only in writing comes easily for Xufan, but he takes care to use expressive words to convey compassion. Chat has its advantages, he says, like allowing responders more time to think and really process what's going on.

Learning how to develop a rapport through text messages is key to these volunteer roles, as is conveying assurance to the young person that they are being heard. Clarity in what is being communicated to the texter is essential.

Jean noted, "With (verbal) conversation you have vocal cues and facial expression (when counselling face-to-face.) With text, it's just words, but with this younger generation this is how they communicate generally. I don't know how often they actually

collègues. Chaque fois que j'estime ne pas bien saisir ce qui arrive, je demande conseil. Je veux être certain d'aider au mieux la personne qui écrit ou qui appelle.»

Le processus de résolution des crises adopté par ConnecTeen consiste à dresser un plan d'action à l'intention de l'interlocuteur et à comprendre si la personne a avantage à consulter un professionnel, à se prévaloir d'autres ressources ou à parler avec un membre de la famille en qui elle a confiance.








Le pouvoir de l'écrit

Xufan estime à seulement un sur dix, environ, le nombre de jeunes qui appellent ConnecTeen. La plupart recourent au texto ou utilisent la fonction de clavardage du site Web de l'organisme.

Lui n'a pas de mal à communiquer uniquement par écrit. Il s'applique à employer des mots expressifs, qui traduisent sa compassion. Le clavardage a entre autres avantages que les bénévoles ont plus de temps pour répondre et comprendre ce qui se passe, dit-il.

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Interested in volunteering?

The three organizations featured in this article recruit new volunteers at regular intervals throughout the year. Bilingual (English-French) volunteers are always needed at Kids Help Phone.

Up to 40 hours of training is required before the first shift. Volunteers are also coached on the job. Generally, volunteers must commit to working one shift weekly (approx. 4 to 5 hours) for one year following their training.

For specifics, please consult the organization's website.

Kids Help Phone

Web portal: kidshelpphone.ca

Founded: 1989

Target group: young people primarily under age 25

Reach: national (headquarters in Toronto)

Services available via:

- text TALK to 686868 (for French service, text TEXTO to 686868)
- online chat (instant messaging) portal on kidshelpphone.ca*
- mobile chat with Always There app*
- phone 1.800.668.6868*

Hours: 24/7/365

Volunteers: 800 text responders trained (as of Nov. 2018)

Contacts received (2018): approx. 30,000 text conversations, 275,000 phone + online chats

*80 staff professionals handle the core counselling via telephone and live chat

Youthspace.ca

Web portal: youthspace.ca

Founded: 2008

Target group: teens and young adults (to age 30)

Reach: throughout B.C. and beyond

Services available via:

- text 778.783.0177
- online chat (instant messaging) portal on youthspace.ca

Hours: 6 p.m. to 12 midnight (Pacific time)

Volunteers: 120

Contacts received (2017): 5,000

ConnecTeen

Web portal: calgaryconnecteen.com

Founded: 1983 (Teen-Line) Renamed ConnecTeen in 2011

Target group: youth

Reach: Calgary and area

Services available via:

- text 587-333-2724 for peer support
- online chat (instant messaging) portal on *CalgaryConnecTeen.com* for peer support
- 24/7 phone 403-264-TEEN (8336) for peer or adult support

Hours: peer support available weekdays 3 p.m. to 10 p.m., weekends 12 noon - 10 p.m. (Mountain time) Outside those hours, adult volunteers take phone calls.

Volunteers: 50 - 60 youth (ages 15 to 20), 250 - 300 adults

Contacts received (2018): approx. 7,500

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L'essentiel du rôle des bénévoles qui répondent aux messages écrits est d'établir un rapport avec leur auteur et de convaincre les jeunes que leur appel est entendu. Il faut absolument que la réponse soit claire.

Jean précise : « Quand une personne parle, vous notez des indices dans sa voix et dans l'expression de son visage [si l'entretien a lieu en personne]. Avec les messages, il n'y a que des mots, mais c'est comme ça que la plupart des jeunes communiquent. Je ne sais pas combien d'appels téléphoniques ils peuvent faire... Notre formation est extraordinaire : elle nous apprend à lire les émotions dans les mots [écrits]. »

L'interaction avec un texteur peut durer de 45 minutes à 1 heure, alors que les conversations téléphoniques prennent généralement

Le bénévolat vous intéresse?

Les trois organismes dont il est question ci-dessus recrutent régulièrement. Jeunesse J'écoute est toujours à la recherche de bénévoles bilingues (anglais-français).

Dès avant le premier quart, il faudra avoir suivi une formation, qui peut parfois durer 40 heures. Les bénévoles bénéficient aussi d'un encadrement en cours de travail. En général, ils doivent s'engager à fournir au moins un quart par semaine (de 4 à 5 heures environ) pendant un an, après la formation.

Pour des informations plus détaillées, veuillez consulter le site Web des organismes.

Jeunesse, J'écoute

Portail Web : jeunessejecoute.ca

Fondation : 1989

Population cible : en majeure partie des jeunes de moins de 25 ans

Champ d'action : national (siège social à Toronto)

Pour obtenir les services :

- Texter le mot TEXTO au numéro 686868 (in English, text TALK to 686868).
- Clavardage (messagerie instantanée) sur le portail kidshelpphone.ca*
- Clavardage sur appareil mobile avec l'application Always There*
- Téléphone : 1 800 668 6868*

Horaire : tous les jours, 24 heures sur 24

Bénévoles : 800 intervenants formés et affectés au textage (en date de novembre 2018)

Communications amorcées (en 2018) :

environ 30 000 conversations par textos et 275 000 conversations par téléphone et clavardages en ligne

* Un personnel de 80 professionnels s'occupe de la majeure partie des services de conseils par téléphone et par clavardage.

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make a phone call. That's what's great about our training - learning how to pick up emotions in (written) words."

Interactions with a texter can last for 45 minutes to an hour, while phone calls usually conclude in half that time, Xufan reported. Emojis are used infrequently by chatters and, in turn, by responders perhaps because of the more formal nature of communication between two strangers.

Quality volunteers

According to Xufan, Jean and Ivy, qualities needed to do well as a crisis line responder include being able to listen, understand and empathize. Being non-judgmental, open-minded and socially aware are important traits, as well. Volunteers must also know how to practise self-care considering the emotionally challenging nature of the work.

Crisis line volunteers come from all walks of life and age groups, although their ranks tend to skew to a younger demographic and to people studying or working in the social services and education fields. Kids Help Phone has attracted early career, veteran and retired teachers to its ranks.

All volunteers undergo rigorous training – from 36 to 40 hours – before their first shift, and receive additional coaching on the job. In return, a significant commitment is expected from the volunteer. Generally, that means working one shift weekly for at least a year once they graduate from training.

"There's a lot to be learned," said Jean, who now also provides on-the-job training for new volunteers. "It can be hard for sure, but I still recommend doing it, especially if you have interest in counselling or even being a teacher. We've had teachers come in wanting to learn so they can better serve students who come to them with issues. You learn a lot of valuable and transferable skills." 🌱csc

* Jean is a pseudonym. Youthspace volunteers are assured anonymity.

moitié moins de temps, rapporte Xufan. Clavardeurs et bénévoles utilisent peu les émojis, sans doute parce qu'une communication entre deux personnes qui ne se connaissent pas reste de nature assez formelle.

Des bénévoles de qualité

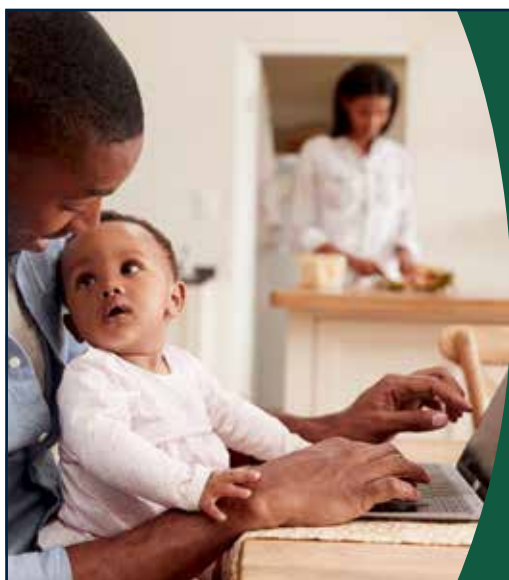
Selon Xufan, Jean et Ivy, le travail de bénévole pour une ligne de crise exige de l'écoute, de la compréhension et de l'empathie. Il est important de même de ne pas juger, d'avoir l'esprit ouvert et d'être au fait des courants sociaux. Les bénévoles doivent aussi savoir prendre soin d'eux-mêmes étant donné le poids émotionnel du travail.

Les bénévoles viennent de tous les horizons et de tous les groupes d'âge, bien que leur population semble tendre vers un segment plus jeune, aux études ou au travail dans les domaines de l'éducation et des services sociaux. Jeunesse J'écoute attire des gens en début de carrière, des vétérans et des enseignants à la retraite.

Tous les bénévoles suivent une formation rigoureuse, de 36 à 40 heures, avant leur premier quart de travail. Une fois en poste, ils bénéficient d'un encadrement. On attend d'eux en retour un sérieux engagement; en général, il s'agit de fournir un quart de travail par semaine pendant au moins un an après la formation.

« Il y a beaucoup à apprendre », souligne Jean, qui forme maintenant les nouveaux bénévoles en place. « C'est parfois difficile, bien entendu, mais je recommande quand même de le faire, surtout si vous vous intéressez à un domaine comme le counseling ou l'enseignement. Nous avons même eu des enseignants qui voulaient suivre la formation pour mieux aider leurs élèves à l'école. La formation comporte une foule de compétences utiles et transférables. » 🌱csc

* Jean est un pseudonyme. Youthspace garantit l'anonymat de ses bénévoles.



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Concurrent Disorders

Troubles concomitants

By/Par Sybil Geldart, PhD, CPsych



©GettyImages/KatarzynaBialasiewicz

This article addresses the combined effect of experiencing addiction problems and mental health issues. The combination of mental health problems and substance use problems is known as a concurrent disorder.

Cet article porte sur l'effet conjoint des problèmes de toxicomanie et de santé mentale, une combinaison appelée troubles concomitants.

It can be a challenge to pinpoint which type preceded the other – mental health issues or an addiction problem, but regardless, young people and their families have a complicated, if not long, road to recovery. To this end, professionals working with teens ought to know how to describe a concurrent disorder, how to screen for it, and how to best support their students.

Il est parfois difficile de cerner lequel, du trouble mental ou de la toxicomanie est apparu le premier, mais quoi qu'il en soit, la guérison est lente, pour les jeunes comme pour leur famille. Voilà pourquoi les professionnels qui travaillent avec les jeunes doivent être en mesure de décrire ce que sont les troubles concomitants et de savoir comment les dépister et comment aider au mieux leurs élèves.

Over 70% of mental health problems arise during childhood and adolescence, while over 60% of illicit drug users consist of adolescents and emerging adults. An epidemiological study conducted in the U.S. almost 30 years ago was the first to demonstrate a link between addictions and mental health problems.

What does it mean to have a concurrent disorder? According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada, one in five Canadians have a mental illness or an addiction problem, with the majority comprising young people 15 to 24 years of age. Over 70% of mental health problems arise during childhood and adolescence, while over 60% of illicit drug users consist of adolescents and emerging adults. An epidemiological study conducted in the U.S. almost 30 years ago was the first to demonstrate a link between addictions and mental health problems. The Regier et al. (1990) study found that having either a substance use problem or mental health problem increased the odds that the person affected had, or would eventually have, the other problem at some point in life. Having been diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, or major depressive disorder, for example, put an individual three times more at risk for a substance problem

Que signifie « troubles concomitants »? Selon la Commission de la santé mentale du Canada (CSMC), un Canadien sur cinq souffre de maladie mentale ou d'une toxicomanie. La majorité appartient au groupe des 15 à 24 ans. Plus de 70 p. 100 des problèmes de santé mentale surviennent pendant l'enfance ou l'adolescence, et plus 60 p. 100 des consommateurs de drogues illicites sont des adolescents ou de jeunes adultes. C'est une étude épidémiologique menée aux États Unis voici près de 30 ans (Regier et coll., 1990) qui a mis au jour ce lien entre la toxicomanie et les problèmes de santé mentale. Elle a montré en effet que les personnes ayant un problème de consommation excessive de drogue ou d'alcool ou un problème de santé mentale risquaient davantage d'être affectées par l'autre problème, en même temps ou par la suite. Les troubles anxieux généralisés, bipolaires ou dépressifs caractérisés, notamment, triplent le risque de toxicomanie. De même, les personnes qui prennent de la drogue sont quatre

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Plus de 70 p. 100 des problèmes de santé mentale surviennent pendant l'enfance ou l'adolescence, et plus 60 p. 100 des consommateurs de drogues illicites sont des adolescents ou de jeunes adultes. C'est une étude épidémiologique menée aux États Unis voici près de 30 ans (Regier et coll., 1990) qui a mis au jour ce lien entre la toxicomanie et les problèmes de santé mentale.

when compared to the general population. Having drug problems made the person 4 to 5 times more likely than average to have a mental health disorder at some time during the life course. These findings show that addictions and mental health problems often go together. So what are the ramifications of experiencing both types of problems concurrently?

When a person suffers from mental health problems and substance use problems the condition is named concurrent disorder. The condition combining addictions and mental disorder has also been coined dual diagnosis. (Although across jurisdictions, 'dual diagnosis' is currently a specialized term reserved for persons with mental illness and co-occurring developmental disability; see the Canadian Mental Health Association for definitions). Despite the label, one need not be formally diagnosed as having a psychiatric

ou cinq fois plus exposées que les autres au risque d'un trouble de santé mentale. Ces chiffres montrent à quel point la toxicomanie et les problèmes de santé mentale vont de pair. Quelles sont les conséquences d'une combinaison des deux?

Si un problème de santé mentale se double d'un problème de toxicomanie, on parle de troubles concomitants ou de diagnostic mixte. Ce dernier terme est toutefois plus souvent employé pour les personnes souffrant d'une maladie mentale et d'un problème de développement (voir les définitions établies par la CSMC). Il peut y avoir troubles concomitants même si le trouble psychiatrique n'a pas été formellement diagnostiqué; il suffit que les deux types de problèmes – maladie mentale et toxicomanie –, éprouvés en même temps, causent de la détresse à la personne atteinte ou interfèrent avec certains aspects de sa vie scolaire, professionnelle ou familiale.

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An addiction is manifested by what is called the four Cs: (i) presence of cravings; (ii) loss of control in amount of substance used and its frequency; (iii) compulsion to use; and, (iv) ignoring the consequences.

disorder for a concurrent disorder to occur; the only stipulation is that problems experienced at that given time – in both substance use and mental health – must be shown to impact a person by causing distress and/or by interfering with aspects of life, i.e., school, work, or home life.

How would you screen for a concurrent disorder? Try to imagine a student coming to your office for help. She is more likely to report mental health problems than substance abuse, particularly if she is exposed to illegal drugs or is under the legal age for using alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis. As described by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Ontario (CAMH), an addiction is manifested by what is called the four Cs: (i) presence of cravings; (ii) loss of control in amount of substance used and its frequency; (iii) compulsion to use; and, (iv) ignoring the consequences. Additional clues suggesting the presence of a concurrent disorder include family tension, irritability

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Stephanie received a 2018 Green Job in Prince George, British Columbia where she spent the summer electrofishing and analyzing stream health.

La toxicomanie se manifeste de quatre façons : i) l'état de besoin intense; ii) la perte de contrôle à l'égard de la consommation ou de sa fréquence; iii) la compulsion; et iv) la consommation malgré les conséquences.

Comment repérer les troubles concomitants? Imaginez qu'une étudiante vous demande de l'aide. Elle parlera sans doute plus volontiers de ses problèmes de santé mentale que de toxicomanie, surtout si elle se drogue ou si elle n'a pas l'âge légal pour consommer de l'alcool ou fumer du tabac ou du cannabis. Selon la description du Centre de toxicomanie et de santé mentale (CAMH, pour Centre for Addiction and Mental Health), en Ontario, la toxicomanie se manifeste de quatre façons : i) l'état de besoin intense; ii) la perte de contrôle à l'égard de la consommation ou de sa fréquence; iii) la compulsion; et iv) la consommation malgré les conséquences. D'autres signes traduisent les troubles concomitants : tensions familiales, irritabilité, voire agressivité, changement de personnalité, abandon d'amis de longue date, problèmes avec la loi et les figures d'autorité. Toujours selon le CAMH, il existe un moyen simple de déceler de possibles troubles concomitants. Il suffit de

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and aggression, personality change, abandoning old friends, and getting into trouble with the law and authority figures. According to CAMH, one easy way to screen for a possible concurrent disorder is to ask these simple questions: (1) Did a psychologist or physician diagnose you with a mental disorder? (2) Have you tried to hurt yourself or ever have thoughts of self-harm? (3) Were you experiencing problems related to the use of alcohol or other drugs? (4) Has anyone close to you voiced concerns about your drinking or drug use? Teens and adults who have answered yes to screener questions of this type are at risk of a concurrent disorder.

If you are querying your students in a sensitive, caring, and nonjudgmental way, you might have discovered by now that they are more inclined to openly discuss ways in which their problems are connected and compounded. For instance, certain substances ingested at high dosages, i.e., cocaine, can bring about psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations and paranoia, and these effects can be terrifying to a young, unsuspecting adolescent. Many young people admit to experimenting with drugs and smoking but then develop no further issues. Others admit that they have felt pressured by peers to (over) use, and still others have developed a full blown dependency and abuse of drugs or alcohol that results in poor academic performance, impaired job performance, and ruptured interpersonal relationships among other concerns. These issues can pave the way for depression, anxiety, and adjustment (and other) problems. Of course, it is not always obvious as to which problem came first – the addiction or the mental health issue. Students who feel overwhelmed by schoolwork and grades, who have performance and social fears, and who become depressed following the loss of romantic relationships all have the potential to be distracted from their responsibilities, to lack focus and stamina, and to feel worthless or guilty for not having completed academic assignments and related goals. In these cases, students might turn to substances as a way of coping with significant distress and dysfunctioning.

How might you support someone who needs help? The co-morbidity of medical, social and emotional problems in concurrent disorders is taxing on individuals because treatment of addictions and mental health issues must be integrated, and treatment usually takes a lengthy period of time. Clients are advised before formal treatment begins that the tendency to self-medicate is high for those who have been diagnosed with a mental disorder and who have been reluctant to seek therapy or psychotropic medication of more severe symptoms. Students would benefit by learning about the concept of self-medicating and the importance of seeking formal treatment approaches.

Students would also benefit from your wisdom, your attitude and your direction regarding next steps. Ask yourself whether you possess an understanding of concurrent disorders and how the underlying problems co-occur. With resources on hand, do you feel confident sharing referrals centered around private psychological services, community mental health facilities, addictions counseling, and medical and social services? If some services are not available in your local community, in what capacity, if any, do you personally feel comfortable working with young people who present with concurrent disorders?

According to CAMH, stigma surrounding mental health can be eliminated once citizens take a close look at their own attitudes



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quelques questions : 1) Avez-vous reçu un diagnostic de trouble mental de la part d'un psychologue ou un médecin? 2) Avez-vous tenté de vous faire du mal ou avez-vous déjà pensé à le faire? 3) Avez-vous eu des problèmes liés à la consommation d'alcool ou de drogue? 4) Est-ce que quelqu'un, dans votre entourage, s'inquiète de votre consommation d'alcool ou de drogue? Les adolescents et les adultes qui répondent oui aux questions de ce type sont peut-être atteints de troubles concomitants.

Si vous posez ces questions à vos étudiants avec délicatesse et sensibilité, sans les juger, vous constaterez sans doute qu'ils sont plus enclins à discuter ouvertement de la façon dont leurs problèmes sont reliés et se compliquent l'un l'autre. Ainsi, à forte dose, certaines drogues, comme la cocaïne, produisent des symptômes psychotiques, notamment des hallucinations et de la paranoïa, qui risquent de terrifier les adolescents qui ne s'y attendent pas. Beaucoup de jeunes disent avoir pris de la drogue et avoir fumé sans problème. D'aucuns admettront avoir cédé à la pression de leurs camarades. D'autres encore sont aux prises avec une réelle dépendance et des abus qui nuisent à leurs études, à leur travail et à leurs relations interpersonnelles. Ces ennuis pavent souvent la voie à la dépression, à l'anxiété et à des problèmes d'accoutumance et autres. Bien entendu, il n'est pas toujours facile de savoir lequel, de la toxicomanie ou du problème de santé mental, s'est présenté en premier. Les étudiants dépassés par le travail scolaire et l'importance des notes, qui craignent l'échec scolaire ou social ou se sentent déprimés après une rupture risquent de négliger leurs responsabilités, de manquer de concentration et de persévérance, d'avoir le sentiment de n'être bons à rien ou de se sentir coupables de ne pas avoir mené un travail à bien et de ne pas avoir atteint les objectifs connexes. Ils risquent de se tourner vers la drogue ou l'alcool pour composer avec ces dysfonctionnements et avec leur profonde détresse.

Comment aider une personne qui en a besoin? La coexistence de problèmes médicaux, sociaux et affectifs qui caractérise les troubles concomitants est lourde pour la personne atteinte, parce qu'il faut intégrer le traitement de la toxicomanie et le traitement des problèmes de santé mentale et que les deux sont généralement longs. Les clients sont prévenus dès le départ d'une forte tendance à l'automédication chez les personnes qui ont reçu un diagnostic de trouble mental comme chez celles qui répugnent à demander de l'aide ou à se faire prescrire un psychotrope pour combattre les symptômes les plus intenses. Il vaut mieux informer les étudiants du concept d'automédication et de l'importance de privilégier un traitement dans les règles.

Les étudiants auront également besoin de votre savoir, de votre attitude et de vos conseils pour la suite des choses. Il est donc important que vous compreniez bien ce que sont les troubles concomitants et comment ils se conjuguent. Étant donné les ressources dont vous disposez, vous sentez-vous à l'aise d'orienter vos étudiants vers des services psychologiques privés, un centre communautaire de santé mentale, des conseillers ou les services médicaux et sociaux? En l'absence des services adéquats dans votre communauté, dans quelle mesure vous sentez-vous apte à travailler avec les étudiants qui présentent des troubles concomitants?

Selon le CAMH, les gens ne stigmatiseraient pas la maladie mentale s'ils avaient conscience de leur attitude et de leurs valeurs. Il est essentiel

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and values. It is vital to understand the relation between substance use and associated illegal activities without being quick to judge. It is crucial to view substance use problems as real issues that deserve attention rather than to see them as stemming from intentional actions. By having already committed yourselves to youth in education and positive development, you probably agree that these issues are important enough to tackle. In this sense, you truly are in a good position to provide genuine support and guidance. ♣csc

de comprendre les liens entre la toxicomanie et les activités illégales qui y sont associées et de ne pas porter de jugement. Il est tout aussi essentiel de considérer la toxicomanie comme un problème réel, qui mérite l'attention, plutôt que d'y voir un acte intentionnel. Puisque vous vous consacrez à l'éducation et au développement des jeunes, vous estimez sans doute que ces problèmes sont assez importants pour y être attentifs. En ce sens, vous êtes très bien placés pour offrir de bons conseils et un réel soutien. ♣csc

Sybil Geldart is an associate professor of psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University (Ontario), with research interests broadly based in developmental psychology, clinical psychology and (occupational) health. She typically teaches courses in psychopathology, clinical psychology, and exceptionalities during childhood and adolescence. Sybil is also a registered psychologist, and has a part-time clinical practice in the city of Brantford where she provides assessment and counselling to children, youth, and adults.



Sybil Geldart est professeure agrégée à la Wilfrid Laurier University (Ontario). Ses intérêts en recherche visent de manière générale la psychologie du développement, la psychologie clinique et la santé (au travail). Elle enseigne habituellement dans trois domaines : psychopathologie, psychologie clinique et atypies de l'enfance et de l'adolescence. Mme Geldart est également psychologue agréée. Elle exerce à temps partiel dans un cabinet de la ville de Brantford, où elle fournit des services d'évaluation et de conseils à des enfants, des adolescents et des adultes.

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Medical Lab Technologists and Assistants

By Jackie Fritz



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The medical profession is a great fit for individuals who truly want to make a difference and contribute in a positive way to their community.

Medical laboratory technologists and assistants are key parts of the healthcare team. They are responsible for conducting routine lab tests as well as maintenance of lab equipment. Lab techs and assistants can be found in medical laboratories in hospitals, clinics, research institutions, post-secondary educational facilities and government research laboratories.

While their positions may overlap at times, generally lab technicians carry a larger responsibility. Just as nursing has members with different skill levels like nurses' aides, licensed practical nurses and registered nurses, laboratory work also employs people with varying levels of education. Lab techs typically graduate from two to three-year programs of study. For those who can't wait to get their gloves on, the lab assistant courses take around four to six months to complete.

Carman Poliwczuk is a Medical Laboratory Technician at Dynalife Medical Labs in Edmonton, Alberta. She explains, "Medical Lab Assistants do not operate instruments (other than in Urinalysis) or release patient results. They do not have the same training that lab technologists do. Their duties include blood collection, performing electrocardiograms (ECGs) urinalysis and data entry. They are also trained in processing samples for analysis such as spinning samples, loading samples on and off instruments and specimen storage. They can perform basic lab procedures such as cleaning and maintenance of centrifuges (used for spinning samples) and waterbaths."

Medical lab techs (MLTs) use sophisticated equipment to run tests on blood, tissue and other bodily fluid samples to help physicians diagnose and treat their patients.

Poliwczuk says, "Medical laboratory technologists are trained in five different disciplines. They are Hematology, Chemistry, Blood Bank, Microbiology and Histology. I have experience in Chemistry but most of my career has been spent in Hematology. We look at the different cells found in the blood which are red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. We also measure hemoglobin levels. Together, these parameters make up the test called a CBC or CBCD. The instruments we run the blood samples on require maintenance and quality control every day. This ensures the results we give are accurate. We look at blood slides under the microscope. We examine fluid samples from joints, chest and abdominal cavities as well. In chemistry, we run large instruments that test for liver function, heart function, kidney function and diabetes, just to name a few. In blood bank, we test for blood types (A, B, AB and O) and match donor blood for patients that need a transfusion. In microbiology, we discover what types of bacteria are making you sick and what kinds of antibiotics that will kill the bacteria and make you better. Histology involves making an onion skin thickness cut of a piece of tissue that has been removed from a patient. This very small piece of tissue is placed on a slide, stained and a special doctor called a Pathologist looks at it. They decide if the cells found in the tissue are normal or abnormal."

» Career Opportunity

A career as a medical laboratory professional is ideal for someone who has an aptitude for the sciences and enjoys following a process to achieve results.

“Good personality traits would include being curious and wanting to explore to find answers. Being orderly, methodical, dedicated and honorable are good traits as well. Many techs are committed to supporting doctors and patients,” says Poliwczuk.

In addition to laboratory training, lab techs and assistants must also have good reading and writing comprehension, great oral communication, proficiency with numbers, advanced use of computerized technology and the ability to think on their feet.

There are colleges in almost every province that offer medical laboratory technologist and assistant training.

Poliwczuk received her education from Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT). She says, “When I went to school, the program was two years. We spent the first year learning theory and practicing techniques in student labs. The second year was spent working in a hospital. We worked side by side with medical laboratory technologists putting our theory and practical training to use. The program is very demanding and as a student, you must be focused.”

After graduation, many provinces require lab techs to complete a certain number of professional development hours per year, a minimum number of practice hours annually and obtain certification with a regulatory body. Lab assistant certification is not mandatory in Canada, but many employers now require it as a standard of employment.

Like all professions, there are upsides and downsides to a career as a lab professional.

Poliwczuk shares, “I love that every day is different because every patient is different. I love the thought that the results I give the physician helps to diagnose what may wrong with the patient. I love the people I work with. We are a family all committed to helping people.”

But she adds, “It is very hard to discover a patient has a Leukemia as the diagnosis means they have a long hard road ahead of them to be healthy again. This is especially hard when the patient is a child. We have regular patients that we see their blood every week. When one of these patients dies, we feel sad as they had become a part of us.”

“Salaries vary from province to province and also with union agreements. At Dynalife, entry level technologists can expect to make between \$60,000 and \$70,000 per year. Experienced techs can make between \$80,000 and \$85,000 per year,” says Poliwczuk.

Government of Canada data from the last census in 2016 states that the median salary for medical lab technologists was \$61,491 while lab assistants earned a median salary of \$42,306. Job growth in the profession was predicted in almost all areas of the country.

Poliwczuk predicts a positive outlook for the profession. “I feel it is a great career,” she says. “There are many avenues to go down if you don't stay a working technologist in the medical field. We have an aging population, many techs that are baby boomers are getting ready to retire, and maternity leaves are longer now. There is a great opportunity for employment now and in the future.” [csc](#)

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To Hell and Back

A Journey on Two Wheels

By Alison Zenisek



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Joe Calendino being awarded the Courage to Come Back award.

“I was at the end of the line,” said Joe Calendino, recipient of the 2014 Courage to Come Back award in Vancouver. Once a “full patch member” of the Hells Angels, he was heavily into drugs. “I was doing cocaine, perks, oxy, GHB and crack.” He was also a notorious street fighter. “One of the reasons I was kicked out of the Hells Angels was for fighting in full colours in a Kelowna casino.” You know you’ve hit bottom when your behaviour becomes unacceptable to an outlaw motorcycle gang.

He lost his membership in the Hells Angels long before his addiction bottomed out. It was that assault in Kelowna that got Calendino arrested and eventually led to a decision to turn his life around. Providentially, one of the officers involved in his arrest had attended high school with Calendino. Kevin Torvik was now a sergeant with the Vancouver police. The arrest was a stark reminder to both men of the different paths they had chosen.

Calendino was arrested again for selling a \$10 rock to an undercover officer. His cocaine addiction had turned into a crack addiction as his finances dried up. He was destitute and living on the street. The addiction had tightened its grip around every aspect of his life. “I was lying on the prison floor and I was going through withdrawal, full withdrawal, and I felt like taking a gun and blowing the back of my head out.” Torvik visited him in jail and was shocked by the deterioration he saw in the once tough and fit gangster. He was now an emaciated crackhead.



Provisionally, one of the officers involved in his arrest had attended high school with Calendino. Kevin Torvik was now a sergeant with the Vancouver police. The arrest was a stark reminder to both men of the different paths they had chosen.

Joe Calendino and Sargeant Kevin Torvik of the Vancouver Police Service.

Torvik brought him a bag of food from McDonald's. Calendino remembers eating and listening to what the sergeant had to say. He had tried unsuccessfully to stop using several times before, but he told Torvik he wanted to quit. In a moment of clarity, he decided his mission would be to insure that kids did not make the same poor choices he had, that they did not stray into the dark

world of addiction, alcohol, and violence. Torvik was skeptical that his old classmate would follow through on that plan, but he urged him to call his old teacher Jim Crescenzo for help.

The call was made and it became the turning point in Calendino's life. He went into treatment and then followed a recovery plan. He has made good on his plan to help teens at risk. "Currently, what I believe in is I had to go through what I went through in order to get where I was going." After speaking to a particularly hardened group of youth at a school and witnessing the impact he made, the seed for a martial arts program germinated. Calendino, a black belt himself, now teaches Judo to boys that also include lessons in discipline, self-defence, nutrition, and how to contribute to the community. He is the founder of the BC based non-profit Yo Bro Yo Girl (YBYG) which aims to steer youth, ages 11 through 22, away from drugs and gangs. After graduation former students can return and become mentors themselves. "They're so proud of being able to give back," says Doug Litke, a staff member at Central City Learning Centre in Surrey. There Calendino runs Yo Bro as part of the curriculum and as an evening drop in program. Principal Janice Smith asserts that the students relate to Calendino because of his openness to his own struggles with substance abuse. YBYG now has chapters in Vancouver, Surrey, and Chilliwack.

Calendino has recently co-authored a memoir with veteran educator, Gary Little. The book details Calendino's journey from the ranks of the elite Hells Angels NOMAD chapter to the crack houses and streets of Vancouver. His struggles are captured on the pages of this gritty and compelling story titled *To Hell and Back: A former Hells Angel story of recovery and redemption*. Little chose to work with Calendino on the book with the hope that the powerful story inspires students who feel marginalized to make wise decisions. The decisions made in high school and early

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adulthood have long term consequences. The perceived glamour of joining a gang and the accompanying crime and substance abuse is in reality self-destructive.

Calendino holds no ill will towards his former gang members, as the mistakes he made were his own. There were times during his life on the streets where he was struggling with drugs, debt, and desperation. Speaking specifically about the reality of joining any gang, group, or crew, "just be careful of that choice. Be it the Hells Angels or another group, there is no bed of roses at the end of the journey." There are people who want to help, he says... "no matter what the adversity anybody is up against, there is a way out, and there's opportunities for you once you decide to make the change."

The book is not just helpful to youth. Parents have their own questions and the story gives an honest glimpse of the rocky road to recovery. Calendino's family never gave up on him, but there were moments of extreme desperation. The book chronicles Joe's siblings spending early mornings and late nights searching the back alleys of Surrey and the greater Vancouver area trying to find Joe when he was in the grip of addiction. Writing the book was difficult as he had to relive the more painful aspects of his past, but overall it has been a positive endeavour. "We've been getting amazing feedback... what we are finding is that everybody has been coming back to us with their stories and their feelings of hope or what they're going through with a loved one." The book has opened up more dialogue regarding issues of substance abuse and gangs. More importantly, it's inspiring people to make good choices in their lives.

Calendino is aware that gang activity he sees on the street today bears very little resemblance to what he lived through. In August and September of 2017 there was a deadly week of violence across Metro Vancouver related to a turf war. This was difficult news for the man who now runs gang prevention programs in schools. "A lot of guys now are dial-a-doping," (a street level drug dealing operation where orders are taken by phone). The gangs are more splintered than they used to be, with younger kids fighting over shrinking territory. The scale of suffering users face has also ramped up because of Vancouver's relentless opioid crisis. "This is a different beast now. The New York Times has called the current wave that we're up against the modern day plague," he said. "You have to think, where are we at? How did we get here?"

With so many overlapping forces at play, Calendino and his co-workers focus their attention on improving and expanding their mentorship and anti-gang program, Yo Bro Yo Girl. "The best way to put it is I didn't choose this journey. This journey chose me. You don't have to stop what you haven't started." He hopes he can give the youth an opportunity to learn from him and prevent them from being swept into Vancouver's gang and opioid epidemic. 🍁 CSC

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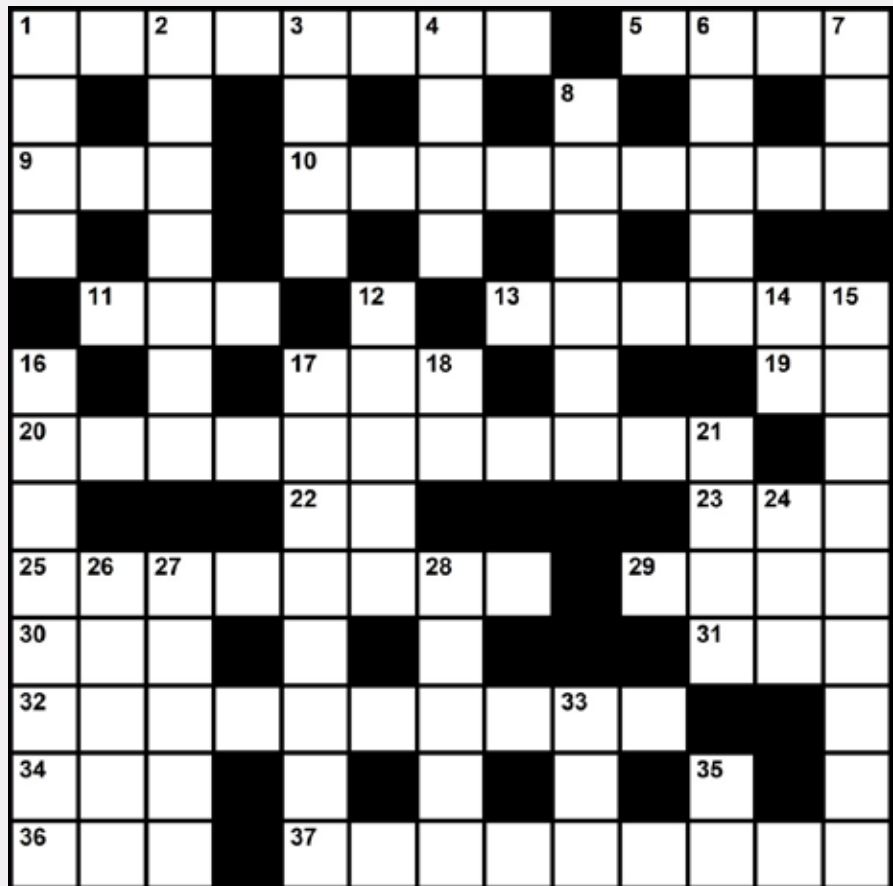
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Across

- 1 Advice and direction
- 5 College major dealing with finance and trade, etc. abbr.
- 9 Academic degree, for short
- 10 Latent ability that can be developed
- 11 Copy slavishly
- 13 Skilled manual occupations
- 17 Sensitive
- 19 Intelligence measurement
- 20 A sense of ____ is more important than a paycheck to most students
- 22 Exist
- 23 ____ hunch, 2 words
- 25 It's a "virtue"- essential to learning
- 29 Rudely ignore
- 30 Watch closely
- 31 Tidal motion
- 32 Ability to spring back from hardships or difficulties
- 34 Have some lunch
- 36 Medical experts, abbr.
- 37 Required by current fashion, like tattoos for example- 2 words
- 32 Selects



crossword solution on page 58

Down

- 1 Openings
- 2 Comprehensive, as a report, 2 words
- 3 Downloads for tablets
- 4 Urban
- 6 Youngster
- 7 Zero
- 8 Main dish
- 12 Expert, so to speak
- 14 Emotional intelligence, abbr.
- 15 One often having spats
- 16 Mollycoddled
- 17 Defied authority
- 18 You and me
- 21 Voice nuance
- 24 Essence
- 26 Annually, 2 words
- 27 Exams
- 28 The C in ICE (program for training cheerleaders from low income families)
- 33 No one wants to feel like a ____ in the machine
- 35 Iron symbol

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(Green)

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