

CANADIAN SCHOOL  
**Counsellor**  
MAGAZINE

**HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELLING:  
THE CURRENT STATE IN CANADA**

**SERVICES D'ORIENTATION DANS LES  
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## Canadian School Counselling Week

*A Celebration of the School Counselling Profession in Canada*

**February 4 – 8, 2019**

School counsellors continue to play a significant role in schools across Canada. Every year, during the first week of February, the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA), in collaboration with its School Counsellors

Chapter, celebrates Canadian School Counselling Week. The goal is to increase the public's awareness of the scope of programs and services that characterize the school counselling profession in Canada within the twenty-first century and beyond.

*"The week recognizes the contributions of the school counselling profession to the personal, social, educational, and career development, and the mental health and wellbeing, of all students in Canada."*

This special week highlights the role school counsellors play in supporting student success. It also builds a sense of national identity within the school counselling profession. The week recognizes the contributions of the school counselling profession to the personal, social, educational, and career development, and the mental health and wellbeing, of all students in Canada.

Canadian School Counselling Week is a collaborative effort by CCPA, the School Counsellors Chapter, and the regional school counselling associations and ministries/departments of education in each province and territory. Individual professionals will have many creative ideas to raise public awareness of the ways in which school counsellors foster student growth.

Various templates of promotional materials are available on the CCPA School Counsellors Chapter website.<sup>1</sup>

Resources may be downloaded by school counsellors to advertise and organize plans for Canadian School Counselling Week. Resources include a sample press release and proclamation, sample posters, certificates and suggested activities. 🍁 **CSC**

<sup>1</sup>[www.ccpa-accp.ca/chapters/school-counsellors/](http://www.ccpa-accp.ca/chapters/school-counsellors/)

*For more information, please contact ...*

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**or Janice Graham-Migel**

*(Chair, National School Counselling Week Committee) at [janice.graham@acadiau.ca](mailto:janice.graham@acadiau.ca).*

*To join the conversation on Twitter, follow @CCPA\_ACCP and use #CSCW and #SCCS. We hope you will join us in promoting and celebrating Canadian School Counselling Week.*



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# Disadvantaged Regina youth get chance at cheerleading through new Indigenous Cheer Evolution program

By Stephanie Taylor, Courtesy of CBC News, Photos by Adnan Mohamad/CBC



Cheerleaders in Training



Tina Caderma



Trinity Caderma

Trinity Caplette is used to hearing loud noises from upstairs. It's the sound of her three daughters flipping, cartwheeling and springing themselves off the couch — their personal gym mat. "We're downstairs, that's all we hear," she said, laughing. "It's always a gym."

Caplettes' daughters, Angelina, Madison and Harmony, discovered cheerleading through YouTube. She said she considered enrolling them in a program, but "with our family being low-income, it just wasn't an option for us."

A friend introduced her to Indigenous Cheer Evolution, or ICE, a new inner-city cheerleading group aimed at Regina families like Caplette's. "I love this program. It's like a blessing for my family, a lot of families here in general."

The program launched in August, offering an introductory and an advanced class, and has so far signed up 61 kids from ages four to 14.

Coach Trinity Caderma, 17, has been a cheerleader for nearly a decade and knows the sport is expensive for even the average family. This program, she said, is much cheaper than what else is out there, giving every kid a chance to try it out, regardless of their family income. "There's so many talented athletes that just haven't had the opportunity 'cause they can't afford the big clubs," Trinity Caderma said, adding some of their kids have tried out at different programs, but couldn't afford to pay the cost.

Her mother, Tina, a school bus driver who has driven routes in North Central, organized

the program and says the majority of the kids are from the neighbourhood.

Talking to people in the community, she explained they were brainstorming a name for an affordable cheer program and decided on Indigenous Cheer Evolution, recognizing many inner-city children are Indigenous.

Tina is not Indigenous, but members on their board are and said, "The idea of ICE being Indigenous just is one step more toward forming a community bond within North Central and then hopefully we can build on something like that."

The group practices Sundays at Queen City Gymnastics and offer free rides to families who need them.

The first lesson was "utter chaos," Tina said. Thankfully for the coaches there is now more order. The kids spend the hour learning fundamentals of cheerleading, from handstands to backbends to jumps and tumbling.

The younger children mostly work on their listening skills. Practice is not without tears or timeouts. "There's just so much more to cheerleading than just waving some pom-poms and dancing to some music," Tina said. She values the sport as a way to teach co-operation and as a way for boys and girls to learn to work with each other. Forming friendships is another important part, she said.

For eight-year-old Jayne McKay, one of a handful of boys in the program, the priority



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is to improve his skills. "Cheerleading is not just for girls," said McKay, who has a hard time doing backbends because he's not as flexible as the girls.

Tina said she wants the program to confront cheerleading stereotypes around money and looks. She charges families \$200 for one lesson a week for four months, which she compared to thousands they could spend on fees at other clubs, not to mention the additional costs of providing uniforms, makeup and travel expenses.

Tina grew up in poverty and said such costs were the subject of emotional conversations with her daughter Trinity over the years.

Trinity Caderma said she has cheered for more than a decade — and travelled internationally to world championships — and only seen a few visibility Indigenous cheerleaders. "If you want to learn and you find a love for the sport you should just be able to do it. So seeing these kids come out here and try something probably completely out of their comfort zone, it's amazing, I love it," Trinity Caderma said.

Trinity Caderma hopes that one day — likely years from now — the kids learning the basics today will be able to perform routines and compete beyond Saskatchewan's borders.

Trinity Caplette, who watches her daughters practise at both home and the gym, said she believes her girls will stick with the sport. "It makes me really proud," she said. "It brings tears to my eyes that I can see my daughters really enjoying this. They look forward to this more than they do school." ✦ CSC

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IDC membership is \$50 per year or \$150 for the duration of studies for students enrolled in accredited interior design programs. Membership includes access to bursaries, scholarships, networking opportunities and vital industry information to help push their careers forward. ✦ CSC

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City of Thunder Bay counsellor, Mr. Peng You. The panel discussion was moderated by Ms. Muskaan Sachdeva, a medical student from the University of Toronto.

The symposium was an incredible success with more than 50 faculty members, high school students and University students in attendance. One member from the audience, Dr. Michael Wesner from the Department of Psychology at Lakehead University, said that the symposium was "very well-run and professional" and that it addressed "a very important topic for all educational institutions". The IB Guidance Counsellor at Superior Collegiate and Vocational Institute, Mr. Clarke Loney, while congratulating on the incredible success of the symposium said, "Several keynote speakers and panel experts changed the perspective of the audience through the lens used in talking about aspects of mental health and the role that physical activity can play in enhancing our mental health".

University is a key life transition for many high school students, which demands adaptation to a new social environment in addition to the stress of academics. In order for students to perform optimally in their studies, it is critical for them to be aware of the challenges they face during the transitional period and the benefits that simple activities, such as staying physically active, can offer to offset the deleterious effects of stress. 🍁 CSC

## Kids help phone ready + prepared with youth support services during cannabis 'legalization'

*Courtesy of Kids Help Phone*

*"Since our first phone call in 1989, we have seen changes in technology, laws, and political leanings and have been dedicated to navigating these waters for the youth we serve every day."*

Kids Help Phone is reminding young people, the adults in their lives, teachers, and the general public that their support team is available and at-the-ready should youth need a safe place to go to and talk.

"Cannabis legalization is a landscape change in Canada," said Alisa Simon, Vice

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President of Service Innovation + Chief Youth Officer at Kids Help Phone. "We know that for many this change brings questions, concerns, and emotions about what this is going to mean for them. And they are not alone. Now is the time to remember that our counsellors are ready, prepared and willing to help."

For over 30 years, Kids Help Phone has been speaking with young people and those in their lives about issues big and small. In that time, many of the conversations that have taken place involved topics and issues related to cannabis.

"For us, talking about cannabis is nothing new," said Jennifer Murdoch, Associate Vice President of Youth Experience and Program Operations. "Since our first phone call in 1989, we have seen changes in technology,

laws, and political leanings and have been dedicated to navigating these waters for the youth we serve every day."

"While the impacts of legalization are still to be determined," she continued, "we will continue – as we have always done – to serve young people. Our priority is to ensure they access the support they need."

Last year, Kids Help Phone had 1.4 million touchpoints with young people across Canada.

Simon said; "With cannabis legalization, just as with any other landscape change that impacts the lives of young people, we anticipate that we will need to be there even more in the coming years. To enable that, we need funding to ensure we are there for young people across Canada 24/7, 365 days a year."

## About Kids Help Phone:

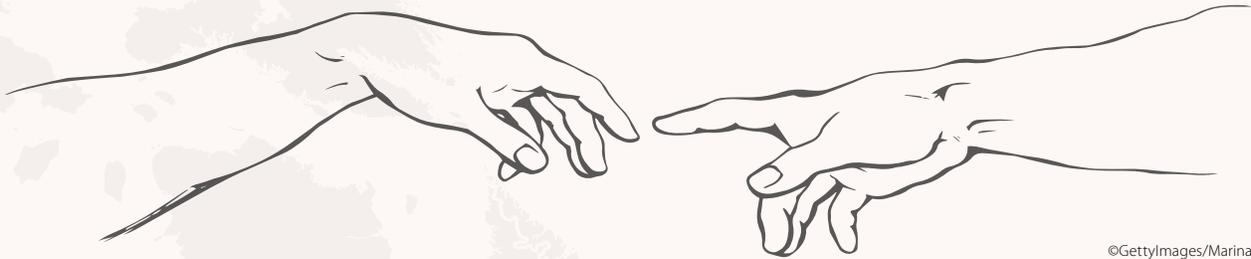
Kids Help Phone is Canada's only 24/7 national service offering professional counselling, information, referrals and volunteer-led text-based support (available nationwide by the end of 2018) for young people. Kids Help Phone's free, anonymous services are available in both English and French. Kids Help Phone is a registered Canadian charity, and we raise the majority of our revenue from individuals, foundations, corporations, and community fundraising. 

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## New research shows skilled trades encourage happiness, sense of accomplishment

*Study reveals more positive feelings on career over general working population*

Students and young people today are looking for more than just a paycheck — they want the opportunity to make meaningful

and real-world contributions in a career that offers a sense of achievement. But as people increasingly struggle to find satisfaction in so-called white-collar jobs, we're discovering the skilled trades can offer a positive alternative.

A new report by JobTalks.org called "Trading Up" that was funded in part by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada highlights the power and potential of a career in the skilled trades. Based on a 2017 survey of the Canadian workforce, the report compares how people in the

trades feel about their jobs and careers to the general working population.

The survey shows that 64% of trades people report having "really accomplished something worthwhile," while only 47% of those not in the trades say the same. Workers in the skilled trades are also more likely to feel a sense of success and achievement (68% vs. 49%) and "getting a lot of satisfaction" out of their work (65% vs. 48%).

Tradespeople often feel satisfied and successful because of the practical contributions and impact their work has on everyday people and society, and this fosters self-esteem and self-actualization. For example, welders are ensuring parks' drinking fountains are safe; building and construction specialists are making sure hospitals and schools have a good foundation; and electricity and power specialists are helping all Canadians' homes receive electricity without interruption.

Beyond this sense of pride and accomplishment, the "Trading Up" report also shows that tradespeople simply enjoy their jobs more on a day-to-day basis. They're among the happiest workers in the country, reporting that their job makes them "truly happy" much more than the general population (51% vs. 41%).

Tradespeople also feel more alive, energized and stimulated while doing their jobs, thanks to constant opportunities for new learning and personal growth through mentorships and apprenticeships. And 70% say they feel they can be more themselves at work (vs. 56% of working Canadians). This supportive environment can help people find their passion and put it to good use in everyday life.

Taken together, the report's insights into the working lives of tradespeople show that a career in the trades could be the answer young people are looking for when searching for a career that combines real-world contributions with personal accomplishment and happiness. 🍁 CSC



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## Newfoundland in desperate need of more guidance counsellors, says teachers' union president

*NLTA boss says province has half the number of counsellors needed*

*By Terri Coles, Courtesy of CBC News*

At a time when students in Newfoundland and Labrador are facing more emotional and mental needs than perhaps ever before, the province's teachers' union says schools have only half the number of guidance counsellors and psychologists needed.

"One can certainly argue that the need for interventions and counselling for youth has never been higher," Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association president Dean Ingram told The Central Morning Show on Tuesday.

It's a statement that's backed up by research.

A report released by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in 2016 found that Canadian middle and high schoolers who reported experiencing serious psychological distress within the past month had jumped to 34% in 2015 from 24% in 2013.

As teens get older, those levels go up. "We have seen a huge surge in levels of anxiety in our kids and our teens," said Dr. Janine Hubbard, a registered psychologist who works with children.

Ingram pointed to a recent incident at Prince of Wales Collegiate in St. John's in which several students were hit by suspected bear spray and sent to hospital as a sign of the need for help in schools in the province.

"I'd make the argument that if you want to deliver effective mental health services for youth, you put the services where youth are — and that, of course, would be our schools."

### One counsellor per 500 students

Ingram said the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association recommends one counsellor per 250 students and one psychologist per 500, though the association said in a statement that they don't have a

specific position on student/counsellor ratios given the importance of context.

In a statement to CBC News, the NLTA said there is no formal recommendation for counsellor and psychologist ratios set for Canadian schools.

However, in numerous presentations across the country, staffing levels of one school counsellor per 250 students and one school psychologist per 500 students have been presented.

In the 2017-18 school year there were 65,051 students in 256 schools, according to Department of Education statistics, which translates into a ratio of guidance counsellors to students of about one to 500.

The department did not respond to a request for comment from CBC News before publication.

### Province employs 155 guidance counsellors

Recommendations to increase the numbers of guidance counsellors date back more than a decade, when the provincial government launched a teacher allocation commission.

In a document released in 2007, called Education and Our Future, that commission recommended an allocation of one guidance counsellor per 333 students.

Schools in the province are staffed with both guidance counsellors and educational psychologists, the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District said in a statement to CBC News.

"It should also be noted that while the EECD ratio provides for 130 guidance counsellors, the district does have some flexibility to assign additional resources to meet the needs of schools," it read. "As such, there are currently 155 guidance counsellors deployed in just over 250 schools."

When there is an unanticipated or urgent need for counsellors a school or district crisis team will be brought in as needed, the NLESD said. Meanwhile, each school has such a crisis team with a guidance counsellor assigned, with varying levels of training.

### Many counsellors cover multiple schools

The fact that many counsellors cover multiple schools is another concern,

Ingram said. The result is several schools with counsellors on premises part time, and it can be difficult to hire for those roles because of the travel time involved.

"When you have school counsellors spread over a wide geographic area, the challenge then is that students don't necessarily wait until the day their counsellor is in the building to have their concerns and issues," he said.

When a counsellor or psychologist is not available the onus often falls on teachers and support staff who are not trained to deal with these issues, Hubbard said, especially when they are severe.

Issues that start out as less serious can escalate if not dealt with in a timely and effective way, she said. Anxiety can go from worry about an upcoming test to physical symptoms and a debilitating anxiety disorder.

"If not addressed early on, emerging mental health concerns such as anxiety or depression can go from fairly minor issues with treatment to, in some cases, very disabling conditions."

The best way to deal with many of the issues in schools is to be proactive, Ingram said, which is more difficult when there isn't a dedicated counsellor on staff.

"Sharing staff across schools occurs in many jurisdictions across Canada, particularly in rural regions, where school enrolments are typically lower than in urban areas," the district said.

In this province, challenges are mitigated through those crisis teams, school staff, regional offices and virtual options, it continued.

Finding longer-term solutions to shortages can help bridge the gap between a need for — and willingness to accept — help and the availability of that help.

The result of counsellor and psychologist shortages is that, thanks to efforts to reduce the stigma of mental illness, we now have students who are more willing than ever to share their struggles but aren't finding the resources and support they need when they do, Hubbard said.

"We've opened up the box in terms of the discussion, but we haven't followed that up with the necessary supports." 

# There Are No shortcuts

By Sean Dolan



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**For my entire career I have been preaching this message to my students:**

*There are no shortcuts so you might as well settle in, do the work, and accept the grades you get.*

It's a logical message. Students who spend too much time looking for shortcuts and neglect their studies always have to bridge the gap that emerges as a result of their dogged pursuit of an easier way to get things done. I have had dozens (and dozens!) of students sit across from me in my office and vow to radically improve their grades after a period of inaction. The monologue usually goes something like this: "Well, sir, you see, I really slacked off in Grade 11, but I am going to get 90s in Grade 12." You can substitute different grade levels into the equation, but the message remains the same - they believe they can just flip a switch and their genius will emerge.

I am not talking about students who, due to life circumstances, have been prevented from achieving their potential. A student who becomes ill, slips into a mental illness, suffers at the hands of an abuser or watches their parents navigate the painful terrain of a divorce can be understandably distracted from their school work. Nor am I talking about students who, despite their best efforts, struggle to post high grades even though they have a strong work ethic. I am talking about the underachiever who elects to coast for a month, a year or a number of years even though their parents and teachers encourage them to get back on track. Once these students realize that they have fallen behind, they often look for the quick fix - the shortcut - to get themselves back in the game.

"The value of learning is found in approaching academics with **integrity** and **respect** for the incremental process of building knowledge, skills and, in time, wisdom. **Learning requires patience and commitment.**"

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My pep talk for these students is seldom received with any kind of pleasure. They don't like to hear that their education is a progression of steps toward mastery learning. There are no substantive shortcuts that can be taken to jump to mastery. Instead, because they didn't put enough effort/practice/time into their academics, they will need to make up the gap in learning that emerged while they were not focusing on their studies – which tends to be a frustrating endeavour. They also don't like to hear that grades generally stay in the same range as one moves through high school. Sure, the odd student will produce a five-point bump from one year to the next but, more often, grades stay the same or drop because the content gets more difficult with each passing academic year. In my experience, as a guidance counsellor for thousands of students over the past decade, I have only seen one student make the jump from a high-60 to a mid-80 (something that required a radical shift in attitude and a change in academic focus from their weaker subjects to their stronger subjects).

I felt pretty good about my no shortcuts philosophy until very recently. Over the past few years, students have begun turning to private schools to get the grades they want to get into university. The private schools I am talking about are small businesses that deliver single credits to students outside of regular day school. Most of these small businesses charge between \$500 and \$900 per credit. As long as the course has an appropriate Ministry of Education course code, they are being entered onto the student's transcript and, for the most part, the universities are none the wiser.

This is not an effort to vilify private schools of this ilk. Many offer credits and programs to students in need. For example, students who cannot attend school because they are ill or are taking care of a sick family member rely on these private institutions to get through high school. Some students also have to make up pre-requisite courses to move from one academic phase to the next and their only option is a private school.

Unfortunately, some private schools are straying from the mandate described above. I have seen private school report cards for students (who have been earning failing grades in day school!) that are nothing short of miraculous. I am talking about marks skyrocketing from 45 to 95. Clearly, these schools have exploited a weakness in the education system and have created a shortcut for students that relays the following message:

With a limited amount of effort (and a certain amount of cash) you can get the grades you want.

This shortcut forces all education stakeholders to ask the question: What is the value of learning? The guidance counsellors I have spoken with have echoed the same refrain: The value of learning is found in approaching academics with integrity and respect for the incremental process of building knowledge, skills and, in time, wisdom. Learning requires patience and commitment. Learning is NOT about exploiting a shortcut that, through a cash transaction, gets a student a grade that is not a true reflection of their performance. 🍁 CSC



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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 Ubiquitous Selfie

By Laurie Nealin



## **We've become a selfie society. And, it's not necessarily a pretty picture.**

As defined by Oxford Dictionaries, a selfie is a photograph that one takes of oneself, typically with a smartphone or webcam, and uploads to a social media website.

In 2013, Oxford proclaimed selfie its word of the year. By then, the term had infiltrated everyday language and virtually everyone's lives. The addition of a front-facing camera on the 2010 iPhone sparked the selfie craze; a surge in celebrity selfie postings on social media ignited it. "The (selfie) fire was burning pretty hot with Facebook, and Instagram added a lot more fuel to it," says Dr. Nicholas Rule, a professor of psychology at the University of Toronto.

...people are trying to make a **good impression** and that drive to make that impression, that **self-consciousness** is leading them to engage in behaviours that are **actually unflattering**.

A few years ago, Rule and fellow researcher Daniel Re conducted a study of selfie-taking undergraduate students to better understand them and their selfie-taking behaviours. Rule reports that frequent selfie-takers can go to great lengths – adjusting the angle of the shot, using filters and so on – to capture what they feel is the perfect image.

His research found that frequent selfie-takers rated their photos higher – in terms of attractiveness and likeability – than did outsiders who viewed the selfies. As well, all selfie-takers felt they looked better in photos they took of themselves than in the ones researchers snapped. The outsiders, on the other hand, rated both images equally low.

“They actually think they look better (in the selfie), so there’s this lack of awareness. While the (selfie-taker’s) intention is to look better, they actually end up looking worse. There is an irony here in that people are trying to make a good impression and that drive to make that impression, that self-consciousness is leading them to engage in behaviours that are actually unflattering.

“In one respect, they’re seeking the praise and approval of others but the means by which they’re doing it is, ironically, causing them to lose the esteem of others,” says Rule whose research report entitled “Selfie Indulgence - Self-Favoring Biases in Perceptions of Selfies” was published in the May 2016 issue of Social, Psychological and Personality Science.

French psychoanalyst and philosopher Elsa Godart suggests in her writing that the selfie culture fosters insecurities, creates a craving for reassurance that the selfie-taker can get only from ‘likes’ and, subsequently, provokes neurotic behaviour. She cites the disparity between a selfie addict’s real and online image, as well as their isolation and loss of connection to people and their surroundings as a major concern.

Rule concurs that problems can arise if the selfies always look better than the person actually does in real life. He notes that filters – computing software algorithms – built into the phone automatically convert the photo in ways that are meant to be self-enhancing, like a sort of digital

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If a student expresses concerns about posting to social media, Dr. Steeves suggests educators:

- ✓ Ask questions about what selfie postings mean to the student
- ✓ Use it as a means to discuss stereotypes and commercialization
- ✓ Recognize the pressures that kids are under on social media and help them navigate that environment
- ✓ Work through options with the student to identify protective measures (Generally, parental surveillance of a child's social media activity is not helpful since it teaches them they're not trusted and makes them reluctant to talk to adults.)
- ✓ Explore resources regarding youth and digital media on the MediaSmarts [www.mediasmarts.ca](http://www.mediasmarts.ca) and eQuality Project websites [www.equalityproject.ca](http://www.equalityproject.ca)
- ✓ Propose a digital fast. (See [#Disconnection Challenge](#) on eQuality site)



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make-up. "Every time someone takes a photo they can put these different masks on that can, as Godart suggested, drastically alter over time someone's sense of what they look like. Looking in the mirror versus an online photo of themselves, that disconnect seems like it could be harmful or dangerous.

"If all that someone sees of you, or more often sees of you, is an altered image on a social media site, then when you actually meet that person there might be challenges – even though you've done the best that you can physically in the real world. I would suspect that's going to lead to some sense of fraudulence or injury to one's self-esteem," Rule offers.

Dr. Valerie Steeves, a professor in the Department of Criminology at the University of Ottawa, has been tracking young people's use of technology since 1999. "When we ask them what their lives are like online, we find out things are all not well," she says. "They're kids in an incredibly stressful public environment that puts incredible pressure on them... to have just the right picture, just the right weight, just the right make-up, just the right clothing. Social media gives girls these fantasies to look at and be absorbed by, but you can never really pull it off in person so you end up feeling really badly about yourself."

Steeves discovered that her young research subjects set rules for themselves regarding social media postings to avoid judgmental reactions. They are very deliberate in choosing the photos they post in an attempt to eliminate negative consequences for themselves.

Her research contradicts the belief that selfies are ubiquitous among teens and young adults. Her subjects reported shying away from selfies – except in specific circumstances. "When we talk about selfies, we often talk

about kids as if they're narcissistic and constantly putting their private life out there. Even early on, our research indicated that kids value online privacy very, very highly. What was most fascinating is that kids are careful not to put much of themselves on social media. They post photos they think are going to get a lot of 'likes.'"

It's acceptable to post an image of your face as long as there's a commercial product beside you, they told Steeves.

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A photo of yourself with your macchiato at Starbucks, for example, would be an acceptable selfie post.

In her three-year eGirls research<sup>1</sup> launched in 2011 with teenagers and young women, Steeves discovered this group posted selfies only when they knew the image would be positively received. “They have social rules about the kind of photos that are safe to post, that they know they’re not going to get judged for. University students know that posting a selfie of themselves drinking

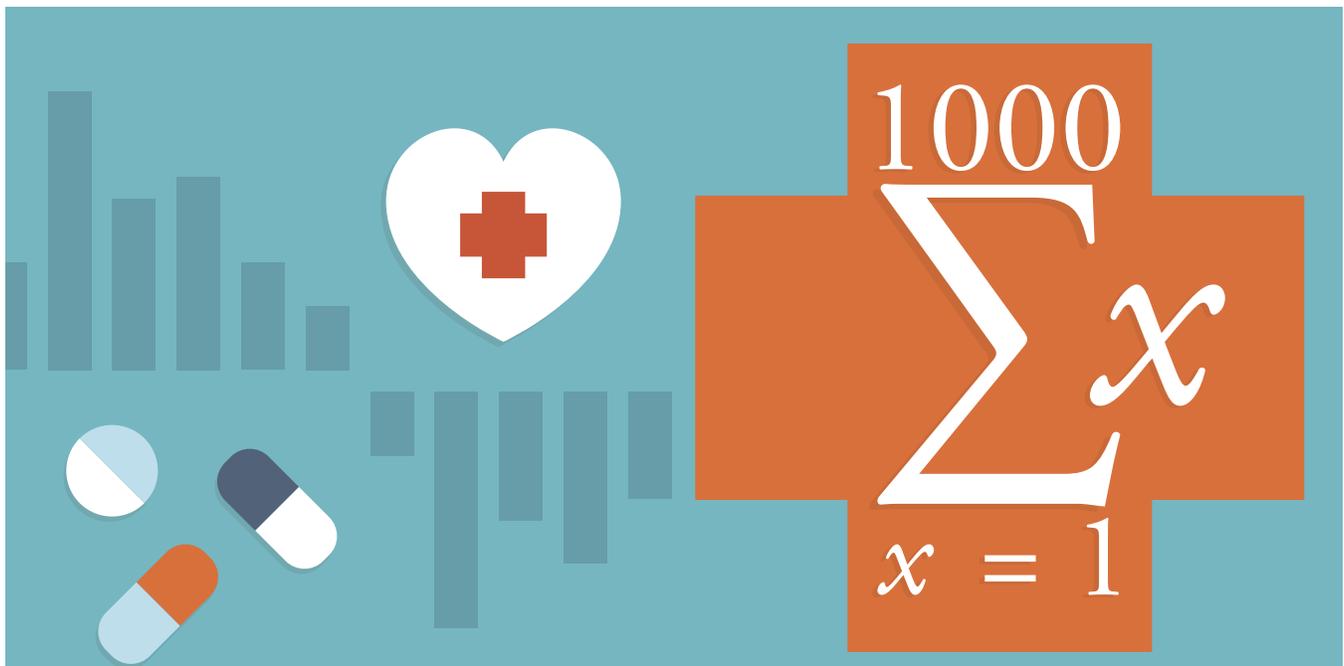
will generate ‘likes.’ When they enter the working world, however, they try to erase those photos from the databank,” says Steeves, the lead researcher for a MediaSmarts project – Young Canadians in a Wired World.

For Steeves, a significant cause for concern is that online space is wallpapered with commercial messages laden with stereotypes. “The stereotypes contained in those messages are amplified so young people will post photos that mirror those stereotypes

because they know that’s what the site is asking for, but they don’t do it without caution and they’re aware it can open them up to incredible judgement.”

Young people curate their photo postings to comply with the demands of the online environment, positioning them as if they’re marketing their own lives, Steeves says. “To be successful, they have to fall into these stereotypes. The fact we’re telling kids they’re brands just indicates how strongly we’ve allowed childhood to be commercialized.” 

<sup>1</sup><https://press.uottawa.ca/egirls-ecitizens.html>



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# Fortnite

By Alison Zenisek

## Frenzy

A highly popular video game designed to draw players in and rob them of their time and real world engagement.



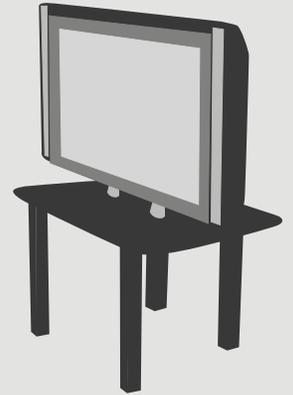
The video game Fortnite has swept the globe with its popularity and has left many wondering at its addictive power.

The Fortnite frenzy seems to have come out of nowhere, but in fact it is the inevitable result of the gaming industry increasingly applying addictive elements to each new game. Parents and educators are rightly concerned about Fortnite's ability to mesmerize teens and steal hours of their time. Today's commercial video games have incorporated cutting-edge graphics, behavioral reinforcers (through achieving levels of play), and exciting and often violent stories. The risks to health through gaming addiction in adolescents are very real, and include sleep deprivation and the subsequent lack of attention, a higher incidence of obesity, depression, and inappropriate or unsafe content. Screen time is often the enemy of the good. Age appropriate critical thinking and digital literacy should now be an essential part of their education.

*Fortnite: Save the World* was created by Epic Games and currently costs \$39.99. It can be played on PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Windows, mobile devices, and multi-player networks. The game takes elements of sandbox-building games and also adds the fast-paced action of a third-person shooter. The two modes of the game are *Fortnite: Save the World* and *Fortnite: Battle Royal*. *Save the World* is a cooperative game in which you play on a team of up to three other players to fight AI controlled waves of enemies, known as husks. It can also be played solo with AI allies that offer aid on the mission. Though not as bloody as the *Call of Duty* series, which are gritty and realistic military first-person shooter games, *Save the World* is also primarily a combat based game with tons of guns and violence. Parents and educators might find it somewhat more acceptable because it does build teamwork and thoughtful collaboration.



We are **just now learning** the **power** of the hooks imbedded in our technology which are both **compelling** and progressively designed to be **addictive**.



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*Battle Royale* is free to play and an offshoot of *Save the World*. Players are dropped into a game map and compete to the last man standing. Younger players are attracted to the cartoonish bloodless style of the game and the ability to collect weapons and build safe structures with wood, stone, and metal in this free *Battle Royale* mode. Adults should be aware that *Battle Royale* does have in-app purchases. Unlike the *Save the World* version there are no creepy zombie-like creatures to kill. The game's online chat feature could expose younger players to mature content from random strangers. Open chat is not recommended for players under the age of 13, but with the right controls

and parental guidance, this game may be a more acceptable alternative to violent first-person shooter games. The voice chat can be turned off in *Fortnite: Battle Royale*. Each match lasts about 20 minutes, which can be a tool for limiting the amount of games played.

Video game addiction is a very real phenomenon in modern society. Behavioral addiction is created by both environment and circumstance. These games are pervasive in our culture and very difficult to avoid. The technology in itself is not bad, but corporations now add addictive features in order to profit. It is no accident that the great technocrats restrict their own children's use of technology,

especially in their bedrooms. In 2010 Steve Jobs told New York Times journalist Nick Bilton that his children had never used the iPad. "We limit how much technology our kids use in the home."

Bilton discovered other tech giants impose similar restrictions. Chris Anderson, the former editor of *WIRED*, enforced strict limits on every device in the home, "because we have seen the dangers of technology firsthand." Williams, the founder of Blogger, Twitter, and Medium, bought hundreds of books for his two young sons, but refused to give them an iPad. Lesley Gold, the founder of an analytics company enforced a strict no-screen-time-during-the-week rule on her kids. It seems that these tech giants were also the greatest technophobes, at least when it came to their own children.

The struggle is to use all that is available on line in moderation. According to one design ethicist, "the problem isn't just self-discipline; it's that there are a thousand people on the other side of the screen whose job it is to break down the self-regulation you have." The entrepreneurs recognize that the tools they create and promote are engineered to be irresistible and therefore have the potential to ensnare users indiscriminately. Teens and youth are particularly vulnerable to these technological tricks. More importantly, there just isn't a bright and obvious line between addicts and the rest of us.

The environment and circumstance of the digital age are far more conducive to

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addiction than anything humans have previously experienced. We are just now learning the power of the hooks imbedded in our technology which are both compelling and progressively designed to be addictive. In some respects substance addiction and behavioral addictions are similar and activate the same brain regions. We are all motivated by the same human needs: social engagement and social support, mental stimulation, and a sense of effectiveness. When these needs are increasingly not met, vulnerability to technological gimmicks is the logical consequence. This era of addictive technology is still in its infancy, but early signs point to a crisis.

In his revolutionary book, *Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping us Hooked* by Adam Alter, a professor of psychology and marketing at NYU, tracks how the newest technology is impacting our lives negatively. Alter brilliantly illustrates how these new obsessions are controlling our lives and offers the tools we need to deliver us from them. He states that behavioral addiction consists of

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several ingredients: compelling goals that are just beyond reach, irresistible and unpredictable positive feedback, a sense of incremental progress and improvement, tasks that become progressively more difficult, unresolved tensions that demand resolution, and

strong social connections. Games employ many of these psychological hooks. Addiction to a particular game is damaging because it crowds out other essential pursuits, especially for youth who are still in the process of developing socially, emotionally, and intellectually.

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There are some warning signs in youth who might have an unhealthy relationship with technology, and more specifically with games like Fortnite. One is behavioral, the other is emotional. When youth experience negative or aggressive emotions after spending time on social media or with a role-playing game online, that is a red flag. If teens replace offline activities they used to enjoy, such as sports or friends, with more screen time, and family dinners are usurped by devices, then there is a significant problem. Teenagers who spend too much time playing video games or

watching violent shows are found to be more aggressive and likely to fight with their peers and argue with the adults in their lives, according to a study in the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*.

In 2000, Microsoft Canada found that our average attention span was 12 minutes long; by 2013 it was 8 seconds long. Goldfish, by comparison, have a 9 second attention span. If this research wasn't so frightening it might be funny. Presently, gaming addiction is a serious problem in East Asia. In China addiction to games

appears to be taking an alarming direction, where parents resort to placing their youth in camps where therapists treat them with a detox regime. Unfortunately for us all, games that were once confined to our home computers, but are now on mobile devices permit youth to access them everywhere. Interestingly, Epic Games has introduced cross play functionality for *Fortnite: Battle Royal*, which facilitates players to form squads with friends on different platforms. Yet another "advancement" provided courtesy of the game publishers. 🍁 CSC



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# Building Resilience: A learned competency

By Dr. Stan Kutcher



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Resilience at its core means the ability to successfully engage with the challenges and opportunities that life brings and through that engagement, develop the competencies necessary to take on future and more complex existential confrontations. While there is a genetic component, (some individuals are by nature more resilient than others) resilience arises out of an individual's engagement with life and all its "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune".

The development of resilience is a life-long activity and involves the complex interplay of environment, genetics and epigenetic processes. In young people it is a necessary component of normal development, in particular the growth of independence.

What has emerged from the now robust literature on resilience is that active engagement with both the challenges and opportunities that life presents is foundational for its development. Resilience does not mean that individuals do not suffer emotional and cognitive distress when faced with life circumstances, it means that they are both able to apply competencies they have learned to deal with those circumstances and that they are able to develop new skills as a result of dealing with those circumstances – skills that they will apply in future situations. Having supportive personal relationships, good problem solving skills, the ability to manage emotions and knowing when, where and from whom to obtain needed help are some of the competencies that contribute to the building of resilience.

## » Building Resilience

In addition to development of those skills, young people also need to develop other competencies, perhaps equally necessary for the building of resilience. One of these competencies is learning (yes, this has to be learned) how to apply critical reasoning to everyday challenges and opportunities. The adolescent years are characterized by neurodevelopment that gradually enables the pre-frontal cortex to supervise and direct more affect driven decision-making. This is the ascendancy of reason over impulse, of thinking over feeling. Or, as the Nobel Prize winning economist David Kahneman so nicely put it – learning to think slow instead of thinking fast!

Another component of resilience is the development of competencies needed to help drive success in both the civil and vocational spheres of life. These include both basic and advanced facility with language (reading and writing), mathematics and general knowledge. These also include learning how to think critically, to manipulate complex concepts and to use data and scientific analytics to inform decision-making. These skills do not come easily to many and require, in addition to

explicit instruction, various degrees of plodding, poking, prodding, practice and persistence. Or as my father used to say: “success is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration”.

So, knowing this about how resilience is naturally created, what kinds of interventions could school counselors consider to help young people develop the complex competencies that when taken together better prepare them to address the challenges and opportunities of life? A few things to consider:

Resilience does not mean that individuals do not suffer emotional and cognitive distress when faced with life circumstances, it means that they are both able to apply competencies they have learned to deal with those circumstances and that they are able to develop new skills as a result of dealing with those circumstances.

### Primum nil nocere

First – do no harm, is a good place to start. Overprotection of young people from the normal and usual vicissitudes of life interferes with their development of the competencies that they need to learn from engaging with those challenges and opportunities. So is solving the problem for them instead of supporting them to solve the problem themselves.

When educators engage in Socratic dialogue with students they can encourage the development of problem solving skills. So, how could that be better deployed school-wide? How can you make that happen in your setting?

Think critically about what you mean when you or the school uses concepts such as “safe-spaces”. Does that mean that all other spaces are sites for danger? Does that support or retard the development of responsible independence? Could spaces be seen as inviting, welcoming and respectful instead of safe? This is something to think about and discuss with school administration.

Another way is to provide young people with clear and concise information that can help them better understand their own stress response and the role it has in building their resilience. For example, share this freely available resource material: [teenmentalhealth.org/learn/understanding-stress/](http://teenmentalhealth.org/learn/understanding-stress/). Students don't need to be protected from everyday stress but learn to use their own stress response to help them be successful in addressing the challenges and opportunities of life.

### Principatus Affectus

The adolescent years are characterized by intense emotional experiences. This has been well recognized in literature and neuroscience alike. However, it is likely not until the last 30 years or so that emotional ascendancy as the preferred vehicle for evaluation of “truth” or the basis for understanding of social interaction has emerged as a common cultural construct in the Western world. Unfortunately, the primacy of affective decision-making promotes the thinking fast over the thinking slow

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capacity. The negative developmental impact of this might be considerable, as argued by Lukianoff and Haidt in their recent challenging book: *The Coddling of the American Mind*.

If this is the case, and it well might be, how can a school counselor nudge young people towards a more pre-frontal and less amygdala driven problem-solving process. One way is to encourage young people to consider options – not just what the options are, but what are the pros and cons of each option – to common challenges and opportunities. Applying commonly used constructs from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy such as challenging cognitive distortions and helping young people work out which actions are likely to be more adaptively successful are two good places to start.

Another way is to encourage the open and respectful exchange of diverse opinions and viewpoints. It is important for young people to learn that someone can still be likeable and human without necessarily agreeing with them. Similarly, the experience of negative emotional states is a necessary and normal part of growing up. Their presence does not mean that a person is unwell or ill. Just because someone feels uncomfortable does not mean that they are suffering from a mental health problem or a mental illness. One useful approach to addressing this issue is through the exposure of students to the

evidence-based mental health literacy resource – freely available for use from [www.teenmentalhealth.org/curriculum](http://www.teenmentalhealth.org/curriculum) and now with an available online professional educational course (through the University of British Columbia) for teachers to engage with so as to be able to implement the resource in their own classrooms.<sup>1</sup>

The bottom line is, that young people build resilience naturally – it's like breathing! They need to be given the opportunity to skin their knees and to learn how to fall and to figure out how to get up themselves. They need to learn that failure is the foundation that success is built on and that in addition, there are skills and competencies that they can learn to better enhance their chances of success. As a counselor you can find hundreds of so called "resilience building" programs – some that you can purchase at considerable cost. Most have little or no evidence that they are much better than supportive exposure to the exigencies of life. Alternatively you can work with students, teachers and administrators to help create a school environment, informed by the local realities of the community in which the school is situated, to create your own resilience building approach, based on the issues identified above. After all – *usus est magister optimus*. 🍀CSC

<sup>1</sup><http://pdce.educ.ubc.ca/mentalhealth/>

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# **High School Counselling: T**

## **Services d'orientation da**

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*Secondary school students in Canada are trying to cope with more stressors than ever before. Social media exploitation and bullying, access to drugs and alcohol, mental health issues and socio-economic factors like unemployment, divorce, and abuse have infiltrated virtually every corner of our country and are challenging educators and pupils in all regions.*

High school guidance counsellors are on the front lines of the battle to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students – a battle some would say is getting tougher and tougher to handle.

Erin Luong is a school counsellor and Mental Health Literacy Teacher for the Calgary Catholic School District. She is also the president-elect for the Alberta Teachers' Association Council of School Counsellors. She has been a practicing school counsellor for the last 14 years and has experience counselling at all grade levels from Kindergarten to Grade 12, with the majority of her time spent working at the high school level. Erin was the proud recipient of the Alberta Teachers' Association Murray Jampolsky Award (2016) for Outstanding Practice as a School Counsellor.

# The current state in Canada dans les écoles secondaires état des lieux

By/Par Jackie Fritz



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*Les élèves des écoles secondaires canadiennes n'ont jamais subi autant de facteurs de stress. L'exploitation et l'intimidation sur les réseaux sociaux, l'accès à la drogue et à l'alcool, les problèmes de santé mentale et différents facteurs socioéconomiques – chômage, divorce, violence – s'observent presque partout, toutes régions confondues, et donnent du fil à retordre aux éducateurs comme aux élèves.*

Les conseillers d'orientation des écoles secondaires sont en première ligne du combat pour la création de milieux d'apprentissage sûrs et inclusifs pour tous les élèves, combat qui – aux dires de certains – serait de plus en plus ardu.

Erin Luong travaille comme conseillère d'orientation et professeure d'éducation à la santé mentale au conseil scolaire catholique de Calgary. C'est également la présidente désignée du conseil des conseillers d'orientation de l'association albertaine des enseignants. Conseillère d'orientation depuis 14 ans, elle a œuvré à tous les niveaux, de la maternelle à la 12e année, mais surtout au secondaire. Son travail exceptionnel lui a d'ailleurs valu le prix Murray-Jampolsky (2016) de l'association albertaine des enseignants.

## » Counselling in Canada / L'orientation scolaire au Canada

She believes her most important roles include supporting students with high school and post-secondary course selection and scholarship information, individual and group counselling with special assistance during times of crisis, coordinating school and community services for education, mental health, justice, newcomers and health care, as well as career counselling.

"As our students' needs become more complex, it is important that guidance counsellors use evidence-based approaches to work with students. Opportunities for life-long learning, networking to share best practice and mentorship are important for both urban and rural school counsellors," she says.

Statistics Canada released a report in 2017 which was based on the 2012 Canadian Community Health Survey – Mental Health. Findings indicate that 11% of youth aged 15 to 24 fit into the criteria for depression at some point in their lives and almost half of them reported suicidal thoughts.<sup>1</sup>

The most recent report available from Statistics Canada regarding the use of illicit drugs among young people was commissioned in 2015 and found that 21% of youth aged 15 to 19 years reported that they had consumed at least one illegal drug including cannabis, cocaine or crack, ecstasy, speed or methamphetamines, hallucinogens or heroin in the previous year. Overall in Canada, the use of illicit drugs increased from 11% of the nation's population in 2013 to 13% in 2015.<sup>2</sup>

Melissa Fuhr is a high school counsellor at John Paul II Collegiate in North Battleford, Saskatchewan. She has a

Elle considère que ses principaux rôles consistent à aider les élèves à faire leurs choix de cours au secondaire et au postsecondaire, à les informer des bourses offertes, à offrir du counseling individuel et de groupe en période de crise, à coordonner les services scolaires et communautaires d'éducation, de santé physique et mentale, de justice et d'intégration des nouveaux arrivants, et à donner des conseils de carrière.

« Plus les besoins des élèves se complexifient, plus les conseillers d'orientation doivent s'appuyer sur des données probantes dans leurs interventions. Les conseillers en milieu urbain et rural ont besoin de formation continue, de mentorat et d'occasions de réseautage et de diffusion des meilleures pratiques », affirme-t-elle.

Statistique Canada a publié en 2017 un rapport basé sur l'Enquête sur la santé dans les collectivités canadiennes : santé mentale de 2012. On y apprend que 11 % des jeunes de 15 à 24 remplissaient les critères de la dépression à un moment ou un autre et que près de la moitié de ce nombre ont déclaré avoir eu des pensées suicidaires<sup>1</sup>.

Le plus récent rapport de Statistique Canada sur l'usage de drogues illicites chez les jeunes, commandé en 2015, indique que 21 % des jeunes de 15 à 19 ans disent avoir consommé au moins une drogue illégale (cannabis, cocaïne ou crack, ecstasy, amphétamines ou méthamphétamines, hallucinogènes ou héroïne) dans la dernière année. Dans l'ensemble de la population canadienne, l'usage de drogues illicites est passé de 11 % en 2013 à 13 % en 2015<sup>2</sup>.

Melissa Fuhr est conseillère d'orientation à l'école secondaire John Paul II Collegiate de North Battleford, en Saskatchewan.



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Bachelor of Arts Psychology/Sociology from the University of Saskatchewan and is currently completing the last three classes towards her Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Regina.

Fuhr describes her thoughts on some of the challenges facing guidance counsellors in today's school environment, "Each of these students require a number of different supports whether it be providing relevant information and coaching, identifying and connecting them to resources in the community, communication with parents and teachers when necessary, and all of the required documentation that comes with those things. There doesn't ever seem to be enough time to see the students we need to see plus implement mental health promotion. Perhaps the biggest challenge, however, is mentally switching gears; in any given day we deal with such diverse and complicated issues such as addiction, suicidal ideation, anxiety, family problems and struggles with gender identity, just to name a few. Students will come to us at times feeling overwhelmed and require immediate assistance. To finish with one student and their concerns and then shift our thinking into an entirely different mindset, within minutes, takes practice!"

Poverty can also adversely affect kids in the school system. With almost 1.2 million Canadian children younger than 18 (17.0%) living in a low-income household,<sup>3</sup> it is inevitable that

Titulaire d'un baccalauréat en psychologie et en sociologie de l'Université de la Saskatchewan, elle suit actuellement les trois cours qu'il lui manque pour obtenir un baccalauréat en travail social de l'Université de Regina.

Quand on lui demande son avis sur les défis des conseillers d'orientation dans le contexte scolaire actuel, voici ce qu'elle répond : « Chaque élève a besoin de plusieurs types d'aide : information et mentorat, aiguillage vers des ressources communautaires, communication avec les parents et les enseignants au besoin, et toute la documentation que cette aide implique. Il n'y a pas assez d'heures dans une journée pour rencontrer tous les élèves qui ont besoin de nous tout en faisant la promotion de la santé mentale. Mais je dirais que le plus difficile, c'est de changer constamment de posture mentale : en l'espace d'une journée, on peut s'attaquer à des problèmes aussi variés et complexes que la dépendance, les idées suicidaires, l'anxiété, les problèmes familiaux et les questionnements sur l'identité de genre, entre autres. Parfois, certains élèves sont complètement dépassés et ont besoin d'une assistance immédiate. Réussir à mettre de côté les problèmes de l'élève à la fin d'une rencontre et repartir à neuf après quelques minutes, c'est du sport! »

La pauvreté peut avoir des effets néfastes sur les enfants qui fréquentent l'école. Comme près de 1,2 million de Canadiens de moins de 18 ans (17,0 %) vivent dans un ménage à faible revenu, chaque conseiller d'orientation intervient un jour ou l'autre



Melissa Fuhr



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*Perhaps the biggest challenge, however, is mentally switching gears; in any given day we deal with such diverse and complicated issues such as addiction, suicidal ideation, anxiety, family problems and struggles with gender identity, just to name a few.*

secondary school counsellors will encounter a student without adequate food, shelter, clothing and school supplies at some point in their career.

Geographical location can also be a factor that may pose additional complications for school counsellors. The challenges of isolation combined with difficulty in accessing additional resources can impact a counsellor's ability to perform their duties as they may wish.

Trent Langdon, M.Ed. (Counselling Psychology), C.C.C. has been a teacher since 2003 and has worked as a guidance counsellor for the past 13 years. Prior to this, he worked in adolescent, residential group homes, and within senior management roles with Boys and Girls Clubs of Newfoundland and Labrador. Trent is currently Vice-President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association (NLTA). He has served two terms as President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Counsellors and Psychologists Association (NLCPA) and one term as President of the School Counsellors Chapter of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA).



Trent Langdon

après d'un élève qui ne peut ni se nourrir, se loger et se vêtir adéquatement ni acheter des fournitures scolaires.

Parfois, même la géographie complique le travail des conseillers d'orientation. L'isolement et le manque d'accès à des ressources additionnelles en région éloignée peuvent donner à certains conseillers l'impression de manquer de moyens pour bien faire leur travail.

Trent Langdon, titulaire d'une maîtrise en psychologie de l'orientation et Conseiller canadien certifié, est enseignant depuis 2003 et conseiller d'orientation depuis 13 ans. Il a travaillé auparavant dans des foyers d'accueil pour adolescents et à la haute direction de l'organisme Boys and Girls Clubs de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador. Actuellement vice-président de l'association des enseignants de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador (NLTA), il a exercé deux mandats à la présidence de l'association des conseillers et des psychologues de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador (NLCPA) et un mandat à la présidence de la Section des conseillers et conseillères en milieu scolaire de l'Association canadienne de counseling et de psychothérapie (ACCP).

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*Mais je dirais que le plus difficile, c'est de changer constamment de posture mentale : en l'espace d'une journée, on peut s'attaquer à des problèmes aussi variés et complexes que la dépendance, les idées suicidaires, l'anxiété, les problèmes familiaux et les questionnements sur l'identité de genre, entre autres.*

"There exists a 'Standards of Practice' document for Guidance Counsellors in Newfoundland however the role is not clearly defined nor is it equivalent across schools. One thing that is common however, is the guidance counsellor's role in 'triage' for its school. They are responsible for comprehensive assessment procedures (psycho-educational testing), counselling, family supports, crisis response, management and consultation of student support services, school-wide Guidance programming, and student issues as they emerge. The 'triage' reference relates to the guidance counsellors role in addressing emergent needs and unexpected situations, frequently consuming their efforts. It is also important to note that guidance counsellors are typically assigned based on a ratio of 1:500 students, many being responsible for multiple schools, some with excessive travel within rural areas, and often having 'other teaching duties,'" Langdon says.

So what is the state of school counselling in Canada? In this article, we will explore the challenges and rewards for secondary school counsellors in the various regions of our nation, from coast to coast to coast.

« À Terre-Neuve, il existe un recueil des "normes de pratiques", mais le rôle de conseiller d'orientation n'est pas défini clairement et n'est pas équivalent d'une école à l'autre. Un point en commun : la fonction de "triage". En effet, le conseiller d'orientation a de nombreuses responsabilités : évaluations exhaustives (tests psychoéducatifs), counseling, soutien familial, intervention de crise, coordination et consultation des services d'aide aux élèves, activités d'orientation pour toute l'école et interventions auprès des élèves qui vivent des problèmes. On parle de "triage" parce que le conseiller d'orientation doit constamment répondre à des besoins émergents et réagir à des imprévus, ce qui demande beaucoup d'énergie. Il faut savoir que les conseillers sont généralement responsables de 500 élèves, que plusieurs couvrent différentes écoles et que certains passent beaucoup de temps sur la route en région rurale, sans parler des "tâches d'enseignement connexes" », explique Trent Langdon.

Où en est l'orientation scolaire au Canada? Cet article explore les défis et les avantages du métier de conseiller d'orientation au secondaire partout au pays, dans chaque région.

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## Northern Region

The sheer remoteness of Canada's north correlates directly to school staffing issues and a lack of educational options for students. For some, getting to school every day means a long bus ride or even requires a young person to leave their home in order to gain their high school diploma. In addition, housing shortages, food insecurity and health issues can directly impact youth who are trying to achieve an education. However, advances in technology including video conferencing and faster internet access, as well as a growing acceptance of non-conventional learning opportunities provides students with more opportunities than ever before.

## Nunavut

In Nunavut, there were 676 students in Grade 9, 975 in Grade 10, 775 in Grade 11 and 790 in Grade 12,<sup>4</sup> with 43 schools in 25 communities that include 711.5 teaching positions and 9,889 students enrolled in the school system.<sup>5</sup> While the number of guidance counselling positions was unavailable, the teacher to student ratio in the region is 1:13.9.

The total population of Nunavut is 35,944. There are 6555 residents are aged 10-19 years. Population density is 0.019 per square kilometre with 1,877,778.53 square kilometres of land area.<sup>6</sup>

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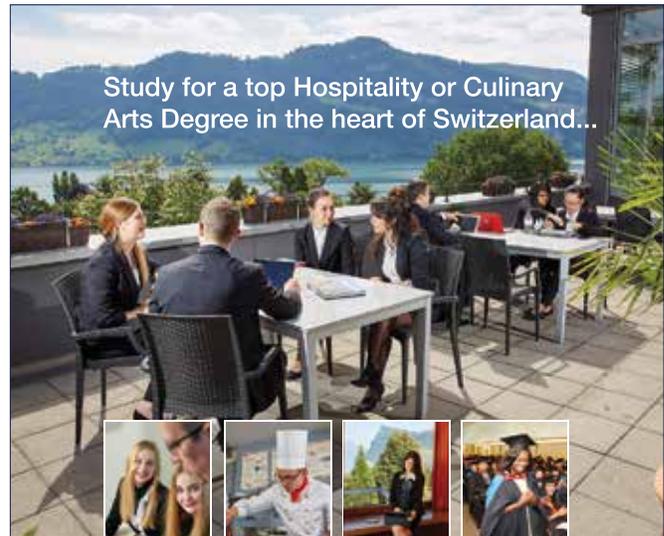
## Dans le Nord

L'isolement du Nord canadien est directement responsable de la pénurie de personnel scolaire et de la faiblesse de l'offre éducative. Certains élèves doivent effectuer un long trajet en bus pour se rendre à l'école, et d'autres doivent carrément quitter leur foyer pour décrocher un diplôme d'études secondaires. En outre, les pénuries de logement, l'insécurité alimentaire et les problèmes de santé peuvent contrecarrer les efforts des jeunes qui veulent s'instruire. Heureusement, les progrès technologiques – notamment les vidéoconférences et l'Internet haute vitesse – et l'acceptabilité sociale grandissante de l'apprentissage non conventionnel offrent aux élèves plus de possibilités que jamais.

## Nunavut

Ce territoire accueille 676 élèves en 9<sup>e</sup> année, 975 en 10<sup>e</sup> année, 775 en 11<sup>e</sup> année et 790 en 12<sup>e</sup> année<sup>4</sup>. On y dénombre 43 écoles dans 25 localités, 711,5 postes d'enseignant et 9 889 élèves qui fréquentent l'école<sup>5</sup>. Si on ne connaît pas le nombre de conseillers d'orientation, on sait que le ratio enseignant/élèves est de 1:13,9.

Le Nunavut compte 35 944 habitants, dont 6 555 jeunes de 10 à 19 ans. Il affiche une densité de population de 0,019 au kilomètre carré, sur une superficie totale de 1 877 778,53 kilomètres carrés<sup>6</sup>.



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## Yukon Territory

Yukon Territory has four secondary schools with Grades 8-12 students. There are also 13 other schools that provide secondary school programming to students. As of September 2018, there are 1,984 secondary students enrolled in Grades eight through 12. 6.88 full-time equivalent (FTE) high school guidance counsellors are employed in Whitehorse. Outside of Whitehorse, there 6.4 FTE guidance counsellors that assist Kindergarten to Grade 12 students and are not dedicated to a specific grade level. The guidance counsellor FTEs are also combined with teacher or other educator roles that have guidance counsellor responsibilities.<sup>7</sup> Those numbers add up to one guidance counsellor per every 149.3 students.

While the total population of Yukon Territory numbers 35,874, there are 3955 residents were aged 10-19 years. The total land area includes 474,712.68 square kilometre and population density is 0.1 per square kilometre.<sup>8</sup>

## Northwest Territories

In Northwest Territories, there were 2782 students enrolled in grades nine through 12 during the 2017/2018 school year. There are about 6 individuals who perform guidance counselling duties, some of whom also have other duties.<sup>9</sup> That means there is approximately one guidance counsellor for every 463.7 students.

Total population in Northwest Territories is 41,786 over 1,143,793.86 square kilometres, with a population density of 0.036 per square kilometre. 5455 residents were 10-19 years old.<sup>10</sup>

## Western Provinces

As of the 2016 Canadian Census, there were 35,151,728 people in Canada, with nearly one in three living in the West. Over half of Canada's Indigenous population also live in the western provinces so it is especially important that school counsellors are knowledgeable about Indigenous history and culture.

## British Columbia

In British Columbia there were approximately 266,341 students enrolled in grades eight to 12 during the 2017/2018 school year. Schools in B.C. are organized to provide educational opportunities for students in specific grades or grade ranges. These grade ranges are: Elementary (K-7), Elementary-Junior Secondary (K-10), Elementary-Secondary (K-12), Middle School (6-9), Junior Secondary (8-10), Secondary (8-12) and Senior Secondary (11, 12). There were over 700 teacher counselor positions in the K-12 public education system in 2017/2018.<sup>11</sup>

The total population of British Columbia is 4,648,055, with 492,840 in the age range of 10-19 years old. Population density is 5.0 per square kilometre with 922,503.01 square kilometres of land area.<sup>12</sup>

## Yukon

Ce territoire compte quatre écoles secondaires qui accueillent des élèves de la 8<sup>e</sup> à la 12<sup>e</sup> année, plus 13 autres écoles qui offrent une formation secondaire. En septembre 2018, 1 984 élèves étaient inscrits de la 8<sup>e</sup> à la 12<sup>e</sup> année. Whitehorse accueille 6,88 conseillers d'orientation équivalents temps plein (ETP) au secondaire. À l'extérieur de la capitale, 6,4 conseillers d'orientation ETP aident les élèves de la maternelle à la 12<sup>e</sup> année sans être attirés à un niveau particulier. Les conseillers ETP sont des personnes qui cumulent des responsabilités d'enseignant ou d'éducateur et de conseiller d'orientation<sup>7</sup>. En faisant le calcul, on obtient un ratio de 1 conseiller pour 149,3 élèves.

Le Yukon compte 35 874 habitants, dont 3 955 jeunes de 10 à 19 ans. Sa superficie totale est de 474 712,68 kilomètres carrés et sa densité de population, de 0,1 au kilomètre carré<sup>8</sup>.

## Territoires du Nord-Ouest

Ce territoire accueillait 2 782 élèves de la 9<sup>e</sup> à la 12<sup>e</sup> année pendant l'année scolaire 2017-2018. Environ six personnes y travaillent comme conseiller d'orientation, parfois à temps partiel<sup>9</sup>. Ainsi, on trouve environ 1 conseiller pour 463,7 élèves.

Les Territoires du Nord-Ouest comptent 41 786 résidents sur 1 143 793,86 kilomètres carrés, ce qui donne une densité de population de 0,036 au kilomètre carré. On y dénombre 5 455 jeunes de 10 à 19 ans<sup>10</sup>.

## Dans l'Ouest

Le recensement de 2016 a dénombré 35 151 728 Canadiens et Canadiennes, dont près du tiers dans les provinces de l'Ouest. Cette région accueille par ailleurs plus de la moitié de la population autochtone du pays, d'où l'importance pour les conseillers d'orientation de connaître l'histoire et la culture autochtones.

## Colombie-Britannique

Cette province accueillait environ 266 341 élèves de la 8<sup>e</sup> à la 12<sup>e</sup> année pendant l'année scolaire 2017-2018. Ses écoles sont organisées pour offrir des services éducatifs aux élèves selon leur année ou les stades scolaires que voici : élémentaire (K-7), élémentaire-premier cycle du secondaire (K-10), élémentaire-secondaire (K-12), école intermédiaire (6-9), premier cycle du secondaire (8-10), secondaire (8-12) et deuxième cycle du secondaire (11-12). On dénombrait plus de 700 postes d'enseignant-orienteur dans le réseau public K-12 en 2017-2018<sup>11</sup>.

La Colombie-Britannique compte 4 648 055 habitants, dont 492 840 jeunes de 10 à 19 ans. Elle affiche une densité de population de 5,0 au kilomètre carré, sur une superficie totale de 922 503,01 kilomètres carrés<sup>12</sup>.



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### Alberta

In Alberta, there are 627 public, separate, Francophone, charter and private schools with students enrolled in grades 10, 11, 12 with 162,149 students enrolled at the beginning of the 2018-19 school year.<sup>13</sup> The number of guidance counsellors in the province was not available, however there were a total of 49,816 teachers throughout Alberta.<sup>14</sup>

The total population of Alberta is 4,067,175, with 481,955 in the age range of 10-19 years old. Population density is 6.4 per square kilometre with 640,330.46 square kilometres of land area.<sup>15</sup>

### Eastern Provinces

Containing six of Canada's top ten largest cities, the eastern region has a large proportion of youth living in metropolitan areas. A recent study from researchers at Duke University and King's College London discovered that 12-year-olds in urban neighbourhoods were almost twice as likely to suffer from a psychotic symptom as those living in rural areas. In their study, approximately 7.4% of children living in urban areas had experienced at least one psychotic symptom by age 12, compared to 4.4% residing in non-urban areas.

### Alberta

La province compte 627 écoles publiques, séparées, francophones, privées et écoles à charte qui accueillent des élèves de la 10<sup>e</sup> à la 12<sup>e</sup> année, pour un total de 162 149 élèves inscrits au début de l'année scolaire 2018-2019<sup>13</sup>. Si on ne connaît pas le nombre de conseillers d'orientation, on sait qu'il y a 49 816 enseignants sur le territoire albertain<sup>14</sup>.

L'Alberta compte 4 067 175 habitants, dont 481 955 jeunes de 10 à 19 ans. Elle affiche une densité de population de 6,4 au kilomètre carré, sur une superficie totale de 640 330,46 kilomètres carrés<sup>15</sup>.

### Dans l'Est

La région de l'Est, où se trouvent six des dix plus grandes villes canadiennes, présente une forte proportion de jeunes habitant en milieu métropolitain. Dans une étude récente, des chercheurs de l'Université Duke et du King's College de Londres ont découvert que les jeunes de 12 ans des quartiers urbains étaient près de deux fois plus susceptibles de souffrir d'un symptôme de psychose que leurs homologues de la campagne. En effet, environ 7,4 % des enfants en milieu urbain avaient souffert d'au moins un symptôme de psychose avant l'âge de 12 ans, contre 4,4 % des enfants en milieu rural.

**7.4% of children living in urban areas had experienced at least one psychotic symptom by age 12, compared to 4.4% residing in non-urban areas.**

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## Ontario

In the school year 2016/2017, there were nearly 2,000 guidance teacher-counsellors in publicly-funded secondary schools in Ontario with a total of 629,538 students.<sup>16</sup> Those numbers add up to a ratio of one guidance counsellor for every 314.8 secondary school students.

The total population of Ontario is 13,448,494, with 1,566,200 in the age range of 10-19 years old. Population density is 14.8 per square kilometre with 908,699.33 square kilometres of land area.<sup>17</sup>

## Quebec

As of 2013/2014 there were a total of 1,183,590 students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools in Quebec.<sup>18</sup> In 2015/2016 there were 99,243 full and part-time teachers in public elementary and secondary schools in the province.<sup>19</sup> While specific numbers of guidance counsellors were unavailable, the approximate ratio of teachers to students is 1:11.9.

The total population of Quebec is 8,164,361, with 848,985 in the age range of 10-19 years old. Population density is 6.0 per square kilometre with 1,356,625.27 square kilometres of land area.<sup>20</sup>

## Ontario

Pendant l'année scolaire 2016-2017, les écoles secondaires subventionnées par la province comptaient près de 2 000 enseignants-orienteurs pour 629 538 élèves<sup>16</sup>. Cela équivaut à un ratio de 1 conseiller pour 314,8 élèves du secondaire.

L'Ontario compte 13 448 494 habitants, dont 1 566 200 jeunes de 10 à 19 ans. Il affiche une densité de population de 14,8 au kilomètre carré, sur une superficie totale de 908 699,33 kilomètres carrés<sup>17</sup>.

## Québec

En 2013-2014, les écoles primaires et secondaires publiques du Québec accueillent 1 183 590 élèves<sup>18</sup>. En 2015-2016, ces mêmes écoles employaient 99 243 enseignants à temps plein et à temps partiel<sup>19</sup>. Si on ne connaît pas le nombre exact de conseillers d'orientation, on sait que le ratio enseignant/élèves est d'environ 1:11,9.

Le Québec compte 8 164 361 habitants, dont 848 985 jeunes de 10 à 19 ans. Il affiche une densité de population de 6,0 au kilomètre carré, sur une superficie totale de 1 356 625,27 kilomètres carrés<sup>20</sup>.

*En effet, environ 7,4 % des enfants en milieu urbain avaient souffert d'au moins un symptôme de psychose avant l'âge de 12 ans, contre 4,4 % des enfants en milieu rural.*

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## New Brunswick

On September 30, 2016, there were a total of 97,842 students in New Brunswick and 7,382.4 teaching positions. 32,121 students were in grades nine to 12. There were 161.5 guidance counsellors employed in all levels,<sup>21</sup> which equates to about one guidance counsellor for every 605.8 students.

The total population of New Brunswick is 747,101, with 78,485 in the age range of 10-19 years old. Population density is 10.5 per square kilometre with 71,388.81 square kilometres of land area.<sup>22</sup>

## Nova Scotia

In the province of Nova Scotia, there are 91 schools that have students enrolled in a senior grade (Grades 10-12). Depending on the configuration of the school, there may also be students enrolled in other grades such as Primary-12 or 7-12. There were 29,245 students enrolled in Grades 10-12 in 2017/2018. In 2017-18, there were 128 Guidance Counsellors in the 91 schools mentioned above. Currently, the provincial recommended ratio of students to guidance counsellors is 1:500. This applies to both elementary and secondary schools. In areas, where there are fewer than 500 students, guidance counsellors may be shared between schools.<sup>23</sup>

The total population of Nova Scotia is 923,598, with 97,100 in the age range of 10-19 years old. Population density is 17.4 per square kilometre with 52,942.27 square kilometres of land area.<sup>24</sup>

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## Nouveau-Brunswick

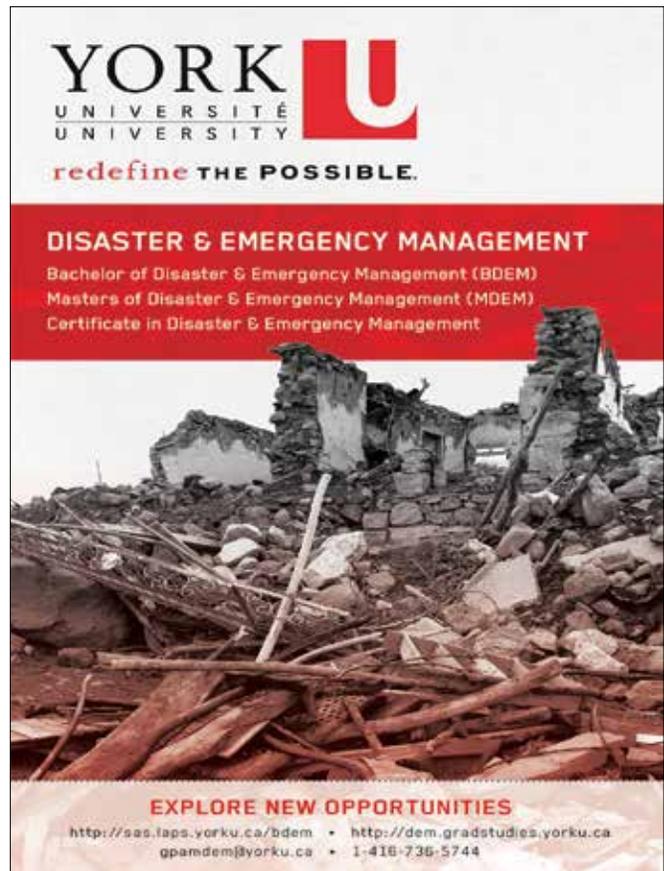
Au 30 septembre 2016, cette province accueillait 97 842 élèves, dont 32 121 de la 9<sup>e</sup> à la 12<sup>e</sup> année. On y recensait 7 382,4 postes d'enseignant. Tous niveaux confondus, la province comptait 161,5 conseillers d'orientation<sup>21</sup>, ce qui donne un ratio d'environ 1 conseiller pour 605,8 élèves.

Le Nouveau-Brunswick compte 747 101 habitants, dont 78 485 jeunes de 10 à 19 ans. Il affiche une densité de population de 10,5 au kilomètre carré, sur une superficie totale de 71 388,81 kilomètres carrés<sup>22</sup>.

## Nouvelle-Écosse

Cette province compte 91 écoles qui accueillent des élèves du deuxième cycle du secondaire (10e-12e année). Selon la configuration de l'école, il peut y avoir aussi des élèves du primaire ou du premier cycle du secondaire. On dénombrait 29 245 élèves de la 10e à la 12e année pour l'année scolaire 2017-2018. Pour cette même année, les 91 écoles mentionnées ci-dessus comptaient 128 conseillers d'orientation. Le ratio provincial recommandé est actuellement fixé à 1 conseiller pour 500 élèves, à l'élémentaire comme au secondaire. Dans les secteurs comptant moins de 500 élèves, il arrive que plusieurs écoles se partagent un même conseiller<sup>23</sup>.

La Nouvelle-Écosse compte 923 598 habitants, dont 97 100 jeunes de 10 à 19 ans. Elle affiche une densité de population de 17,4 au kilomètre carré, sur une superficie totale de 52 942,27 kilomètres carrés<sup>24</sup>.



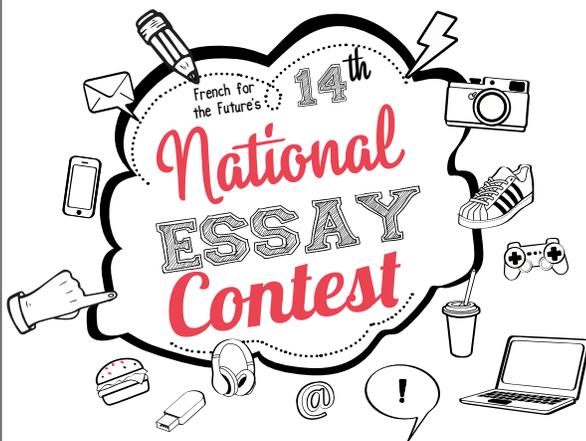
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### Prince Edward Island

There were approximately 5000 students enrolled in Grades 10 - 12 in Prince Edward Island in September 2014.<sup>25</sup> Exact numbers of guidance counsellors were not readily available, however the teacher to student ratio in the province over all grade levels was 1:12,7.

The total population of Prince Edward Island is 142,907, with 16,425 in the age range of 10-19 years old. Population density is 25,1 per square kilometre with 5,686.03 square kilometres of land area.<sup>26</sup>

### Newfoundland and Labrador

In Newfoundland and Labrador, there were 15,413 students in grades ten through twelve in 2017/2018. There were 175 full-time equivalent guidance counsellors employed at all levels. With a total enrollment of 65,401 from Kindergarten to Grade 12, the ratio of guidance counsellors to students was 1:373,7.

The total population of Newfoundland and Labrador is 519,716, with 53,290 in the age range of 10-19 years old. Population density is 1,4 per square kilometre with 370,514.08 square kilometres of land area.<sup>27</sup>

The low ratio of guidance counsellors to students appears to be a common issue across the country.

Martia MacLean is a school counsellor with the Cape Breton Victoria Regional Centre for Education as well as President of the Nova Scotia School Counsellors' Association, a Professional Association of the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union. She has been a school counsellor for the last 15 years and has been fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with all grade levels as a school counsellor.

### Île-du-Prince-Édouard

Cette province accueillait environ 5 000 élèves de la 10<sup>e</sup> à la 12<sup>e</sup> année en septembre 2014.<sup>25</sup> Si on ne connaît pas le nombre exact de conseillers d'orientation, on sait que le ratio conseiller/élèves, tous niveaux confondus, était de 1:12,7.

L'Île-du-Prince-Édouard compte 142 907 habitants, dont 16 425 jeunes de 10 à 19 ans. Elle affiche une densité de population de 25,1 au kilomètre carré, sur une superficie totale de 5 686,03 kilomètres carrés.<sup>26</sup>

### Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador

Cette province accueillait 15 413 élèves de la 10<sup>e</sup> à la 12<sup>e</sup> année en 2017-2018. Tous niveaux confondus, on y trouvait l'équivalent de 175 conseillers d'orientation à temps plein. Avec une population scolaire totale de 65 401 élèves de la maternelle à la 12<sup>e</sup> année, le ratio conseiller/élèves était de 1:373,7.

Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador compte 519 716 habitants, dont 53 290 jeunes de 10 à 19 ans. Elle affiche une densité de population de 1,4 au kilomètre carré, sur une superficie totale de 370 514,08 kilomètres carrés.<sup>27</sup>

Le faible ratio conseillers/élèves semble problématique partout au pays.

Martia MacLean est conseillère scolaire au centre régional d'éducation Cape Breton Victoria et présidente de l'association des conseillers scolaires de la Nouvelle-Écosse, une association professionnelle du syndicat des enseignants de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Conseillère scolaire depuis 15 ans, elle a eu la chance de travailler avec des élèves de toutes les années.

Elle affirme ceci : « En Nouvelle-Écosse, les écoles sont subventionnées selon le nombre d'élèves, et c'est la même chose pour les conseillers scolaires. Le ratio recommandé est actuellement fixé à 1 conseiller pour 500 élèves. Or les chiffres ne correspondent pas toujours aux besoins, ce qui crée des difficultés pour les conseillers scolaires. Et je ne crois pas exagérer en disant que la province est aux prises avec une pénurie de conseillers. »

Trent Langdon abonde dans le même sens : « Les défis tiennent beaucoup aux attentes démesurées côté charge de travail, aux ratios élèves/conseiller élevés, au manque de clarté (et de protection) des rôles et à la difficulté de répondre aux besoins de tous les élèves sur notre vaste territoire. »

Erin Luong ajoute : « Nous aimerions que les administrations scolaires voient les bienfaits d'investir dans les conseillers scolaires. En Alberta, les conseillers scolaires sont des enseignants brevetés qui ont suivi une formation continue ou fait des études de 2<sup>e</sup> ou 3<sup>e</sup> cycle universitaire pour être prêts à aider les élèves sur les plans personnel, social, éducatif et professionnel tout en contribuant à leur santé mentale et à leur bien-être ([https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c0e3ce\\_3a1a4f04556346e58afc9384ed25e82b.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c0e3ce_3a1a4f04556346e58afc9384ed25e82b.pdf)). Le recours à des enseignants-orienteurs favorise la réussite des élèves, car ces personnes connaissent à la fois les besoins développementaux et le réseau scolaire. Dans l'étude "Briefing on Social Return on Investment for School Counselling", la professeure Merali (Université de l'Alberta) conclut que le ratio optimal serait 1 conseiller pour 250 élèves. »

Si les besoins des élèves varient d'une région à l'autre et que les défis semblent parfois insurmontables, les avantages émotionnels et professionnels du métier de conseiller d'orientation sont les mêmes partout.

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MacLean says, "In Nova Scotia schools are funded based on student numbers, and funding for school counsellors fall within that formula. Currently the recommended ratio is 1:500 (counsellor to student). Numerics don't always represent need, and this has also been a struggle for School Counsellors. I also believe it is fair statement to say that we are facing a shortage of School Counsellors in the province."

Langdon concurs, "The challenges are heavily rooted in workload expectations, high student-to-counsellor ratios, lack of clarity (and protection) of roles, and meeting the needs of all students given the wide-spread geography of our province."

And Luong adds, "We would like school jurisdictions to be aware of the value of investing in school counsellors. 'In Alberta, school counsellors are certificated teachers who have received additional professional development or graduate-level training that prepares them to support students' personal, social, educational and career development, as well as promote



Erin Luong

« Le métier de conseiller scolaire est formidable. Il comporte tellement d'avantages que c'est difficile d'en choisir un, mais avoir la chance de tisser des liens avec des élèves qui vivent parfois les pires ou les plus beaux jours de leur vie, c'est toujours très formateur. Savoir que les élèves et leur famille ont entièrement confiance en moi et m'invitent à les aider, c'est une belle leçon d'humilité », affirme Martia MacLean.

Melissa Fuhr renchérit: «Le simple fait de nouer des liens avec les élèves au quotidien est une récompense en soi. Voir un élève surmonter ses difficultés pour atteindre ses objectifs, peu importe la durée du processus, c'est extrêmement valorisant. Mon poste m'a amenée à rencontrer des jeunes absolument extraordinaires. Et quand un élève me dit qu'il n'aurait pu décrocher son diplôme sans mon aide, je me sens vraiment choyée. Ces belles histoires compensent toutes les difficultés et la fatigue qu'on peut vivre. »

Erin Luong résume bien le tout : « Comme conseillers d'orientation, nous avons une chance inouïe. Nous avons le privilège de prendre les élèves là où ils sont et de les amener à s'épanouir. » 🍁 CSC

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students' mental health and well-being.<sup>28</sup> Employing teacher counsellors has a positive effect on student achievement because teacher counsellors understand both the individuals' developmental needs and the school system. Dr. Merali's research 'Briefing on Social Return on Investment for School Counselling' (University of Alberta) recommends that the optimal student-school counsellor ratio would be one counsellor for every 250 students."

While student needs may vary from region to region, and the challenges may seem overwhelming at times, the emotional and professional compensation of guidance counselling positions are similar everywhere.

"Being a School Counsellor is a wonderful career. There are so many rewards it is difficult to pick one but having the opportunity to develop relationships with students sometimes at the highest or lowest points of their lives is always such a learning experience. To feel the trust that students and families share with you is immeasurable and to be invited to help, is very humbling," shares MacLean.

Fuhr agrees, "I am rewarded daily in my job just by building relationships with our students. When we see a student struggle and then watch as they become empowered to overcome the barriers they face and achieve their goals, no matter how long it may take, is extremely rewarding. I have met some of the most amazing young people in this position. To have a student come and say 'I could not have made it to graduation without your help.' is the best feeling. Watching those successes makes what is a very demanding and exhausting job at times worth every minute."

And Luong sums it up nicely, "Guidance counsellors are some of the luckiest people in the world. We are given the privilege to meet our students at their level and help them to soar." ♣ csc

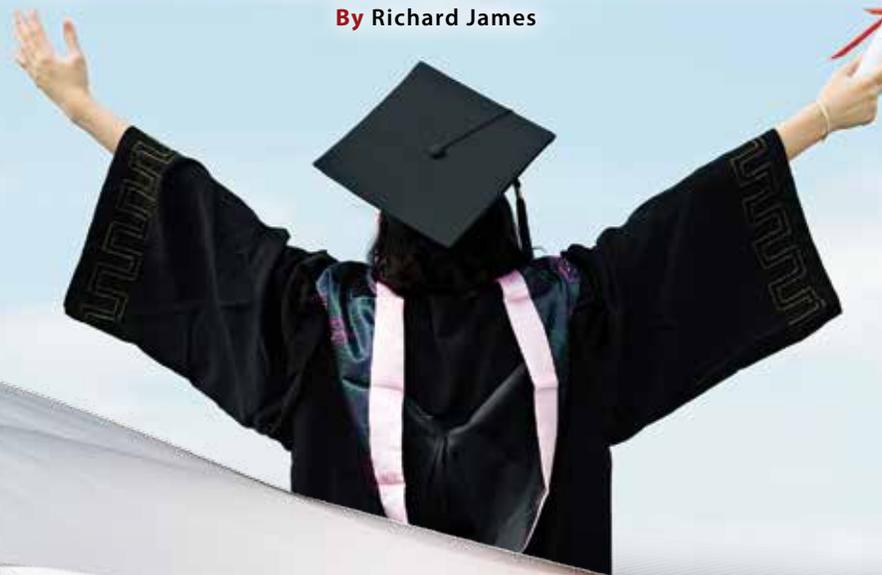
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# THE HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA

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By Richard James



## **What is the Higher National Diploma and how is it opening new pathways to education and employment for students?**

The Higher National Diploma is a diploma to degree pathway designated by the Scottish Qualifying Authority (SQA).

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The higher national diploma was developed by the SQA carrying over 100 years of experience in international designations. The Scottish Qualifications Authority is a non-profit government run organization which regulates the education platform of over 70 Universities around the world.

The SQA developed the Higher National Diploma (HND) designation as an answer to students' needs of an internationally recognized education where a student can take part of their post-secondary education at one institution and then seamlessly transfer to another, even if in another country.

## **What is the benefit of the Higher National Diploma over a Diploma from local post-secondary institution?**

The Higher National Diploma gives real economic value to the students.

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## How does the Higher National Diploma Work?

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After 2 years of completed study the Higher National Diploma is awarded. Students who wish to finish their degree will be given block transfer advanced entry into universities locally and internationally. Students who wish to take a break from their studies, start working in their field, or travel abroad are no longer limited to a singular university pathway. Graduates can do all these things and even work in countries having their Diploma recognized.

The curriculum and its targeting of the practical and relevant skills required to obtain employment is a unique and much needed approach to post-secondary education. The Higher national Diploma is held to strict compliance standards continually being upgraded to be relevant.

With the Higher National Diploma programs as a post-secondary option, students are given the most flexibility to work while studying for their degree and gaining the needed work experience upon graduating with their diploma or degree. The Higher National Diploma works for the students at each stage of the education and employment cycle.

This is truly the only way to fast track a career that requires a certification, diploma, or even a degree, while offering the most flexibility for students to attain them.

## How can students enter the Higher National Diploma Program?

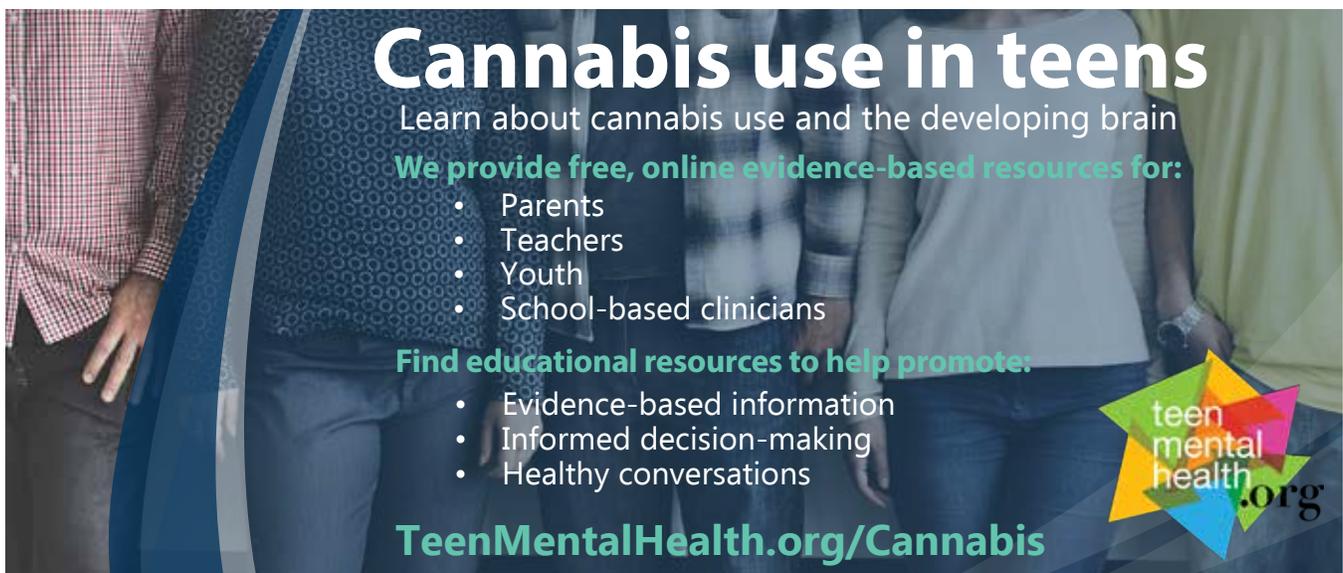
The Higher National Diploma university pathway programs are offered in the UK, Australia, China, South Asia, Hong Kong, and now Canada. Although new to Canada the Higher National Diploma has been offered outside the UK in countries like China since 2003.

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# Ready, Willing and Able

## Finding work for people with intellectual disabilities

By Sean Dolan



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When Mark Wafer got his first Tim Horton's franchise up and running, he was putting in long hours and looking for reliable employees. One day a teacher from a local high school came into his coffee shop and recommended a young man with Down syndrome. While he didn't really know what to expect, Wafer decided to hire Clint Sparling – a move that gave birth to a working relationship that would last over two decades and dramatically alter Wafer's business model.

Wafer partnered with community organizations who specialize in helping people with intellectual disabilities and, over the years, has expanded his workforce to include 33 people with disabilities in his seven-franchise operation. He says that his employee turnover rate is half that of the Tim Horton's average (35% as opposed to 75% turnover in most franchises) mainly because he hires people with disabilities to work alongside the rest of his staff. These employees often have perfect attendance records and demonstrate an excellent commitment to their jobs.

Mark Wafer has convinced over 200 of his fellow Tim Horton franchise owners to follow his lead and hire people with disabilities. So, is this trend catching on? The short answer: not really.

While schools across Canada have done an admirable job of integrating students with intellectual disabilities into the classroom, the same cannot be said for integrating this same segment of the population into the workforce. According to Statistics Canada, our nation has an employment rate of 79%. This means that almost 80% of those available to work are working. However (and this is where the numbers get disturbing), only 49% of people with a disability are working – putting their employment rate way out of whack when compared to the rest of the nation. And, the more severe the disability, the lower the employment rate.

The main obstacle to getting people with intellectual disabilities working: the attitudes and perceptions of society as a whole. Many employers are trapped in a number of common myths relating to people with intellectual disabilities. In a study of 2,000 workers with disabilities, the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) picked apart these myths. Here's some of what they came up with:

**It costs too much** – employers are concerned that hiring a person with an intellectual disability is going to cost them money. They worry that resources will have to be redirected to support the new hire and, in the end, the prospect will be too risky in terms of the bottom line. The JAN study concluded that 57% of employers saw no additional cost in hiring a person with a disability, while 37% reported a nominal cost of roughly \$500. Give a person with an intellectual disability the right job and the bottom line will be just fine.

**They can't / don't work as hard** – according to the JAN study, 73% of employees believe that people with intellectual disabilities work hard and contribute as much as any other employ to the success of the business to which they belong.

**They can't handle the work and will leave** – with an average turnover rate across the board of nearly 50%, people with intellectual disabilities shatter this myth with a stellar 7% turnover rate once they get hired to a job.

**They're going to miss a lot of work** – in reality, 86% of employees with an intellectual disability have an attendance record that is as good or a better than their co-workers.

This is the ammunition agencies across Canada use to help employers make the decision to hire people with intellectual disabilities. Ready, Willing and Able (the product of a collaboration between the Canadian Association for Community Living and the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorder Alliance) has managed to help 2,100 people with intellectual disabilities find work across Canada. They have formed solid partnerships with companies like Costco, Home Depot and Purolator. Despite proven results, the federal funding formula that keeps Ready, Willing and Able afloat was altered and parts of the organization had to be shut down, further frustrating national efforts to find employment for this under-utilized sector of the workforce. The Canadian Abilities Foundation (CAF), active in disability advocacy since 1986, recently launched an initiative called It's Time that seeks to enlighten employers regarding the merits in hiring employees with disabilities. Both organizations are proving instrumental in facilitating an attitude shift across Canada. The message: Canada is a nation of individuals with vary abilities and no group – especially a group with so much to offer - should be left out of the mix.

Meanwhile, progress - albeit slow - is resulting in an increasing awareness that hiring people with intellectual disabilities is good for business. In addition to high employer satisfaction, as well as employee retention and productivity, employers are also reporting improved company morale and customer appreciation. Colleagues working alongside people with intellectual disabilities report feeling a greater connection to their fellow workers and an improved understanding of people with disabilities. Customers

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- remembering and sharing our history will help guide and build our vision for the future
- inclusive communities enrich the lives of all citizens



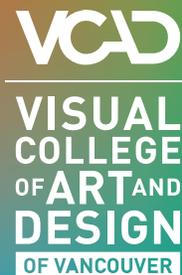
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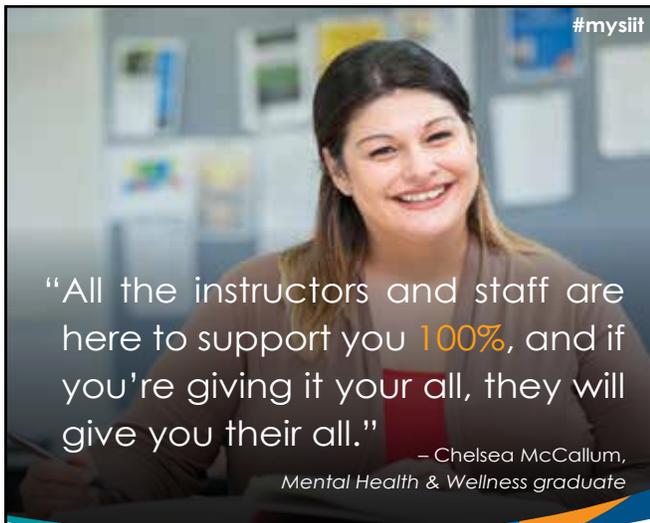
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say they view companies that utilize inclusive hiring practices as companies they want to do business with. In other words, hiring people with intellectual disabilities makes people want to come to work and customers want to send their business to companies that embrace inclusivity.

In addition to these benefits, employers are not left on their own to figure out how best to use their intellectually disabled employees. There are a great number of agencies nationwide that will help employers understand the most effective ways to communicate and use their disabled employees. Ready, Willing and Able and the Canadian Abilities Foundation are an excellent starting point to discover how to access community resources to help employers deal with their new hires. The University of British Columbia’s Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship is also an excellent resource.

At the end of the day, people with intellectual disabilities pose no greater challenge than any other employee. A good employer simply needs to value the gifts of each employee, train that employee with patience and understanding, and expect that the employee will do their job. In many ways, employees with intellectual disabilities outperform their coworkers when their employers give them the job and mentorship they need to get the job done. 🍁CSC

**Agency links:**

- Canadian Abilities Foundation - [abilities.ca](http://abilities.ca)
- Inclusion B.C. - [inclusionbc.org](http://inclusionbc.org)
- Ready, Willing and Able - [readywillingable.ca](http://readywillingable.ca)
- UBC’s Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship - [cic.arts.ubc.ca](http://cic.arts.ubc.ca).  
 Check out their Transitioning Youth with Disabilities and Employment (TYDE) program at [cic.arts.ubc.ca/transitioning-youth-with-disabilities-and-employment-tyde](http://cic.arts.ubc.ca/transitioning-youth-with-disabilities-and-employment-tyde).

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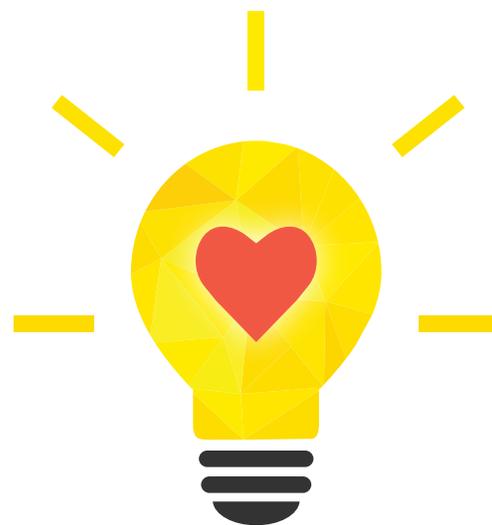
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# Of Job Skills and Vegetables: *the Youth Now Farm*

By Alison Zenisek

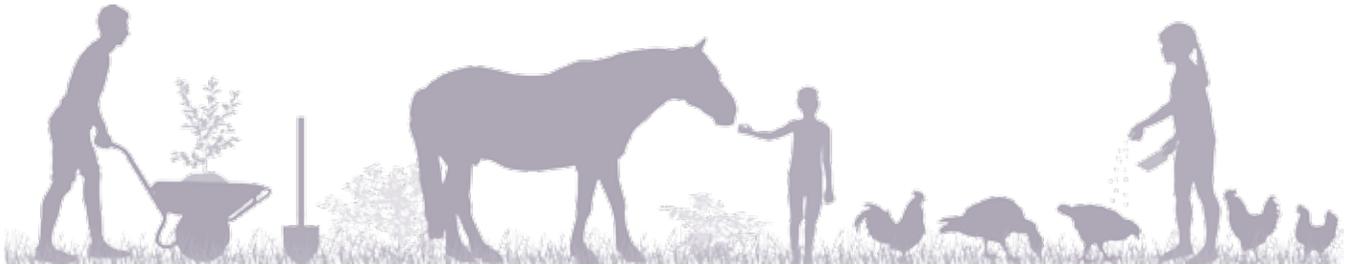


**A heritage farm outside of Ottawa is hosting a program to help marginalized youth and young adults (ages 15-24) gain the job skills and confidence to find and keep employment.**

Youth Now Canada, the Youth Services Bureau, Ottawa's Parkdale Food Centre, and the National Capital Commission are working in partnership to help reduce the barriers to employment for this age group. In 2017 Statistics Canada reported that 13% of young people in Ottawa were unemployed. Youth who have difficulty finding a job often come from poverty, homelessness, have mental health issues, challenges at home, or have a history of run-ins with the criminal justice system, according to Youth Now Canada, a nonprofit organization.

Recent young immigrants also struggle to find employment. For them culture and language are the significant barriers. Mark Arnold, Youth Now Canada's executive director, asserts that farm programs across North America have proven to be revolutionary in changing reality for marginalized teenagers and young adults. He is ready to put this knowledge into action. In 2017 an unnamed donor gave Youth Now Canada \$100,000 to jump start the program. Through the donation they were able to buy equipment and pay for initial staff salaries. The multi-pronged approach combines community engagement, youth development, paid employment, therapeutic experiences, and valuable mentorship in a farm setting.

For the participants, some of whom are dealing with **depression, anxiety, or anger management** issues, the time spent with the animals is a big help. A student who feels **overwhelmed** and who might need some **space to reflect** is encouraged to hang out with a horse or a rabbit for a time. This interaction often makes them **more receptive to learning essential coping skills**.



After much preliminary work, Youth Now Farm finally accepted its first group of young trainees to its program in June and its second on August 20. Six participants spent their day getting their hands dirty as part of the new eight week social program at the Carlsbad Spring farm. Working on a farm can be therapeutic and gives youth the opportunity to discover their particular strengths. The animals they work with help youth learn the art of give and take, as well as responsibility, cooperation, and kindness. As well as the care and feeding of livestock, youth also learn how to plant, raise, and sell a variety of produce. Much of the produce grown is sold at the farm's roadside stand or at local markets, which creates additional

business skill learning opportunities. Working in a natural setting is a wonderful experience for these young people, and many don't want to see their term end.

Rylan Campbell, a 17 year old high school student in the second cohort, rides the bus for an hour to the Blair transit station where she catches a 7:30 am carpool to the farm at Carlsbad Springs. The farm is 18 kilometres southeast of downtown Ottawa. "I feel really grateful to be here, so it's great," said Campbell, who moved to Ottawa from Thunder Bay less than a year ago. "It's really an awesome environment to be in." Campbell says that she interviewed for the two-month farm program because she enjoys working with her hands in the earth. She wants to gain knowledge and

practical experience that will help her pursue a career in the environmental sciences. The managers and the organizations involved in this program, still in its infancy, are very optimistic about the positive impact it is having. Of the five initial youth that participated in the very first cohort to complete the program, two went back to school and two of the remaining three are employed.

For the participants, some of whom are dealing with depression, anxiety, or anger management issues, the time spent with the animals is a big help. A student who feels overwhelmed and who might need some space to reflect is encouraged to hang out with a horse or a rabbit for a time. This interaction often makes them more receptive to learning essential coping skills. The program aims to foster both personal and professional development. Youth set goals and journal daily. At the end of the week they are given the opportunity to discuss challenges they faced and lessons learned. The very act of growing or nurturing something outside of themselves is important.

Rebecca McCaffrey is the youth development facilitator at the Parkdale Food Centre and joined the farm program staff in July. She says that a youth's progress is tangible and improvement in confidence can often be seen on a daily basis. A typical shift on the farm involves work in both the barn and the garden. The successful applicants who are interviewed and chosen by the Youth Services Bureau earn a wage for up to 35 hours of work each

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week. If they fail to show up for work, they don't get paid. The mission of Youth Now is to assist youth by enhancing their own strength and resiliency. A good work ethic is part of their training.

Working on the farm can help youth recognize their past challenges in the work force, and then find ways to problem solve. In the garden the participants plant, harvest, sort and wash a variety of vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Some days they can be found peeling garlic, bagging beans, bunching green onions, or picking and sorting cucumbers. In the process they learn a number of food related business skills, including the best way to sell food at market. Leftovers go to the Parkdale Food Centre or home with participants so that they have an opportunity to taste the results of their labours. Once a week the young people visit the Centre where they learn food safety and preparation, meal planning, nutrition, and how to network for a job.

The priority in the barns is the care and feeding of the animals. These include a donkey, several goats, pigs, turkeys, ducks, rabbits and four therapy horses. The participants learn how to groom the horses, muck out stalls and pens, as well as feed and socialize the various animals. Time spent with the animals is meant to be therapeutic and builds many skills that are transferable to other jobs. Not all of the work is fun, but the youth soon learn that the animals' well-being depends on the work getting done. The importance of each chore to the life of the animals fosters a sense of responsibility.

Elvis Gakwaya has been working on the farm for most of the summer. Born in Rwanda, he was orphaned during the 1990s' genocide. He has been living in Canada for 9 years. He loves working on the farm. "I'm going to miss the farm and just being in this quiet," he said. I am never going to forget this." The natural environment has given Elvis healing and purpose.

The goal for the managers is to grow the farm into a financially sustainable venture, which they hope will simultaneously evolve into a full-fledged social enterprise for the benefit of many. Arnold believes it will take three to five years to maximize the farm's potential. The property has 75 acres, but

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the soil quality is poor. Less than two acres are in use right now, but as the farm grows, the future revenue it provides will support the overall project. The dream is that the farm will not only contribute to the greater Ottawa community by increasing the city's access to locally-grown foods, but also empower and train youth who are in need of such an opportunity.

"A lot of young people aren't going to succeed necessarily in some of the more traditional programs. Counselling doesn't work for everyone," Arnold said. "There is

something to be said for planning, planting, seeding, nurturing, and harvesting a vegetable... seeing it from start to finish." The farm is designed to assist marginalized teens and young adults to gain the confidence they need to land and keep a job. They learn and practice skills related to conflict management, problem solving, reliability, and personal responsibility, all key ingredients to a successful career. Growing produce and caring for animals bring about tangible results and the harvest will be ownership of a job well done, new skills, and a fresh appreciation of the natural world. CSC

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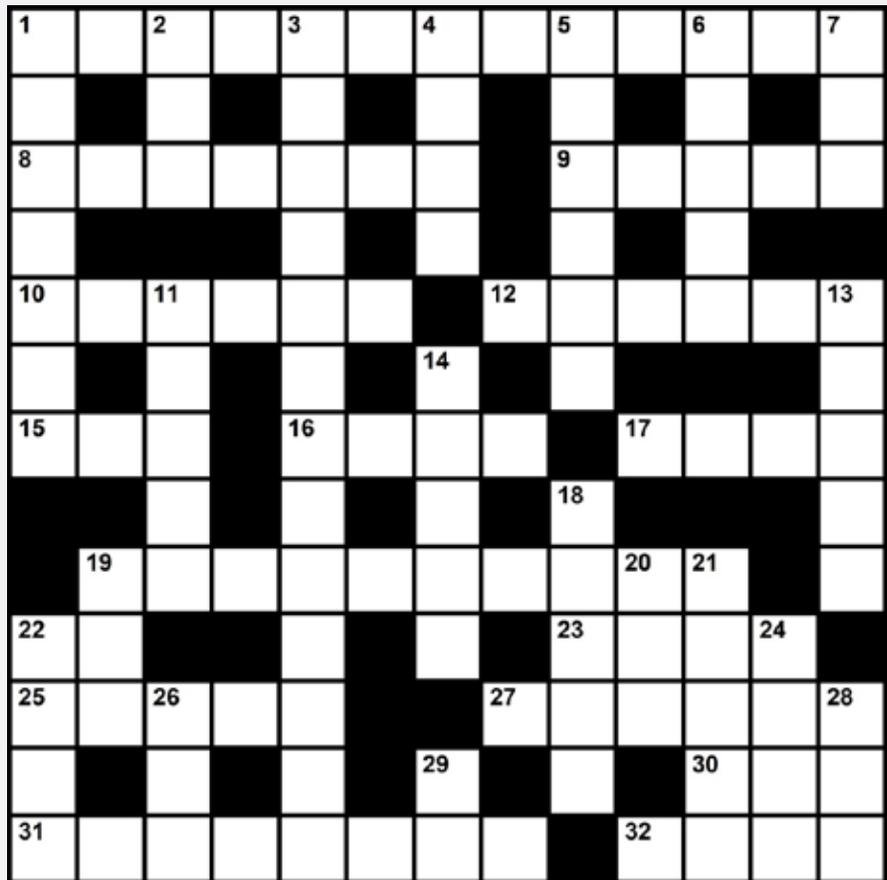
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**Across**

- 1 One who preys on kids on the internet, 2 words
- 8 Freshly consider
- 9 One who leads the way
- 10 Counsellors try to build self-\_\_\_ in kids
- 12 Physical well-being
- 15 Took, as an exam
- 16 Assistance
- 17 \_\_\_ Eagle program at CFB Wainwright encourages confidence and opens doors for indigenous youth
- 19 This kind of intelligence may disrupt the world of education and careers
- 22 Yonge, for one
- 23 Barely managed, with "out"
- 25 They could be junior or senior
- 27 Occupations to be recommended
- 30 Sci-fi subject
- 31 Canada's largest bilingual National Career Development Conference
- 32 Selects



crossword solution on page 58

**Down**

- 1 Professions
- 2 Automated computer program
- 3 Bring up a problem for consideration, 3 words
- 4 Yard tool
- 5 University graduation award
- 6 Probationary period
- 7 Regret
- 11 Teach one-on-one
- 13 Prevents from being found
- 14 Natural aptitude
- 18 Levels
- 19 Had a snack
- 20 Also called, for short
- 21 Resulted, 2 words
- 22 In \_\_\_ (together)
- 24 Adroit
- 26 \_\_\_ Arbor (University of Michigan locale)
- 28 Distress signal
- 29 McGill University, for short

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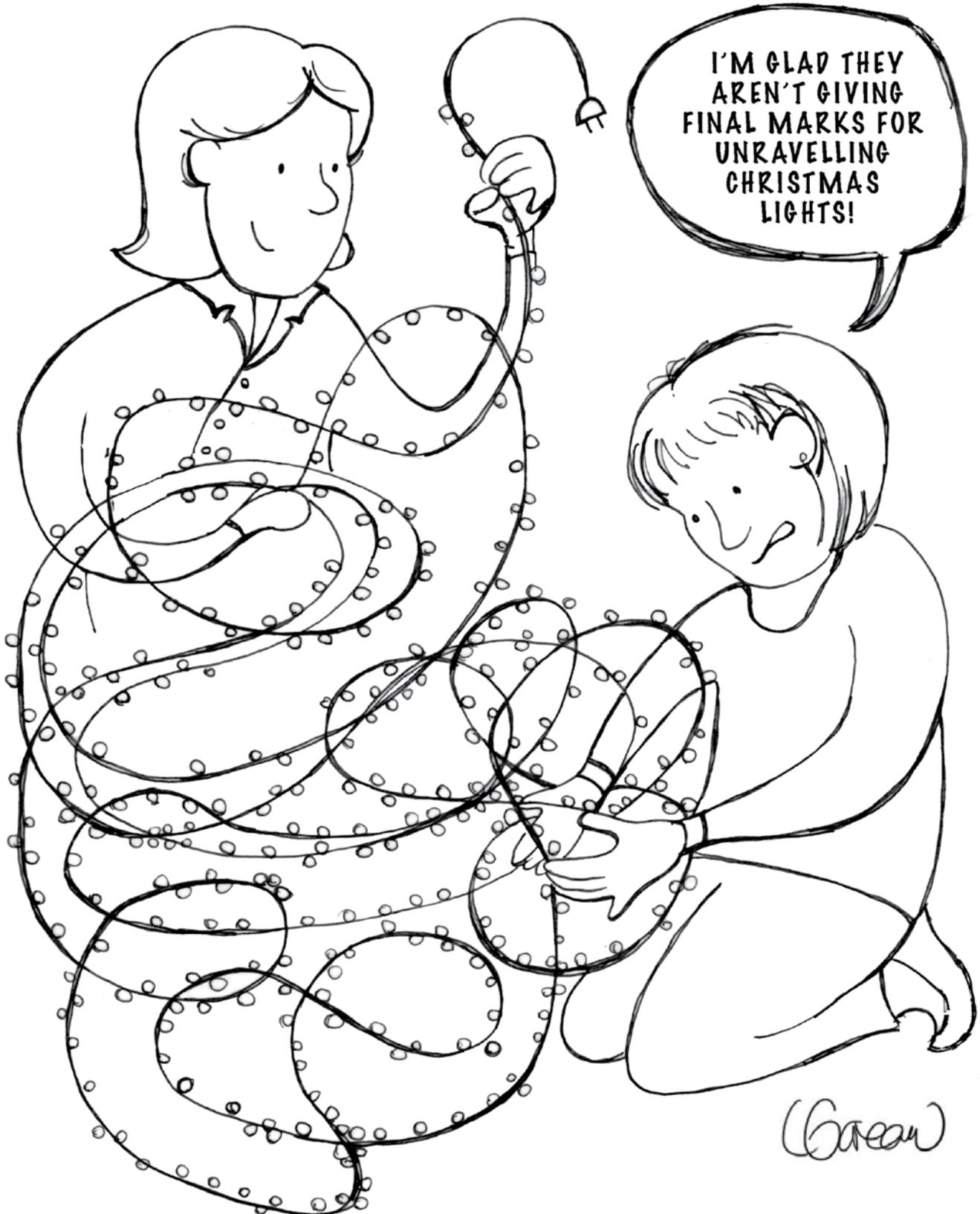
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The University and the renowned Research Hospital Ospedale San Raffaele, part of the San Donato Group, Italy's largest hospital group, are located on the same premises allowing for unsurpassed interaction in an exciting environment where breakthroughs are made every day in the treatment of acute and chronic conditions.

Small classes, a multicultural environment and state of the art facilities make studying Medicine at the International MD Program in Vita-Salute San Raffaele University a unique learning experience.



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