



Between Us/Entre Nous

SPRING, 2017

Edited by: Rose Anthony, Candice Lawrence & Shivon Raghunandan

Chair's Report

Submitted by Greg Taylor



Hey folks! Can you believe we are almost done another year? Two years just zoomed by for me as Chair and this will be my final report.

Please keep in mind that the AGM is also election-time for new executive positions. I will be turning into “Grandpa Chair” (a.k.a. Past Chair) and we are happy to have Shawna Bernard, from Conestoga, as our new Chair starting in September. If you cannot actually attend the AGM, you can still submit names of people that you would like to have as your representative on our executive. The following positions will be open for re-election this year:

Secretary

Southwestern

Indigenous

I would like to welcome Nancy Verduyan from Fleming College, our new Registrar on the executive. A big thank you goes out once again to Heather Drummond who served as both our Registrar and Webmaster at the same time.

Just a reminder that we have two more OCC-CCCO Executive Teleconference meetings before this year wraps up so if there is something that you would like the executive to hear or address, please let your regional reps know:

OCC-CCCO Regional Reps:

Audrey Rosa – Eastern

Shawna Bernard – Southwestern

Mona Chevalier – Francophone

Jamie Warren – Indigenous

Lavlet Forde – Central

Darryl MacNeil – Northern

Shawna Bernard and I attended a HOSA meeting at Centennial College on February 28th in Toronto where all networking group representatives were invited to have a dialogue with HOSA on the following topics:

- What are the most pressing issues facing practitioners in your professional areas?
- What does support from HOSA look like to you?
- What does good communication look like?
- Process to understand, assess, prioritize particular issues for on-going advocacy over the next year?

From the discussions that we had, it was very clear that everyone in attendance (VP's, Deans, managers, counsellors, accessibility advisors, career/co-op, athletic staff) face challenges when dealing with students who have mental health issues. Other hot topics identified were the new sexual assault policy and accommodating students as per the new human rights legislation. HOSA sees all networking groups as subject matter experts and wants our continuous input. They also want to know how they can best assist us, whether in some form of system-wide advocacy, advocacy with the Ministry or individual expertise.

We are very pleased with our new WordPress/Blog website that Heather Drummond developed for OCC-CCCO. The constant updates of fresh content and information has increased the usage of our website dramatically.

Please remember to submit the names of any colleagues that you feel are deserving of the OCC/CCCO Awards. The deadline for nominations has been extended to May 12th.

Have a great summer everyone!

College Updates

Conestoga College

Submitted by Shawna Bernard and Lynn Robbins-White

Another busy winter semester is winding down in Counselling Services at Conestoga College as we continue to support students through the final exam period. This winter our counsellors have continued to provide personal, academic and career counselling to Conestoga students at the Doon, Waterloo, Cambridge, and Guelph campuses. In addition to our fall semester staffing, we have been pleased to welcome Alicia Glynn to our Counselling Services team this winter semester. Alicia has formerly worked in Accessibility Services at Conestoga, and recently joined the Counselling Services team as of January 2017. Alicia joins our counselling staff complement of Shawna Bernard, Lynn Robbins-White, Marshall Chanda, Keith Martin, Lydia Almorales-Ray, Adrienne Dutta, Erin Kravetsky and Adam Koenig. Comfort Afari and Melissa DeNoble continued to work in their new roles in Counselling Services this winter semester of providing coordinated care counselling to students in a case management role capacity.

A review of our Counselling Services statistics from fall semester showed an increase in counselling appointments

provided at Conestoga College in fall semester. A total of **2102 counselling appointments** were provided to students in fall semester 2016, as compared to **2031 counselling appointments** in fall semester 2015. We continue to see an increase in students accessing counselling services at our various campuses, primarily requesting personal counselling for issues related to mental health, anxiety, relationships, depression, stress, family issues, and also suicidal ideation. In addition to providing individual counselling to students, we continue to provide group and workshop offerings. This year our department also responded to increased requests for consultations by faculty who were concerned about students' personal and academic well-being. Our counselling department continues to work closely with faculty as well as other departments on campus such as Security Services, Health Services, Accessibility Services, Student Life, and the International Office to provide supports for students.

This winter 2017 semester we were pleased to provide *two* new group offerings to students. The *new Taming Your Inner Critic Group* (designed and facilitated by counsellors Adrienne Dutta and Keith Martin), is a four week program designed to bring awareness to

students on how to make their inner critic work for them and stretch beyond their self-imposed limitations. The program builds on skills each week, using a self-compassionate approach. Research has shown that self-compassion is more than just kindness; it decreases anxiety and depression, increases motivation to change for the better, enables students to learn more effectively, and assists students to avoid repeating past mistakes. The workshop series is designed to help students academically as well as help to improve interpersonal relationships. Students were given a pre- and post-questionnaire created by Kristin Neff to measure their level of self-compassion which includes measuring their level of self-kindness, isolation, self-judgement, connection to common humanity, over-identification and mindfulness. Each student who attended the group had an increase in their overall level of self-compassion and various changes in the other sub-scales. The group facilitators are looking forward to further expanding the group and doing more research on how students can improve their level of self-compassion which will decrease their negative mind states and foster a more positive attitude overall.

Counselling Services also offered a new 4 week **Mind Over Mood CBT Group** this winter 2017 semester, in response to inquiries made by students to access CBT when presenting for counselling. Designed and facilitated by counsellor

Marshall Chanda, this **Mind Over Mood CBT** psycho-educational group was open to all Conestoga students, and provided participants with knowledge and skills for how to modify and change unhelpful thoughts, behaviours, and emotions, through use of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) principles and techniques. A total of thirteen students accessed the group this semester. Post-workshop evaluations were positive with participants indicating they would recommend this to a friend. Based on positive student responses to this initial program offering, the group will likely be offered again in the upcoming fall 2017 semester.

In addition to these new groups, we also provided our regular offerings of the **Mindfulness Group** in fall and winter semester, as well as the **Just Breathe. Just Run. and Performance Anxiety Group** in fall semester. During fall 2016 semester, **7 safeTALK** trainings were offered to students in the following programs or groups: Bachelor of Community and Criminal Justice, Social Services, OTA/ PTA, Bachelor of Early Learning Program Development, the general student population, and the student government CSI Board of Directors. In winter semester, our Counselling department provided **14 safeTALK trainings** to students in the Personal Support Worker, Paramedics, Early Childhood Education, PSI/ Police Foundations, and Health Office Administration programs at our Doon,

Waterloo, Guelph, and Brantford campuses. In May our Counselling Services will work with the Student Life department to provide **Upstander** sexual assault prevention training to our student leaders on campus.

Our Counselling Services also continues to host our successful **Stress Free Zone** event. This semester our Stress Free Zone was offered on April 5, just before final exams. It is always a popular event for providing students the opportunity to alleviate stress with massage, reflexology, an Epsom's bath craft and food! Approximately 55 students enjoyed a free massage by an RMT or Reflexologist. It was a great way to acknowledge student stress levels and treat them to a moment of stress reduction and wellness. This winter, our Counselling Services also offered a Beat the Blues event, participated in the college's Cultural Diversity Week, and also Health and Wellness Week.

We wish our colleagues at other colleges well as we continue to provide counselling supports to our students to assist in their academic and personal well-being. Best wishes for a "stress free" spring as we welcome a new season in our yearly cycle!

George Brown College

Submitted by Genevieve Beaupre

Staffing

Jeremy Jacob, one of our full-time counsellors will be returning from Parental Leave in May.

This year we were able to take on 6 Interns – 2 in the fall semester, 2 in the winter semester, and 2 of them were able to stay with us for the entire academic year.

New Initiatives

In March we held our first Healthy Campus Week, which was an initiative led by the Counselling Department's manager, Tenniel Rock, which involved counsellors, peer coaches, and staff from Student Life and the Student Association. This week-long event held at all 3 campuses included workshops, a service fair and panels, film discussions, and more.

The Counselling office, in partnership with a community organization named Stella's Place will soon be offering "Bean Bag Chat" to students. This initiative will allow students to chat with a counsellor at specific times, offering an alternative to walking into our office. This service will likely begin in the fall and a part-time counsellor will be hired to focus on this.

Humber College

Submitted by Rose Anthony and Shivon Raghunandan

At Humber, we continued to have another busy Winter 2017 semester. We had two interns, Orla Tyrell and Shannon Stach that joined us this academic year to provide support to students through our FITA program as well as counselling outside of the program. They have been huge assets to our team & will be missed. Shannon created several mental health workshops including: Building Better Relationships, Building Presence and Kindness, The Challenging Worry Wart, to name a few. Shannon has left these workshops with us with hopes of delivering some of these in the Fall 2017 semester.

In addition to providing one and one support, the counselling staff continues to be involved in various initiatives and trainings. These include several Safe Talk workshops to students in the CYC and Criminal Justice Programs, Peers Tutors/Mentors and staff. Mental Health First Aid is also being facilitated by three of our counsellors. Other workshops include: Personality Dimensions, Stress Management and Burn Out, and participation in Mature Student Orientation.

We also had a very successful Bounce Forward Campaign in February to promote mental health awareness. In addition to mini screenings for depression, anxiety and stress, there was a Zen room facilitated by nursing students. We had very positive feedback

from the event and it will continue as a major event sponsored by Counselling.

Mohawk College

Submitted by Peter Young

Mohawk College's counsellors are busy with the day-to-day of working with students one to one, but are also managing work on other programs, presentations and developments.

The following are some of those activities:

Don Jamieson has joined a community working group entitled Technology Overuse Network Group [TONG]. It involves several community and social service agencies discussing the impact of technology on community members. Don has also been active in providing academic counselling for our Continuing Education students.

All of our counsellors have been involved in providing SafeTALK training across the Mohawk College community – students and staff – to raise awareness around identifying and helping individuals with thoughts of suicide.

Counselling Services is busy planning our second "Be Well Do Well" day, as part of the college's Fall orientation activities. This involves a day of workshops and activities promoting strategies for students to maintain physical and mental health, through the

academic year. Examples: “Learned Optimism”, “Grit” and Mindfulness exercises.

Jaynn Miller has returned from retirement, part-time, to provide some backup counselling and to organize and deliver ongoing workshops around sexual violence. These “Bringing in the Bystander” sessions are available to all staff and students.

Peter Young continues to provide a counselling presence in Mohawk’s Social

Inclusion Centre. “Social Inc.” is a physical positive space supporting students, who may be marginalized around race, religion or sexuality. It is a hub of education and events to promote and celebrate social inclusion.

A workshop targeting all staff and faculty has been developed by Don Jamieson entitled “Dealing with Students in Distress”. This workshop trains staff in supporting students who are having behavioural or emotional/mental health difficulties.

Remember to Visit Our Website!

<https://occccco.wordpress.com/>



OCC Collaborating with Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health

Submitted by: Lavlet Forde, MA. RP.

OCC Professional Development Liaison & Central Regional Representative

This spring, OCC Professional Development Liaisons, Lavlet Forde and Maheen Sayal along with OCC Chair, Greg Taylor met with the Director of CICMH, Rosie Smythe and Mary Compton - Mental Health Consultant to discuss how OCC and the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health can collaborate.

This was our first meeting, to explore how our two organizations can collaborate with one another. Here's a brief overview of what was discussed at the meeting.

Professional Development Opportunities

CICMH was interested in our thoughts on what type of training would be helpful to the OCC counselling community. We discussed how it would be beneficial to offer training at both the introductory and advance level in the following areas:

Training Recovery & Peer Support

Trauma

Resiliency

Community Mental Health & Addictions

Working with specialized populations

Sexual Violence

Safe Talk

Promotion

OCC and CICMH will work alongside to promote different events, webinars etc.

OCC Annual General Meeting

CICMH plans to attend our AGM meeting to highlight services, strategy and vision for CICMH

Moving Forward

Both organizations are excited about beginning the process of collaborating and look forward to how these types of collaborations will assist both the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health community and the OCC counselling community.

We would be delighted to hear from you too! If you have any ideas, suggestions on collaboration with OCC and CICMH please forward them to:

Lavlet Forde – lforde@georgebrown.ca or

Maheen Sayal maheen.sayal@sheridancollege.ca

eSuccess-Coaching Program Update

submitted by Heather Drumond, Counsellor @ Mohawk College

Sharing Psychology through Technology. Providing information, guidance, support and opportunity for student growth in non-academic skills necessary for student engagement, persistence and success. Sharing personal, academic and career development strategies.

www.Success-Mohawk.com

Program Inception

In 2014, this program began as a way to reach students outside the counselling office. I started to notice that there were so many useful strategies being shared in counselling sessions that many students were missing out on, as we only tend to see approximately 1/3 of the student population our counselling offices. I started this program as a way of helping students build the non-academic skills known to play a significant role in their ability to engage in the academic process. Originally, it was focused on emotional intelligence, academic self-efficacy and career clarity (goal setting theory), which was informed by my doctoral research findings. The topic range has grown in response to student feedback, presenting issues in counselling and relevant topics that surface in the lives of students.

I designed this program to meet students where they are at, engrossed in the various social media platforms. This program was born out of a need to find innovative and cost effective ways to engage college students and encourage academic persistence. This approach was developed as an enhancement to the already successful face-to-face engagement and support strategies being implemented in the Mohawk College Counselling department.

Currently, the eSuccess-Coaching program is in a phase of redevelopment as a response to the feedback from participants. It will continue to incorporate various social media platforms such as WordPress, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, as a means of sharing information, skill training/enhancement and creating a sense of positive connectedness amongst students and faculty/counsellors. However, the “module” format is being replaced. Apparently, students are not keen on doing more work that looks like school work! I don’t blame them.

The following is a peek into the program to date:

Program Growth

The program has grown from 713 views/year in 2014, to 3323 views/year in 2015 and to 5183 views/year in 2016. Already in 2017, there have been 2339 views and engagement with of the content. I have had many students, parents and colleagues provide positive feedback and pass along posts to other people. I did not anticipate that faculty, staff and parents would find the blog posts useful in helping their children navigate difficult times. Pretty cool evolution!

Top 10 Most Popular Posts:

1. Hardwiring Happiness: Take the Leap, Really, It's Worth the Risk
2. Academic Self-Efficacy: Upgrading Your NeckTop Computer
3. Emotional Intelligence = School Success: Really? Yes, the Math Does Add up!
4. Emotion Regulation: Why it Contributes to Academic Success
5. Leaning In: Learning to Show Up in Your Own Life
6. Perseverance: 11 Strategies to Help You Stay on Track
7. Stress Management: The Artful Balance in Emotion Regulation
8. Perseverance, GRIT, Follow-Through: a.k.a "White-Knuckling it" Through Tough Times as You Achieve Your Goals
9. SLEEP! Why Have You Abandoned Me?!?!
10. Try Something NEW?!?! Terrified? Growth Requires Expanding Your Comfort Zone

I will be presenting at CACUSS this year in Ottawa around the "lessons learned" and the "design thinking process" that has led to some of the program pitfalls and the success. The presentation is titled, Using Social Media to Engage Students: Thinking Outside the College Counselling "Box". I am happy to collaborate, answer questions and share my experiences with this design and implementation process. Feel free to contact me @ heather.drummond@mohawkcollege.ca.

Prospective Algonquin Students Offered Career Counselling

Submitted by David Glickman, Algonquin College

Just how much time should Counsellors invest with prospective students? This question has been pushed into the open since a special funding proposal was approved earlier this year. Concern around declining enrollments, early program withdrawals and attrition rate have given rise to the notion that investing more time with select individuals can help improve student retention. The key is to target the service to the correct individuals. These individuals usually present at our service with a statement, “I want to attend Algonquin, but I’m not sure which program to take.” Sometimes, a 30-minute session can clarify their indecision, especially if they have thought through their program choices carefully and have limited questions. Yet many students choose very disparate programs, or base their program choices on only a superficial idea of what a program entails. The decision might be based on a single factor, such as the belief that a certain program will lead to a “guaranteed job”. Other times it’s based on the notion that the program is entirely hands-on, when in fact the coursework requires several theory-based classes. The point is that quality career counselling can help prospective students consider their program choices more carefully, in order to make a more informed choice that may reduce their likelihood of attrition.

What we have found so far is that, with a targeted approach, the majority of prospective students don’t require more than a couple of sessions. Just as a person would identify their criteria before buying a cell phone or car, we start by identifying their career-search criteria. We developed a fillable pdf form, which includes space for inserting their values, potential skills, Holland Code interests and non-negotiables. We model how to use online resources and checklists to identify these criteria, then end a first session with suggestions for independent research. Most often, students return with greater insight into their potential career and program choices. Subsequently, we can have a much more productive discussion about how their criteria influence their decision-making process. Since many college students are concerned about job prospects, a demonstration around how to critically evaluate labour market information is often included. Also, ethical career counselling requires us to consider clients’ options, even if the end result means they choose another post-secondary institution, or even a gap year. This allows us to steer clear of falling into the recruitment trap. So far, the results have been positive, based on client feedback, and funding has been extended for another year. By the end of the 2017-18 academic year, we hope to reach 1,250 prospective students.

Other developments over the course of the initiative will include redesign of the prospective students' website, with video content and accompanying short exercises. We also plan to run small group presentations and have a greater Counsellor presence at the Open House events, allowing us to interact with prospective students who present with uncertainty about program choosing choice.

Again, the Career Clarity Project is aimed at helping students make an informed program and career choice, thereby increasing the retention rate from full-time programs. If you have any questions about the program or would like to receive our materials, please email me at: glickmd@algonquincollege.com

Wallet Card for Disclosure to First Responders and Law Enforcers

With thanks to Dennis Debbaudt, Mary Fox, Debby Geheran, & Steffi Geheran

An important time for a person with Asperger Syndrome (Autism Spectrum) to disclose the fact that they *have* AS is when interacting with a "first responder," i.e. a police officer, fire fighter, or emergency medical technician. This kind of disclosure may be especially hard, because the situation may be an emergency, or one in which you feel threatened or unsafe. If you are an adult or teen with AS, we suggest that you carry a copy of the card below in your wallet at all times, to use in such difficult situations. Be sure to write on the back of the card the names and telephone numbers of two people who know you, and who explicitly agree to serve as emergency contacts for you if you ever find yourself in a difficult situation with a police officer or other first responder.

Some parents take their children to meet local police and disclose their AS *in advance* of any possible emergency. Teens and adults could also make it a point to introduce themselves to local police, perhaps taking along a family member or trusted friend to facilitate the meeting. It is far easier to establish a mutually respectful relationship at a time when everyone is calm, than in the midst of an emergency or active law enforcement incident.

The expert on these issues is **Dennis Debbaudt**, who has kindly spoken at AANE conferences and trained law enforcement personnel and other first responders in New England on behalf of our community. You can receive his e-mailed "Autism Risk and Safety" newsletter by contacting him at <ddpi@flash.net>. AANE staff members have developed this card based on models created by Dennis, and on his insights and teaching.

It is very important to ask a police officer *permission* to reach into your pocket to get your wallet and the card yourself, or tell the officer exactly where you are

carrying your wallet—purse, left side coat pocket, etc.—and ask the officer to please take out the wallet and look for the card himself or herself. For example, you could say, “Officer, I have a card in my wallet that explains my disability. May I please show it to you, or would you prefer to reach into my back pocket yourself?” If you reach into your pocket suddenly, the police officer may think you are reaching for a weapon, and react in a way that could endanger you.

Directions

1. Cut out both the front and back sides of the card.
2. Fill out the front with your name, date of birth, and phone numbers of your two emergency contact people.
3. Cut a piece of card stock to the same size. Put it between the two sides of the card.
4. Laminate with contact paper or a clear lamination kit from a pharmacy, hardware, or stationery store.
5. Put the card into your wallet; carry it with you whenever you leave home.

To: A Law Enforcement Officer or other First Responder

My Name: _____

In case of emergency, or to assist both you and me in communicating

and in resolving this situation, please contact one of the following people: _____



Asperger/Autism

I have a diagnosis of *Asperger Syndrome (Autism Spectrum)*

a social/communication disability related to autism.

Because of my Asperger's Syndrome, I may

- Panic if yelled at, and lash out if touched or physically restrained.
- Misinterpret things you tell me or ask me to do.
- Not be able to answer your questions.
- Appear not to be listening or paying attention.
- Tend to interpret statements literally.
- Appear rude or say things that sound tactless, especially when anxious or confused.
- Have difficulty making eye contact.
- Speak too loud, too soft, or with unusual intonation.

I would like to cooperate. To help me cooperate, PLEASE:

