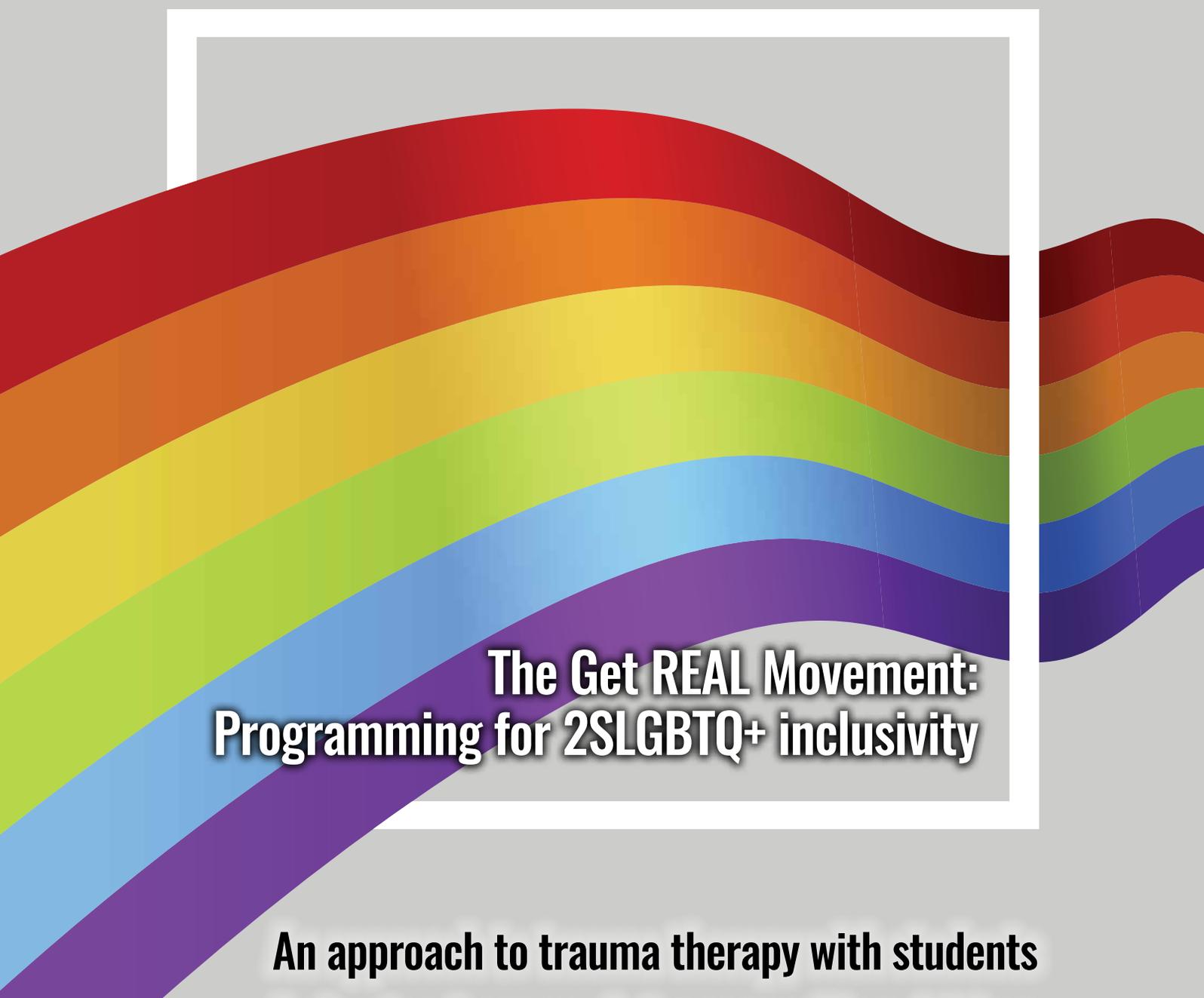


# MANITOBA

## *School Counsellor*

SPRING 2022



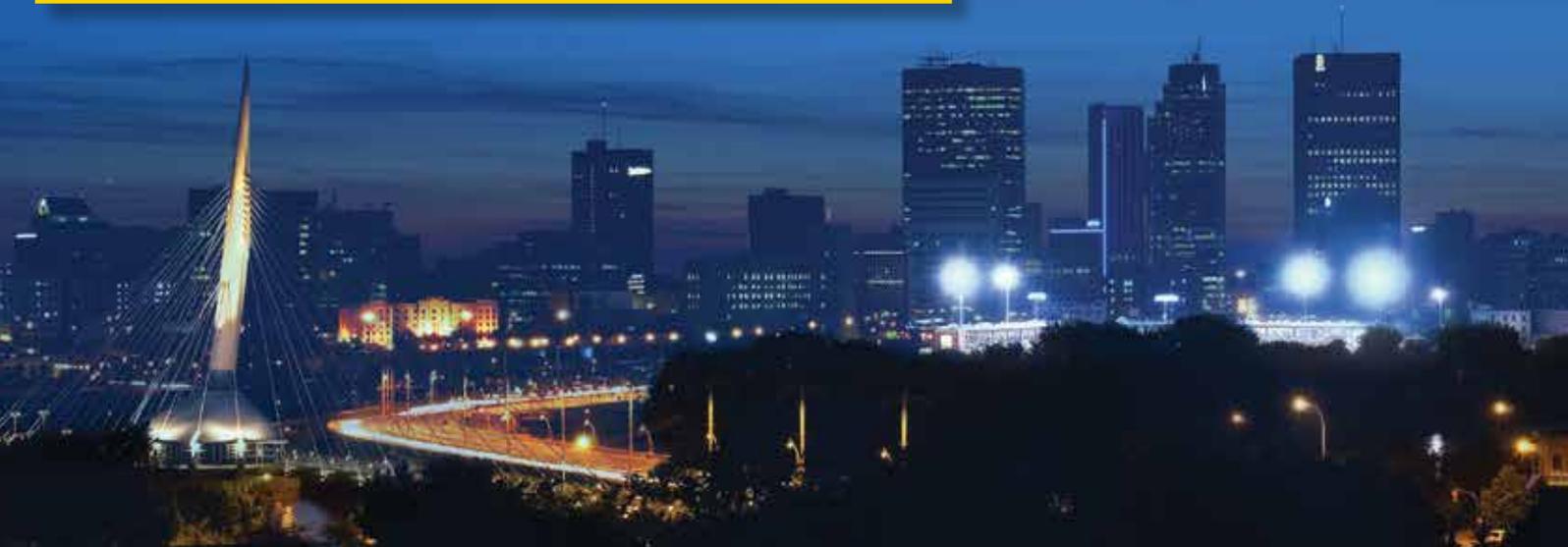
**The Get REAL Movement:  
Programming for 2SLGBTQ+ inclusivity**

**An approach to trauma therapy with students  
A six-step framework for counselling children**

# Skills Canada National Competition



**Winnipeg**  
**May 24 - 27**  
**2023**



# MANITOBA School Counsellor

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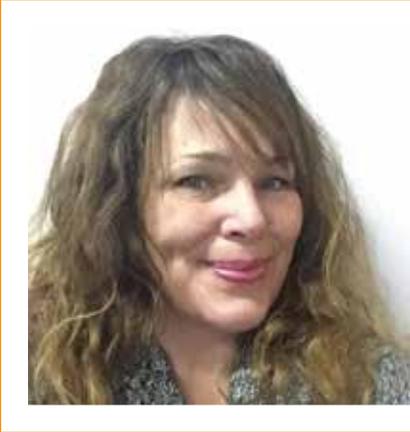
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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF MSCA

### *Jennifer Stewart*

Wishing you all a great finish to the 2021/22 school year. The feeling of spring is in the air and people are feeling some rejuvenation by the warmth and sunshine.

Thank you all for attending our MTS PD day with Adrienne Shum's yoga class and Dr. Jody Carrington's afternoon presentation supporting educators during these stressful times. We had such a great turn out and received lots of positive feedback about the event. It was a great day spent virtually together. Next year we will be hosting Jesse Thistle, PhD candidate, published researcher, and Canadian award-winning author of the novel *From the Ashes*. Check out his work and website at [jessethistle.com](http://jessethistle.com). I hope you will be able to join us for this intimate event.

Our current issue is filled with great articles that will provide you with information on transgender and gender diverse students' programs and resources that are available. We are hoping these will be supportive of your work with students.

We are looking for nominees for our awards. If you know any counsellors who are doing great things in your division contact us with your nominations. We are also looking for applicants for our annual scholarships. If you are completing your post baccalaureate or masters in counselling consider submitting your application by April 15, 2022. Please refer to our website for all the details in applying at [www.msca.mb.ca/awards.html](http://www.msca.mb.ca/awards.html). ♦



# Connecting to gender-affirming care at Klinik

Every person's gender identity journey is unique. This individuality is reflected in the different types of gender-affirming medical care and referrals that people access through our clinic. The Trans Health program at Klinik has existed for over a decade. It was started by a small group of health-care providers wanting to provide and make gender-affirming health care more accessible.

Although we still operate part time, over the years our team has grown to include a peer support worker, social workers, physicians, nurse practitioners, psychologist, a nurse, and administrative support. Our focus is providing gender-affirming medical care and referrals to gender-affirming medical procedures. We are able to see people aged 16 and up and operate part-time three days a week.

One of the main reasons that folks will connect with us is to start gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT). People connecting with us for GAHT will connect with us for about a year until their goals have been reached and we can transfer their care to their primary care provider.

People will also connect with us for referrals to gender-affirming surgeries, voice therapy, and hair removal. In Manitoba, as in many other provinces, referral letters for these types of gender-affirming medical services must be provided to the health region by specific health-care providers. For surgical referrals, more in-depth appointments are a part of the surgical referral process for additional required letters.

A client's journey with us starts by meeting our social workers and peer support worker, and then our medical staff. We can connect with clients in-person, by phone, and in virtual visits. Clients can see our social workers and peer-support worker for ongoing supports or connection to community resources while accessing our program. Depending on the trajectory of the pandemic, we hope to be able

to re-start some of our in-person education sessions for clients in the not-so-distant future.

Our physicians and nurse practitioners are also available to consult with primary care providers to support clients' existing health-care providers in starting and monitoring GAHT. Our peer support worker and social workers are available to connect with school counsellors or other supports to provide additional information that may be helpful as you support your students.

Clients can refer themselves or be referred by a health-care provider. You can find us on Instagram at [@transhealthklinikwpg](https://www.instagram.com/transhealthklinikwpg), or for more information specific to gender-affirming medical care or our program, please visit our website at [klinik.mb.ca/health-care/transgender-health-klinik](https://klinik.mb.ca/health-care/transgender-health-klinik). ♦

**A client's journey with us starts by meeting our social workers and peer support worker, and then our medical staff.**



# The Get REAL Movement: Programming for 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusivity

Above: Within Manitoba, the Get REAL MB After-School Program offers a unique support system for 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

Yesterday, 11:03 PM

hey, my name is [redacted] and I am in grade 6. you guys recently did a presentation on zoom with my school a couple days ago. I thought that was really really cool and I know it takes a lot of courage and strength to go up in front of schools and talk about your experiences and stories. I think it's really inspiring and amazing what you guys do. I am currently questioning my sexuality and I really don't know what I am right now. you guys helped me remember that no one is alone, including me, and it's normal and ok to question your sexual orientation. thank you guys so much. you're all amazing people and I want you to know that you are helping so many people. you guys are awesome. keep doing you. :) <3

The Get REAL Movement is a Canadian non-profit organization. Our mission is to combat 2SLGBTQ+ discrimination, racism, and bullying in schools, summer camps, and workplaces. We accomplish this through education – offering a range of workshop modules for students, parents, teachers, and corporate businesses, and producing online and in-person resources, including curriculum pieces, posters, videos, and merchandise; and through leadership development and youth support. All this is through our university chapter, high school after-school, and 2SLGBTQ+ virtual counselling programs.

The Get REAL Movement's team is made up of diverse individuals that have a wealth of lived experience, educational backgrounds, and work experience as speakers and community organizers. We share stories, discuss acceptance, and educate others about how to be better allies to the 2SLGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities.

Within Manitoba, the Get REAL MB After-School Program offers a unique support system for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Running for four years now, the team brings together 20 youth ages 13 to 17 from all different school divisions that are looking for a safe community of friends. Once a month, they meet and spend time together; whether



**Our most in-demand workshop, our Inclusivity Workshop, is a one-hour session that focuses on building compassion, sharing stories, and dispelling stereotypes.**

in-person or virtually, and the team runs activities, field trips, group discussions, and brings in guests. Previous activities have included Queer trivia, Zoo Lights festival, Get REAL Olympics, a Manitoba Moose Game, MTC theatre tickets, mental health night, and musical guest appearances. Ninety per cent of students said that the program had a positive impact on their mental health (10 per cent of others said it did not affect mental health in either a positive or negative way). One-hundred per cent of students said that the After-School Program helped them feel more connected to the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Eighty-six per cent of students said that Get REAL MB helped them become more confident in their 2SLGBTQ+ identity, and 100 per cent of students said that they would like to return next year and participate again. Get REAL MB offers this programming completely free to youth and we have loved expanding over the last several years. We have seen these students form genuine connections with others who have shared experiences of self-discovery, coming out, and navigating the world. You can learn more about our after-school program and watch the Get REAL MB video here: [www.thegrealmovement.com/afterschool](http://www.thegrealmovement.com/afterschool).

Additionally offered, the Get REAL Movement facilitates workshops for students in Grades 4 to 12, for educators, parents, and corporate businesses. Our most in-demand workshop, our Inclusivity Workshop, is a one-hour session that focuses on building compassion, sharing

stories, and dispelling stereotypes. We show that we all have challenges, we all can be kind, and we're a lot more alike than we are different. This workshop is delivered by young, relatable 2SLGBTQ+ facilitators who have grown from their diverse life experiences and journeys to find confidence in their identities. These workshops are powerful, interactive, non-judgemental, and relatable: we've delivered this workshop to almost a million students across Canada and have had one of our busiest years yet! These workshops are currently being offered virtually for the 2021/22 school year. Other workshops offered include Anti-Racism Workshops, Trans 101, Pride in our History, Black History, GSA Building, and Parent/ Educator Workshops.

Some teacher feedback includes: "This was the best presentation we've had in years. We have many students who are going through very similar experiences and to hear your powerful stories of being yourself and to see the impact you are having is fantastic."

Our mission within Manitoba and across Canada comes down to acceptance and awareness. We believe that everyone can take small steps to educate others, unlearn, relearn, and create safer and better spaces for our students.

For more information, you can contact our Get REAL MB program coordinator and team lead speaker, Mackenzie Kolton at [mackenzie@thegrealmovement.com](mailto:mackenzie@thegrealmovement.com). ♦



# Together, we can build **#InclusiveSchools** for everyone

Egale, Canada's leading organization for 2SLGBTQI people and issues, is hosting a range of exciting free webinars and resources for the school community, with the goal of increasing 2SLGBTQI inclusion in many areas of our day-to-day lives.

Did you know that 62 per cent of 2SLGBTQI students feel unsafe at school, compared to only 11 per cent of non-2SLGBTQI students (Peter, Campbell, and Taylor, 2021)?

Egale, Canada's leading organization for 2SLGBTQI people and issues, is hosting a range of exciting free webinars and resources for the school community, with the goal of increasing 2SLGBTQI inclusion in many areas of our day-to-day lives – and you're invited!

From mental health to anti-cyberbullying and trans inclusion, Egale has you covered with all the resources and tools you need to create #InclusiveSchools!

Launched in late January, Building Inclusive Schools is the latest round of free live and facilitator-led webinars covering important topics for educators, counsellors, and school staff looking to increase 2SLGBTQI

inclusion in their own schools.

Choose from a crafted collection of 90-minute webinars, including:

- An Introduction to 2SLGBTQI Inclusion, the perfect starting point (or refresher) for school staff looking to build more inclusive schools;
- Cyberbullying and 2SLGBTQI Youth, designed to build on current anti-bullying efforts within schools, and equips school staff with practical tools to prevent and address cyberbullying targeted towards 2SLGBTQI students;
- Faith & 2SLGBTQI Youth will help school staff bridge the gap between faith and identity as it relates to 2SLGBTQI youth. And finally;
- Trans & Nonbinary Youth will help educators understand the unique experiences and challenges faced by trans and nonbinary students.

Plus, as an added feature to Building Inclusive Schools, pre-register to join the conversation with educators and school staff across Canada to share ideas, resources, and questions on 2SLGBTQI inclusion through Egale's new and exclusive online portal! Learn more and register for free at [egale.ca/inclusive-schools](https://egale.ca/inclusive-schools).

In the 2020 National Survey Results: Impacts of COVID-19 on the 2SLGBTQI Community, Egale found that 42 per cent of the 2SLGBTQI community reported significant impacts on their mental health, compared to 30 per cent of non-2SLGBTQI people (Egale Canada & Innovative Research Group, 2020). To help address the growing need for mental health supports for 2SLGBTQI people, especially as a result of the pandemic, school counsellors are encouraged to register to attend 2SLGBTQI Inclusion for Mental Health and Social Service



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Providers. This 90-minute free live and facilitator-led webinar will have participants consider the structural and cultural biases in Canada and its mental health system, and their impacts on 2SLGBTQI mental health and well-being. Participants will learn evidence-based strategies that can be implemented immediately into your practice. Sessions run from February to July 2022. Learn more

and register for free at [egale.ca/mental-health-supports-webinar/](https://egale.ca/mental-health-supports-webinar/).

To browse Egale's free online database of 2SLGBTQI resources, visit [egale.ca/awareness](https://egale.ca/awareness). Plus, stay up to date with Egale Canada on social media at @egalecanada on all platforms!

Have a safe and exciting school year, and we look forward to helping build more inclusive schools with you.

*Egale Canada & Innovative Research Group. (2020). National survey results: The impact of COVID-19 on the LGBTQI2S community. <https://egale.ca/egale-in-action/covid19-impact-report/>*

*Peter, T., Campbell, C.P., & Taylor, C. (2021). Still In Every Class In Every School: Final report on the second climate survey on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools. Key Takeaways. Toronto, ON: Egale Canada Human Rights Trust. ♦*

# Rainbow Resource Centre: Helping to support 2SLGBTQ+ students and schools

BY DENE GUILLAS

Rainbow Resource Centre is a non-profit community resource centre that offers support and services to the 2SLGBTQ+ community and allies through counselling, education, programming, and support groups for folks of all ages. The education team offers workshops, consultation, and support for schools, families, workplaces, and service providers.

The school equity and inclusion coordinator's (SEIC) position on the education team is to support all Manitoba schools in making positive changes for diversity and inclusion through:

## Staff workshops – school staff PD learning

- Provide thought-provoking and informative sessions to help staff feel more confident to start including 2SLGBTQ+ support in their work, plus guidance to intervene on inappropriate conversations
- Workshop topics:
  - Who is the Rainbow Resource Centre? The programs and services that can help students, staff, families, etc.
  - Identity Unicorn: Sex assigned

at birth, gender identity, gender expression, attraction, and cultural identities

- Barriers, challenges, and discrimination the 2SLGBTQ+ community might face
- How to create safe(r) more inclusive spaces for ALL - Inclusive language, conversations, physical environments, policies, etc.

## GSA workshops/visits – Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSA)

- GSAs include any student-led group focused on 2SLGBTQ+ concerns. They provide a space for 2SLGBTQ+ students, allies, and youth with 2SLGBTQ+ family members with a place to go and feel welcome, heard, seen, supported, and above all, safe.
- These help to show not only the 2SLGBTQ+ students that you support them, but ALL students see the value your school places on diversity and inclusion.
- Workshops/visits can help schools get GSAs started or visit with ones already started.

## Consultation – Policies, documents, resources, curriculum, phobic behaviours, etc.

- Provide support in the creation of more inclusive policies, documents, forms, etc. to show the school and community that your school places a high value on diversity and inclusion for all.
- Share resources such as lesson plans, activities, books, etc. to start incorporating more representation into day-to-day classroom lessons and activities.
- Offer guidance and resources to help combat any phobic behaviours that arise from the inclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ content in school, both from students and the community.

There are some other great programs and services that Rainbow offers to help school staff support students:

- Counselling – free service to help students and their loved ones navigate their identities
- Youth Program – help students looking to connect with other 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Manitoba through programming, resources, and an online support chat space

- Information – questions about other resources, programs, referrals, etc.

The SEIC's role is to empower, educate, and support school staff, so that they feel confident in addressing the concerns, questions, conversations, topics, and curriculum that happens day-to-day. School staff have the most impact in students' school lives and if they can weave 2SLGBTQ+ content throughout all school curriculum and throughout all grades, it will have a powerful ripple effect on how 2SLGBTQ+ students see themselves in your school, and hopefully show others that diversity in all forms should be celebrated. ♦

**Dene Guillas (he/him)**  
**is the school equity & inclusion coordinator**  
**at the Rainbow Resource Centre. He can be reached at**  
**[deneg@rainbowresourcecentre.org](mailto:deneg@rainbowresourcecentre.org).**



### CONTACT US

Please reach out to Rainbow Resource Centre to inquire about our workshops, policy consulting, GSA guidance and support, or for any other questions you may have.

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[www.rainbowresourcecentre.org](http://www.rainbowresourcecentre.org) 204-474-0212

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# Healthy healing

## An approach to trauma therapy with students

BY JOZIE BUHLER

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an extremely prevalent mental condition in North American society, and around 60 per cent of men and over 50 per cent of women are exposed to traumatic events at some point in their lives (Paintain & Cassidy, 2018, p.238). When traumatic events such as physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, death, or violence occur, there is a significant likelihood that the victims, as well as witnesses can develop a serious trauma disorder, and the effects can be devastating without proper treatment and care. Many of the causes of PTSD can leave the victim with significant mistrust regarding the community around them, and the traumatized brain has no way of accurately identifying who is trustworthy anymore. This effect can be even more pronounced for children and adolescents, and their entire mental and

emotional development can be altered by the effects of the experienced trauma.

Post-traumatic stress disorder can stem from a variety of events, including physical or sexual violence, being kidnapped, and even severe motor vehicle accidents. Symptoms can manifest within three months following a trauma event, but may also take months or even years to be fully present. This can cause difficulty for psychotherapy professionals in accurately diagnosing and treating PTSD, especially for children who may feel hesitant to speak about the events or their trauma for fear of the repercussions. PTSD can cause many symptoms, including insomnia, difficulty concentrating, panic attacks and anxiety, avoidance and emotional or social detachment,

A theme of the interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT) treatment portion is to address how past traumas and PTSD symptoms are compromising current functioning, and the goal is that after reconsolidating their traumatic memories, students will be able to learn how to navigate personal and social situations.

## In the beginning, there would be a focus on creating and affirming a safe environment for the student, especially in situations of abuse, where a fear of authority figures may have developed.

and strong negative emotions such as fear, guilt, shame, and disgust in regards to the trauma event. With a wide variety of symptoms, it is no surprise that a diagnosis of PTSD carries massive consequences for a victims' health, and the comorbidity of other mental illnesses and impaired functioning with a PTSD diagnosis is significant.

The question for this level of trauma is what therapeutic direction should be taken to work through these events. The "traditional" therapeutic response to PTSD has been various versions of prolonged exposure, where a client is repeatedly exposed to and relives the traumatic event in order to eventually become desensitized to the feelings of anxiety, fear, and guilt. While technically an effective treatment, there is some concern that this type of treatment is detrimental to a clients' wellbeing, and research has suggested that "exposure may increase symptoms of anxiety and avoidance" (Bleiberg & Markowitz, 2019. p.15).

For students, who can be particularly emotionally vulnerable, an alternate approach would be a much more effective and safe plan of treatment. This theoretical plan would roughly follow the framework of the universal three-phase model (establish safety, reprocess memories, and reconnect to the world) integrated with aspects from both interpersonal psychotherapy and cognitive trauma therapy (CTT). The proposed schedule would be based on the CTT research from Kubany et al. (2004) in which they

suggest two one-and-a-half-hour sessions per week, for about five to six weeks initially (p.7).

The first aspect of the model is to establish safety for the student, and provide trauma education. In the beginning, there would be a focus on creating and affirming a safe environment for the student, especially in situations of abuse, where a fear of authority figures may have developed. In the psychoeducation portion, the counsellor would explain the physiological responses to danger that the body has, and encourage the student to celebrate their body's responses instead of feeling guilt for them. This dissolves the sense of being "bad" or "wrong" and promotes feelings of safety in the child. They would also work on developing a solution-oriented attitude, allowing them to be open to working on difficult aspects.

In the second phase of the universal model, a number of sessions should be dedicated to reprocessing memories and reframing thinking regarding the traumatic events. This would be achieved through combining the memory reconsolidation work as described by Alberini & LeDoux (2013) with the CTT. Memory reconsolidation has some similarity to prolonged exposure, in that the student will be prompted to reactivate the traumatic memory. However, memory reconsolidation differs in that the aim is not to numb the memory, but rather to change the implicit meaning attached to the traumatic experience.



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For students with PTSD, the memories of their trauma will likely be associated with feelings of extreme fear and guilt, and those emotional memories will need reworking in order to feel relief. With memory reconsolidation, the counsellor and the student will need to work together to figure out the emotional belief that is attached to the memories and update their schema so that they can successfully respond to the traumatic memory stimulus. With CTT, the associated emotions are also reprocessed, and “clients are taught to distinguish what they knew ‘then’ from what they know ‘now’” (Kubany et al., 2004, p.7). It is highly probable that students will feel a significant level of guilt, despite the fact that they were unable to control the situation unfolding before them. It would be important to reaffirm with the child (in simple terms) that their guilt has no rational basis, and that the events were not their fault.

A theme of the interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT) treatment portion is to address how past traumas and PTSD symptoms are compromising current functioning, and the goal is that after reconsolidating their traumatic memories, students will be able to learn how to navigate personal and social situations. IPT therapists do this in part by teaching social skills and by encouraging the student to engage in social interactions outside of the sessions. Another aspect of reconnecting sessions would include teaching the difference between aggressive and assertive speech, and providing education on self-advocacy strategies and decision-making that promotes the child’s best interests, and standing up for their personal rights.

By the end of therapy, a main goal would be primarily to reduce or even hopefully remove the PTSD symptoms. Treatment would be considered successful if the student is able to experience a reduction of fear and guilt responses through the memory reconsolidation and IPT, as well as have a working understanding of how to address any potential future traumas and symptoms. CTT and IPT both have a double-sided goal of first dealing with the past trauma, and then future-proofing the student against

new traumatic experiences. Another goal would be to experience what is known as “post-traumatic growth”, which includes aspects such as enhanced personal relationships, openness to new possibilities, a greater sense of personal strength, and greater appreciation for life.

The strength of IPT and CTT is that they both focus on the client themselves and their progression forward. For many students, the experiences they have would leave strong emotional scarring, and while prolonged exposure may eventually desensitize and numb the emotional trauma, it would do very little to help them develop healthy coping skills to move forward with. These healthy coping skills are crucial in the rehabilitation of adolescents with PTSD. Using the universal three-phase model as a base for therapy framework, and including skills and treatments from cognitive trauma therapy and interpersonal psychotherapy, many students have a strong chance of overcoming their trauma and maintaining a stable life despite the events they have faced.

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**Treatment would be considered successful if the student is able to experience a reduction of fear and guilt responses through the memory reconsolidation and IPT, as well as have a working understanding of how to address any potential future traumas and symptoms.**

# A resource for equity and inclusion in Manitoba

BY DIEDRE A. DESMARAIS, PHD, AREA DIRECTOR, ACCESS AND ABORIGINAL FOCUS PROGRAMS, UM



For over 40 years, the University of Manitoba Access Programs provided valuable academic resources to Manitoba students who have traditionally encountered barriers to post-secondary education.

The University of Manitoba Access Program (UMAP) and the Health Careers Access Program (HCAP) are open to Manitoba residents who qualify for admission into the university. Interested students may then apply to the Access Program and interviews are held in May for the September term registration. Priority is given to northern Manitoba residents, Indigenous and newcomer students, and students with limited financial resources.

For over 40 years, the University of Manitoba Access Programs provided valuable academic resources to Manitoba students who have traditionally encountered barriers to post-secondary education. The founding principles of equity and fairness were outlined in the Poonwassie report of 2003 and these continue to guide the good work of committed professionals who interact with students daily. Working as a team, academic professionals provide the safety of a community whose sole purpose is to elevate students to academic success.

Access students come from diverse cultural backgrounds and the program endeavours to provide a safe and caring community so students can thrive in their own ways of being. Personal counsellors provide cross-cultural supports and Access has a grandfather (elder) who guides Indigenous ways of being through ceremony and cultural practices. Access' grandfather is available to any student who seeks a greater understanding of his knowledge and spiritual base.

Common to all Access students are the services provided meant to enhance capacity to achieve academic success. These services fall into several categories such as academic advising, personal counselling, and financial literacy. New students share a common first year experience and have the opportunity to register into smaller classes taught by Access faculty members. Wrap-around academic supports such as tutorial assistance and academic workshops are created specific to these students' needs, and in doing so, a community of shared experiences and common goals is created. Although interaction with students is more intense in the first two years of a student's academic experience, the academic supports remain available to students as they move through their academic programs.

The Access Programs were created for the primary reason of removing barriers to post-secondary education for specific groups of people in Manitoba; reasons such as, academic unpreparedness, circumstance of racism or systemic racism, and lack of confidence in academic skills. Unfortunately, those reasons still exist. The Access team of educators are committed to student achievement and work hard to build a community of support as students move through their academic programs. Over the years, hundreds of students have been supported by the program and achieved degrees in Science, Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Law, Kinesiology, Fine Arts and Liberal Arts. These accredited professionals now successfully share their hard-earned skills in communities all across Canada. The Access team is proud to have been given the privilege to walk with them along their academic path and are ever committed to repeating this walk with future generations of students who face similar circumstances.

Poonwassie, Deo H. (2003). *Reclaiming Futures A Review of Access Programs* at the University of Manitoba (unpublished internal report). ♦

# A job with a view



BY KAREN RUTHERFORD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ARCA

Journeyman roofers can earn more than \$100,000 per year and work opportunities consistently exist across this country.

When you arrived at work this morning, did you wonder who put the roof on your school?

Sometimes great opportunities are missed because they are out of site. A notable example of that is a career in commercial roofing.

Today we would like you to take a minute and consider the opportunities for your students.

All Institutional-Commercial-Industrial (ICI) buildings need highly qualified journeyman roofers to create a building that is protected against the elements. In addition to becoming a recognized journeyman, there are many other careers in roofing, some of which require physical work, while many do not. There are inspectors, technical representatives, manufacturer's marketing representatives, and actual roofers. Workers in this industry can achieve a Red Seal Journeymen ticket ensuring they will have year-round work and enviable

salaries. Journeymen can earn more than \$100,000 per year and work opportunities consistently exist across this country.

Not everyone wants to work at a desk or be confined to tiny little rooms like family doctors. A life working outside comes with incredible health benefits. In a recent study the following was determined:

There are 10 specific health benefits to a work life that includes considerable time outdoors.

1. Twelve per cent reduction in the levels of cortisol, the stress hormone that wakes many people up in the middle of the night because of physical movement throughout the day.
2. Risk of increased blood pressure reduced by nine per cent. (Better than monitoring cholesterol and taking medications).



# Mentorship and hands-on learning lead to student success



**Dylan Robinson** harnessed every opportunity to grow new skills and connect with his community while studying at UWinnipeg.

At The University of Winnipeg (UWinnipeg), students receive unique opportunities to participate in hands-on research and academics. These valuable experiences complement the faculty-student connections for which UWinnipeg is known. With small class sizes, caring professors, and a community-centred downtown campus, UWinnipeg offers students a warm, welcoming atmosphere that fosters academic and career success.

Dylan Robinson harnessed every opportunity to grow new skills and connect with his community while studying at UWinnipeg. He was in the Pathways to Graduate Studies program, was a member of the UWinnipeg chapter of the Canadian Indigenous Science and Engineering Society, and participated in many Aboriginal Student Services Centre events. Working in Dr. Tabitha Wood's chemistry lab grew his confidence and provided vital support as he worked toward his dream of medical school.

"She believed in me and encouraged me to pursue further chemistry courses to help me prepare for the MCAT," said Robinson. "I am thankful I had the opportunity to gain confidence working in the lab in collaboration with such a strong mentor."

Stephanie Connell also points to the power of mentorship. She met Dr. Ed Cloutis in an Intro to Earth Science class. "He was telling the class about his involvement in planetary missions and was talking about the NASA Curiosity rover,"



**Sophia Hershfield** says connections with her professors grew her confidence.

said Connell. "I couldn't believe there was a professor at UWinnipeg involved with anything to do with NASA."

After emailing back and forth with Dr. Cloutis, he offered her a job in his Centre for Terrestrial and Planetary Exploration (C-TAPE) lab even though she was a first-year student with no lab experience.

"I always encourage other students to approach professors as they might be looking for students," said Connell. "If you make relationships with professors and get to know them and show interest in their research, you'll have an easier time finding a research job."

Sophia Hershfield also says connections with her professors grew her confidence. From Dr. Jenny Heijun Wills, who inspired her to pursue English, to many others who provided guidance and mentorship.

"They really taught me to trust my intellectual instincts and push myself to try new things and reach new limits of what I could do and really explore ideas and concepts that were interesting to me," said Connell.

Faculty of Education students Mikaila Collins and Meagan Nenka recently travelled with Dr. Sheri-Lynn Skwarchuk and Dr. Yvonne Vizina, and nursery school director Karlin Mann, 10 hours north of Winnipeg to the Misipawistik and Tataskweyak Cree Nations to share ToyBox Manitoba

resources and learn about Indigenous and northern culture.

“This journey to Misipawistik and Tataskweyak has been life changing,” said Nenka.

“The gratitude of the community and the generosity of the gifts we were presented reflected that this visit was not just for ToyBox or for the five of us as guests. We felt that our mutual presence and enthusiasm to learn forged lasting connections,” said Skwarchuk.

After a tour of Assiniboine Park Zoo and the conservatory, UWinnipeg psychology and biology student Kerianne Chant jumped at the chance to take part in research assessing the personalities of polar bears. Her work will help experts proactively manage animal problems and minimize human-wildlife conflicts.

“This project highlights just how actively engaged our students are in undertaking work in the community that has impact and contributes to the skills needed for careers,” said Dr. Jino Distasio, vice-president of research and innovation.

Learn more about how The University of Winnipeg delivers education with impact at [uwinnipeg.ca](http://uwinnipeg.ca). ♦



Faculty of Education students Mikaila Collins and Meagan Nenka recently travelled with Dr. Sheri-Lynn Skwarchuk and Dr. Yvonne Vizina, and nursery school director Karlin Mann, 10 hours north of Winnipeg to the Misipawistik and Tataskweyak Cree Nations to share ToyBox Manitoba resources and learn about Indigenous and northern culture.



Education students and faculty in Northern Manitoba for the ToyBox project.

## Choosing a program is the first step to turn a dream into reality.

At The University of Winnipeg, students arrive with different talents and passions, and leave ready to make their mark on the world. Our small class sizes means their success matters. Our dedicated faculty will help students discover their strengths and provide them with the opportunity to participate in world-class research and learning activities.

See how studying at UWinnipeg has helped students pursue their passions and work toward their career goals:

[uwinnipeg.ca/impact](http://uwinnipeg.ca/impact)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WINNIPEG**

# MITT introduces Work Skills Foundations

## New preparatory program gives all students orientation to post-secondary and career life



Commencing with the Fall 2022 term, Work Skills Foundations is designed to help students transition into post-secondary programs while navigating the expectations that come in this unique culture and academic setting.

2022 is going to be an exciting year at the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT), in particular with the introduction of Work Skills Foundations.

Commencing with the Fall 2022 term, Work Skills Foundations is designed to help students transition into post-secondary programs while navigating the expectations that come in this unique culture and academic setting.

Work Skills Foundations replaces Introduction to College and Work, which was established in 2015 to assist international students to get acclimated to MITT and the Canadian work environment. Now, Work Skills Foundations is expanding the audience.

Whereas the predecessor was directed to students coming from abroad, the new Work Skills Foundations program is intended to bring all students into the program, in part because local students had already been expressing interest.



The new Work Skills Foundations program is intended to bring all students into the program, in part because local students had already been expressing interest.

“Originally, it was geared toward international students, but we found that (domestic) students were also inquiring about the program. We wanted to rework it to appeal to students with a wide variety of backgrounds” says Colin Fraser, one of the architects of Work Skills Foundations and manager of MITT’s English Language Institute. “All of our students benefit from understanding how they learn best, becoming more efficient and effective in the classroom, and picking up invaluable intercultural communication skills as well.”

### Building blocks

With this impetus in mind, Fraser and his associates set off on program renovation. One of the first actions was to establish the goals for Work Skills Foundations, with nine outcomes identified:

- Self-assess personal strengths and areas for growth in relation to MITT Work Skills.
- Discuss MITT ethics and integrity expectations.

- Reflect on appropriate behaviours in Canadian learning environments.
- Identify effective strategies to improve personal learning.
- Apply practical time management strategies for scheduling, planning, and prioritizing tasks.
- Apply problem-solving strategies to workplace or academic situations.
- Explore common stressors experienced by students and build strategies to overcome them.
- Differentiate key cultural factors influencing communication and behavioural responses.
- Build a lifelong learning strategy for career resiliency based on personal values and goals.

Fraser and his associates did not work alone. Consultation took place, particularly with those who had been part of Introduction to College and Work previously.

“It was more of an internal process, but we had a lot of MITT staff with experience, background, and enthusiasm for the program that was part of this,” Fraser says. “We have a group of instructors who have taught this program quite regularly over the last few years, so they’ve had a lot of good ideas and input that we’ve incorporated.”

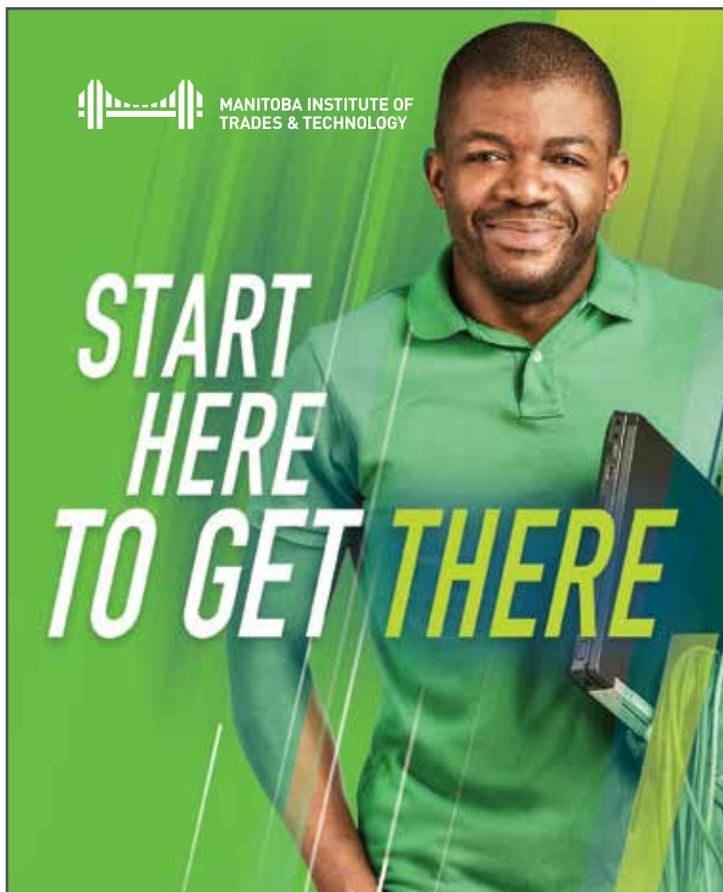
## Launching online

One of the major alterations between the two programs is the delivery method. While Introduction to College and Work had been delivered at appointed times (either in-person or remotely as COVID-19 conditions allowed), Work Skills Foundations features asynchronous learning, a more self-directed approach, allowing participants the opportunity to take in the modules at their leisure through the MyLearning platform. The 10 three-hour classes, however, must be completed before a program commences.

For Fraser, who at one time was an instructor for Introduction to Work and College, seeing the program come to life is very meaningful.

“I’m very excited to see the evolution,” he says. “It’s a very interesting and beneficial program for students. It’s really going to get them excited about being at MITT. We’re giving them the tools and strategies to be successful, not only in an academic setting but with practical course components and when they have graduated into the working world as well.”

To learn more about MITT’s Work Skills Foundations, visit [MITT.ca/WorkSkillsFoundations](http://MITT.ca/WorkSkillsFoundations). ♦



### Help your students plan their career or education path at MITT.

Our programs are developed with industry and most have graduates career ready in a year.

MITT offers more than 30 post-secondary programs leading to diplomas and certificates in the areas of business and information technology, health care, human services, and skilled trades, with many of our skilled trades programs accredited by Apprenticeship Manitoba.

Our student success and career development advisor teams are available by phone, email, or virtually to help students achieve their academic and career goals.

Learn more  
[viewbook.mitt.ca](http://viewbook.mitt.ca)

# What are *you* doing after graduation?



For graduates that are not pursuing further training or education and want to move directly into the labour market, Opportunities for Employment (OFE) is here to help.

As the end of their final semester looms near, Grade 12 students are faced with the repeating question, “What are you doing after graduation?”

Although asked with genuine interest or curiosity, for some students this is a question filled with dread. Making the decision of what career to pursue can be daunting.

As a school counsellor, you want to point graduates in the right direction for success, no matter what they decide to do after they graduate.

For some graduates, they plan to attend post-secondary education right after graduation. For others, they may choose to take a gap year or pursue full-time employment. That is where OFE can help.

## Who we are

We connect job seekers and employers, bringing them together to foster successful long-term employment.

OFE has been providing free employment services to the Winnipeg community for over 25 years. To date, over 27,500 people have found employment at OFE.

We offer a variety of programs and services designed to prepare individuals for an effective job search in today’s job market, upgrade their skills if needed and connect them with employers who are hiring.

We have approximately 500 active job seekers with various skills, education, and experience looking for employment at any given time from entry-level to professional job opportunities.

## Our process

We begin the process by getting to know each individual, their experiences, skill set, and employment goals. Then an Employment Development Plan is created for each participant. This is essentially an action plan of the steps needed to reach their goal. As part of their action plan, a participant may be scheduled for one or more short-term training or certificates, if it relates to their employment goals.

We also offer job-specific training for four in-demand industries. This involves short-term training that prepares participants for work in a specific industry, or even for a specific employer. We have many employer partners that have collaborated with us to develop training to ensure a steady flow of job-ready applicants.

### 1) Manufacturing

A job in manufacturing could involve being a machine operator, production worker, forklift operator or a general labourer. Another option we offer is working as a sewing machine operator.

One of our employer partnerships has been with Canada Goose, a winter outerwear company with a production facility in Winnipeg. We have assisted in training over 500 participants to become sewing machine operators with this company.

### 2) Health Services Support

A job in health services support could involve assisting others who need help with daily activities such as a home support/disability worker or respite support worker.

### 3) Retail and Hospitality

A job in retail and hospitality could involve serving the public as a retail sales associate, store clerk, cashier,



or front desk clerk. It also includes housekeeping and specialized or light duty cleaners.

#### 4) Customer Service

A job in customer service could involve being a customer service representative, providing information, problem solving, taking orders, and ensuring customer satisfaction.

We have many employer partners in each of these industries that are looking to hire trained, job-ready candidates from OFE.

#### Employer connections

OFE has numerous connections with Winnipeg employers who contact OFE to meet their recruitment needs. Over 5,000 employers have used OFE's services to assist in filling positions within their company. These connections provide daily job leads and direct access to employers

who are hiring. We also offer employer hiring events and networking opportunities to our job seekers.

#### Eligibility requirements

Participants must...

- Be 18 years of age or older
  - Have a valid SIN number
  - Reside in the city of Winnipeg
  - Be unemployed or working less than 20 hours per week
- \*Other eligibility requirements may apply for specific programs.

#### How to register

You do not need a referral to attend OFE. You can have interested graduates register online at [www.ofe.ca](http://www.ofe.ca) or by calling our main line at 204-925-3490.

Want to learn more about OFE?

If you would like to register for a presentation and tour, please contact us at [roslynk@ofe.ca](mailto:roslynk@ofe.ca).

If you would like a presentation on-site for your staff or organization, please contact us at [agapio@ofe.ca](mailto:agapio@ofe.ca). ♦



#### CONTACT US

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Winnipeg, MB R3C 0B9  
204-925-3490 [ofe@ofe.ca](mailto:ofe@ofe.ca)

[www.ofe.ca](http://www.ofe.ca)



Funding provided by: The Government of Canada and The Manitoba Government

## WE CONNECT GRADUATES

(and a lot of other people looking for work)

## WITH EMPLOYERS!

[www.ofe.ca](http://www.ofe.ca)

We offer **free** employment services to job seekers and businesses in Winnipeg.

Do you know High School Graduates who:

- are looking for full-time employment
- have limited or no work experience
- are *not* pursuing post-secondary education
- need direction and support in finding a job
- could benefit from job-specific training
- need connections to employers

Opportunities for Employment



Providence now has more than 20 program options, and our most popular majors are in Aviation, Biology, Business, Health Science, and Psychology.

# Earn your psychology degree at Providence University College

Just 30 minutes south of Winnipeg is a Christian university with approximately 440 students, offering bachelor's degrees in arts (BA), science (BSc), business administration

(BBA), and theology (BTh). Providence now has more than 20 program options, and our most popular majors are in Aviation, Biology, Business, Health Science, and Psychology.

No matter your area of study, students will learn to lead with character and knowledge as they're taught by experienced faculty who are both professors and mentors. We offer more than an academic education, but a close-knit community where students can live, learn, and belong. We prepare students for full lives and meaningful careers.

Through a wide range of course offerings, our Psychology Department gives students an opportunity to study human behaviour and mental processes. You will explore the answers to why people think, feel, perceive, and behave the way they do. Classroom topics range from the basic nervous system to principles of perception,



Taking courses in different psychology-related disciplines will help you find your passion, and then you will be able to pursue further studies to specialize in the area of your choice.

helping you gain an understanding of the various sub-disciplines of psychology.

When you choose Psychology at Providence, you will take foundational courses in research methods, child, adolescent and adult development, personality theories, brain and behaviour, forensics and social psychology. Taking courses in different psychology-related disciplines will help you find your passion, and then you will be able to pursue further studies to specialize in the area of your choice.

Since 1925, Providence has graduated more than 12,000 students. We have distinguished alumni who serve in different health fields, business sectors, non-profits, private practices, and ministries in Canada and around the world. Psychology graduates from Providence have typically taken prerequisites for further studies and built professional careers in areas such as education, therapy, counselling, psychology, medicine, and science.

Psychology offerings at Providence University College:

- Three-year Bachelor of Arts
- Psychology Major or Minor

If you are interested in how humans develop from the womb to old age, why you believe what you believe, the impact of stress on mental well-being, or how psychology intersects with the criminal justice system, then this is the program for you!

Providence is rurally placed, community driven, and uniquely positioned to help transform the aspirations of students into careers that will make a difference for Christ in a changing world.

Your story starts here. Learn more at [prov.ca](http://prov.ca). ♦



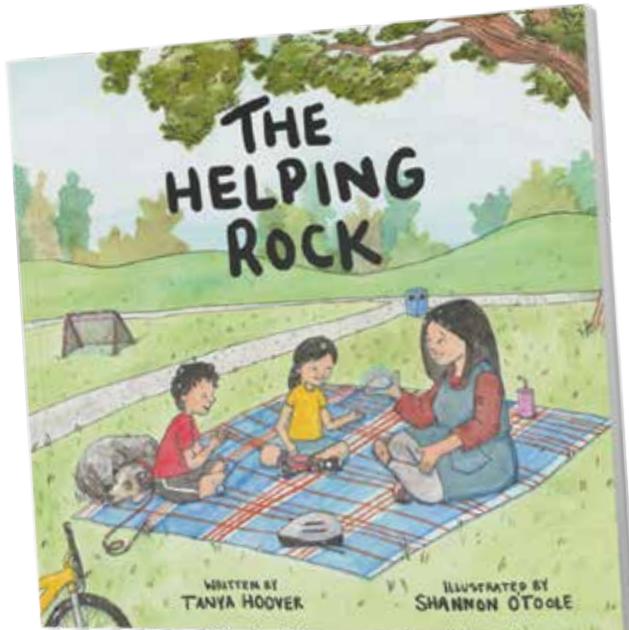
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# A six-step framework for counselling children

## Lessons from *The Helping Rock*

BY TANYA HOOVER



As a certified play therapist, I know that it's important to build up children's confidence and help them be open to growth. I developed a therapeutic framework to support learning these skills, and I have found it to be effective in my own practice.

I based my new children's book, *The Helping Rock*, on this framework. The story and accompanying resources can be used to share these concepts with children and their caregivers. Follow the six steps below to see how.

### 1. Identify strengths

Many children are referred to me because of behaviour and social/emotional challenges at school/home. They usually have low self-esteem and many don't know their own strengths.

When counselling children, I pay attention to what their interests are. When they feel accepted and are enjoying themselves, it's easier to notice their strengths.

*The Helping Rock* begins with a child named Lani noticing

her struggle: she can't ride a bike and doesn't want any help. But with Mama's support, Lani recognizes a way to share her own gift of being good at spelling.

### 2. Normalize that we all have things that are more difficult for us

We all have internal strengths and struggles that influence how we cope with "what is" in our lives.

To explain this concept to children and their caregivers, I share that we're all imperfect, and we are all able to strive to grow into our healthiest self.

In *The Helping Rock*, Mama shares with Lani that we all have strengths and struggles. She then offers Lani a rock to help her remember this concept. Within the safety of being with her supportive Mama, Lani can consider how to help her friends, and ultimately, she's able to accept help in an area she finds difficult.

### 3. Identify therapeutic goals

Normalizing that we all have things that are more difficult for us takes away shame. Then, we can openly acknowledge therapeutic goals such as learning to manage big feelings or gaining social skills.

While passing the helping rock among her friends, Lani grows her awareness that everyone has gifts to share and areas they find more challenging. Although she initially doesn't want any help to learn how to ride a bike, she eventually opens up to receiving help from her cousin.

### 4. Introduce a growth mindset

A growth mindset means that we can always keep learning and growing. In a therapy setting, it means a child can learn new skills to overcome challenges.

In *The Helping Rock*, this concept is illustrated when Mama tells Lani that we all need help sometimes.

# The story and accompanying resources can be used to share these concepts with children and their caregivers. Follow the six steps to see how.

## 5. Help the child embrace the full balance of who they are

Social/emotional health includes accepting all aspects of ourselves: our best qualities, and our trickier, negative, and darker parts. Children learn about accepting all of who they are through acceptance from their caregivers.

Lani's friends show a variety of strengths and struggles. In this way, the book demonstrates how we all have struggles and strengths that require us to ask for help and share our gifts.

## 6. Support sharing within the community

Counselling and learning can happen individually or in

groups. The strength of learning in larger settings is that everyone learns from each other. It provides opportunities to show how all our strengths and struggles fit together like a puzzle.

*The Helping Rock* celebrates this concept by using the visual of a sparkly rock that Lani and her friends pass around as they each, in turn, help each other.

Using these six steps provides opportunities to help children increase their confidence, embrace a growth mindset, and share their gifts within their community.

*Tanya Hoover is a certified play therapist and registered social worker. Her new book, The Helping Rock, is a project of the Crisis & Trauma Resource Institute (CTRI). ♦*

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*The Helping Rock* is about the importance of sharing our gifts with others and the strength we gain by working together. As a colourful sparkling rock is passed among Lani's friends, readers witness the many ways we help each other.

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# Teachable moments



Year after year, Emma McNeilly's company has supported The Salvation Army's Adopt-A-Family program, which helps struggling families over the holidays.



Booth UC also helped McNeilly further her understanding of a variety of different areas of business.



Not only did she earn a degree, but she also met her future husband, fellow Booth UC student Benjamin McNeilly (BBA/17).

Booth University College graduate Emma McNeilly (BBA/17) tries to live out her faith daily, and a story that comes to her mind revolves around Christmas.

"My office was deciding on what to do for the holidays," says McNeilly. "People suggested a potluck lunch, a gift exchange, or after-work drinks. But my first thought was, why don't we do something for the people struggling this season?"

So that year and every year after, McNeilly's company has supported The Salvation Army's Adopt-A-Family program, which helps struggling families over the holidays.

"My experience at Booth UC nurtured that desire to help others, and is one that I would not trade for the world," says McNeilly.

Booth UC also helped McNeilly further her understanding of a variety of different areas of business. She says that her studies benefited her personally, as well as academically, especially the courses dealing with finances and budgeting.

Not only did she earn a degree, but

she also met her future husband, fellow Booth UC student Benjamin McNeilly (BBA/17).

"Ben and I joke that we didn't even make it through the front steps separately, as he was the one who unloaded my car when I arrived at Booth UC!" she says, adding that they dated through university and were married in May 2017, one month after they both graduated.

While both Emma and Ben graduated with BBAs, he went on to become the community ministries coordinator at The Salvation Army's Weetamah Corps in Winnipeg, while she started working at a property management company that August. McNeilly parlayed her degree into a series of promotions and has moved up in the company to the point where she handles leasing and accounting.

"My degree has helped me immeasurably," she says.

McNeilly's father is also a property manager, so the business was not unfamiliar to her, but it was her Booth UC experience that has stood her in good stead, especially her minor in religion.

"Our workplace and clientele consist of people of many faiths, and one of the classes I took was World Religions," she says. "Being able to see why certain things are done through the lens of faith helps me do my job better."

She adds that many people have parents living with them, so when they apply for an apartment, it's important to know that they are family-centric and that they need separate areas for their parents. Her company has built properties to facilitate that and she would not have had that insight if not for Booth UC.

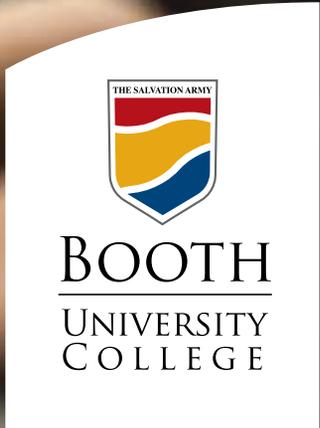
McNeilly's own faith was nurtured at Booth UC and has matured with the passage of time. She is very involved in her church now, and leads worship on Sunday.

"I've grown in finding out who I am," she says. "I've discovered I find joy in teaching, and that helps me to connect with God, and I've been able to spread my knowledge and faith throughout the communities that have come after Booth UC." ♦



# Start Here

Booth University College | 





Try The Trades programming utilizes MBTI's AR and VR training simulators. The introduction of advanced technology will encourage students to be fully immersed in the learning environment.

# Reimagining construction careers with Try The Trades

Over the last decade, our digital universe has evolved dramatically, creating entirely new methods for communication and changing the roles and responsibilities of industry professionals as organizations adapt to new technologies. This rapid expansion can be seen across Canada's construction industry, where digitally advanced machinery, cranes, tools, drones, online training, and virtual reality modules have become increasingly common on project jobsites.

While most tech applications are largely suited towards safety and heavy equipment operation, there is a largely untapped resource for using technology in recruiting new generations into the skilled trades.

Manitoba Building Trades Institute's Try The Trades program aims to increase workforce participation and entry into the industry by creating an

environment that actively engages students – all while improving the quality, scope, and depth of exposure to career opportunities in the skilled trades industry.

By collaborating with Winnipeg-based Bit Space Development, we have created innovative AR and VR content to support more efficient training, and continue to work with industry partners to develop applications for use of technology in the field.

Our state-of-the-art Try The Trades Exhibition Hall offers a fun and free interactive learning destination for Grade 9 to 12 students all year round. Via a four-hour career exploration experience, students will have the chance to visit 12 interactive trades booths staffed by professional skilled trade journeypersons and participate in a variety of hands-on demonstrations.

Whether it's the feeling of virtually walking across a beam 30 feet up in the air like an ironworker, using controls to navigate a front-end loader over a rocky terrain, or testing your welding precision with simulated sounds and sparks, Try The Trades training gives students a first-hand look into working in the skilled trades without the real-life risks.

Recognizing that education and personal development is a journey, it is important for students to be given additional information, assessments, and learning materials to make an informed choice about future career paths. An in-person visit to Try The Trades will help stimulate interest, while exploring aptitude in over 30 different trades careers, which can be done anywhere using the new Try The Trades Online Construction Careers Hub. This online initiative launched in partnership with

Canada's Building Trades Unions and Skill Plan Canada is complete with industry statistics, videos, testimonials from tradespeople across the country, and essential skill aptitude tests for math and literacy. This will help educators to identify and assess youth interested in progressing towards apprenticeship by creating trackable skills benchmarks.

Participation in the Try the Trades program and longer immersion programs is intended to help students make earlier and more informed choices about education and careers they want to pursue.

Discover careers for creators today. Visit [TryTheTradesMB.ca](http://TryTheTradesMB.ca) to learn more. ♦



A student from Seven Oaks School Division tests their welding accuracy at the hands-on Boilermakers Local555 activity booth.

## TRY THE TRADES

MANITOBA BUILDING TRADES EXHIBITION HALL

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[info@mbtrades.ca](mailto:info@mbtrades.ca)

# Polar bear research connects CMU alumna to the natural world

BY MYLES THIESSEN



Sara Wolowich Brown (CMU/19, Environmental Studies) recently did a three-month work placement at Assiniboine Park Zoo this past fall.

Wolowich Brown's placement at the zoo came through a program called Ocean Wise, which connects young people with opportunities in conservation.



Specifically working with the Research and Conservation Department, Wolowich Brown spent most of her time studying polar bear personalities.

For Sara Wolowich Brown (CMU/19, Environmental Studies), going to the zoo is more than just entertainment. It's become a passion.

That passion and desire for connection with the natural world translated into a three-month work placement at Assiniboine Park Zoo this past fall, where she helped conduct polar bear observation and shoreline clean-up strategies.

"It was a really unique opportunity to see a bunch of different aspects of the zoo," says Wolowich Brown. "A lot of people, when they think of the zoo, they think about just going to look at animals, but [the Assiniboine Park Zoo] actually has lots of research projects that are going on, and that's a really big part of what they do."

Specifically working with the Research and Conservation Department, Wolowich Brown spent most of her time studying polar bear personalities.

"[I surveyed] what they're doing, where they're located, if they are interacting with other bears. All that information is used to provide care for the bears at the zoo," she says.

Whether it be understanding that polar bears like to watch the zoo's crowds

or that all the bears at Assiniboine Park Zoo are rescued from Churchill, Wolowich Brown says her time at the zoo gave her a much deeper appreciation of conservation efforts taking place in the province.

"The zoo is about education, conservation, and research. It's not just entertainment," says Wolowich Brown.

"The more people know, the more people care about something. Hopefully, that care can move into actual real-life decisions to better the planet and take care of these animals."

Wolowich Brown's placement at the zoo came through a program called Ocean Wise, which connects young people with opportunities in conservation. She says Ocean Wise looks at skills you have and your background and match you up with an organization that could use your skills and develops them.

Some of those skills, Wolowich Brown says, she developed through CMU. After joining the Environmental Studies program in its infancy, Wolowich Brown says, "I know when I got there that there were new professors, so it was a growing experience between the professors and the students." But she says she found the program's interdisciplinary focus to be beneficial to her education.

"The overall concept of the crossover between the sciences and social sciences was already there," she says.

Kenton Lobe, teaching assistant professor, International Development and Environmental Studies at CMU, says the institutions' courses are shaped to help students explore that crossover.

"I am enlivened by dialogue that reflects careful reading, impassioned dialogue, and the ongoing creativity I witness in student thinking and work," says Lobe. "It will seem cliché to talk about the energy of young people, but it is true. I am encouraged by students grieving deeply for broken kinship relationships with our non-human neighbours."

Wolowich Brown hopes to blend her passion for conservation with education in the future.

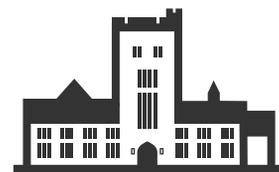
"I think there is a disconnect, and people don't understand we have beluga whale, seals, and polar bears; we have a whole other ecosystem that is directly connected to us," she says. "[I want to help] people become more literate of the natural world around them and make changes in the world to protect these species." ♦



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# Ready for technology



Above: UCN Information Technology Readiness North Project student, Charmaine Sayese, works on computer network cables.

Right: UCN students connect with tech experts from across Canada through virtual meetings.



Survival in Manitoba's north country takes experience, know-how, and perseverance. These are all qualities University College of the North (UCN) student Charmaine Sayese used to succeed in a program using motherboards, satellites, and software.

Sayese was raised and lives in the Opaskwayak Cree Nation community of Bighetty.

She remembers the first time she used a computer as a young girl in elementary school.

"I was in awe. We were playing a game," Sayese said. "The computers back then had floppy disks. The advancement to now is unbelievable."

In her community, urban centre modern conveniences, like the Internet, can be intermittent. Despite the uncertainty of a constant connection, Sayese embraced what technology she could get her hands on.

"You can search anything. If you want to learn it, you can search it," she said. "If you want to educate yourself, you can with the computer."

Social media platforms like Facebook are another survival tool in the north. Online community groups that trade and sell are some of the most followed. An order from Amazon may take weeks to deliver but your neighbour might be selling just what you need.

Sayese's technology curiosity led her to UCN's Information Technology Readiness North Project. The project sets out to lessen the digital and economic divide for Indigenous women in the North.

"It's nice to have hands-on. I get to learn more about what we are using, like the insides of a computer."

Less than three per cent of women at Manitoba post-secondary institutions study computer or information science. That number drops even lower for women employed in IT and Indigenous women in the field are rare.

"UCN recognized the lack of opportunities for local women to access IT training. The course began as a women-only pilot project with

the intent of opening training to all students in the future," said Tara Manych, innovation consultant.

The goal is to offer training in an industry that promises economic opportunities, advancement, and financial security.

"Computers interested me for a while. I saw the Facebook ad, took a chance, and here I am today," Sayese explained. "The project interested me because it was focused on Indigenous women. It's a different atmosphere because we look at things from a woman's perspective."

Sayese says her path in technology at UCN serves as a beginning for others.

"In the future, I'd like to be educating other people about this information," she said. "I'm learning something. Why not give it back?"

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*“I don’t think I would be where I am today without the supports of the Access Program. Access is really good because it establishes a community within a larger whole.”*

**Brandon Wosniak**, UM student,  
Métis living in Winnipeg

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