



CANADIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

STRATEGIC PLAN: 2013-2018



CPA's Vision

To be the national voice of the discipline and profession of psychology in Canada by supporting and promoting the science, practice and education of psychology and its application in the service of the health and welfare of Canadians.

Mission

Through principle, policy, and activity:

- a. improve the health and welfare of all Canadians;
- b. promote excellence and innovation in psychological research, education and practice;
- c. promote the advancement, development, dissemination, and application of psychological knowledge; and
- d. provide high quality services to members and affiliates of the Association.

Values

CPA's values are articulated well through the Code of Ethics to which the organization, as well as its members, affiliates and officers, subscribe and are accountable. The four Principles around which the Code of Ethics is organized include: 1) respect for the dignity of persons, 2) responsible caring, 3) integrity in relationships, and 4) responsibility to society. CPA commits itself to these Principles in the discharge of its activities to support and promote the science and practice of psychology in the service of its membership and the public good. It is these Principles that guide our policy and activity in fulfillment of our mission.

Who We Are

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) was founded in 1939 as the national organization representing Canadian psychology domestically and internationally. The Association is organized around three pillars: Science, Education, and Practice. CPA works closely with other associations and societies, organizations and governments, and interacts with the public and the media in the pursuit of its mission.

The science and practice of psychology have relevance and application to the public good and to every sector of Canadian society. The study and practice of psychology inform and contribute to the well-being of Canadian individuals, families, and the communities and organizations in which they live and work. There is growing recognition by employers and governments, as well as by public and private institutions, that psychological factors affect not only the well-being of individuals but, ultimately, societal success. This recognition derives from a number of contemporary issues of public attention and concern. They include the needs of an aging population, the incidence and prevalence of chronic disease and mental disorders, drivers of satisfaction and productivity in the workplace, post-traumatic stress and other disorders within military populations, the significant unmet health needs of rural and remote populations, and the need to make upstream investments in support of a mentally healthy and



resilient citizenry. The public is increasingly aware of these issues and expects more in the way of evidence-based public policy, as well as accessible and effective health and social services and supports.

The discipline and profession of psychology has a significant role to play in improving the well-being of Canadians. We can do this through research and education of the psychological factors and phenomena that underlie human thought, feeling and behavior which in turn can inform Canada's public policy. We can do this through the practice of psychology used to promote well-being and address the problems of Canadians and the groups and organizations in which they live and work.

The mental and behavioural health needs of Canadians are staggering. In any given year, one in five people in Canada is living with a mental health problem or disorder with estimated costs to the economy of \$51 billion annually. Untreated or undertreated mental health problems come at great cost to individuals, families, employers, communities and the economy. Psychological treatments are among the most effective for many mental disorders, notably those that are most likely to affect Canadians – depression and anxiety. Although psychologists are the largest, regulated, specialized mental health care providers in Canada, psychological services are not funded by provincial health insurance plans, limiting Canadians' access to mental and behavioural health care that works. CPA must play a key role in calling on funders and decision-makers to enhance accessibility to needed psychological services.

Significant strides have been made in increasing public awareness of mental health issues affecting our society. A key milestone occurred in 2012 with the launch of Canada's first mental health strategy by the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Its purpose is to help promote well-being and to improve mental health for all people living in Canada. It joins in a vision for a mental health system that can truly meet the needs of people of all ages living with mental health problems and disorders and their families. Ultimately, Canadians want client/patient-focused systems through which they can access the care and services that work when and where they need them. The profession of psychology and CPA can play a key role in the implementation of this strategy and its recommendations to help Canada do a better job in taking care of its mental and behavioural health. A unique feature of CPA's voice is our recognition that psychological factors keep people, organizations and society well and that arguably, the best health investments are those made before problems start. Psychological practice is not just about secondary and tertiary care of illness and disorders. It is also about helping children learn, helping workplaces and workforces flourish, and about implementing programmes and policy that fosters resilient and skilled citizens.

Psychology and cognitive science researchers excel among Canadian scientists and have made leading contributions worldwide. Through its scholarly, trade and lay publications, CPA helps to disseminate this information as well as profile the issues affecting research and the discipline of psychology. Through advocacy activities with government, partnerships with other associations and societies, and meetings with decision-makers and funders – to name a few – CPA promotes excellence and innovation in psychological research and its applications. CPA needs to support and promote basic and applied behavioural research that, ultimately, has a range of applications for the health and well-being of individuals and the many groups and organizations of which they are part. CPA needs to continue to advocate for research and to promote its dissemination and application.



CPA must continue its role in lobbying government for increased funding for psychological research and student support, and educating the public about important findings from psychological science. Psychologists are agile and well-rounded thinkers who can assess gaps, analyze trends, and communicate effectively. These skills are in addition to the subject matter of their expertise – how people think, feel and behave; the very functions upon which individuals, families, the workplace and societies depend for their success. Just as CPA works to ensure that psychological services find their way to people who need them, it will work to ensure that psychological knowledge is shared for the public good.

Training in psychology is essential to its science and practice. Apart from launching the training of students who ultimately go on to become psychologists, undergraduate psychology courses are often the most subscribed university classes. Understanding how people think, feel and behave is of inherent interest to students and this understanding enhances personal well-being, as well as people's success in their many personal and occupational roles. CPA plays an important role in the development and training of researchers, practitioners and teachers of psychology who go on to research and practice in a wide array of public and private settings and workplaces. CPA contributes to the education and continuing education of its members and affiliates through the publication of journals and newsletters, annual conventions, accreditation, and online and in-person workshops. With rapid developments across psychology's many specialities, the discipline's and profession's need for knowledge exchange has never been more acute. CPA will help meet this need by investing its expertise and resource in knowledge transfer, continuing education, and in the leadership it can take in assisting the discipline and profession to define its training and competencies.

Through its activities in support of science, practice and education and training, CPA strives for excellence in meeting the needs of its membership. However, the value of this excellence must also be felt among psychology's many public stakeholders and partners. It is through our participation in alliances of science and practice, our success at knowledge transfer and translation, and our work with government and other stakeholders that we can determine how well psychology can ultimately contribute to the public good.

Who We Serve

CPA as an association exists because of the commitment and support of its members and affiliates. The provision of quality and relevant services to members and affiliates is one of CPA's key responsibilities and finds its form in CPA activities like journals, conventions and other trade publications. Member-responsive services, however, also include building relationships with government leaders, partner organizations and societies, and others involved in developing, influencing, and implementing public policy. Ultimately, it is these policies that will shape the well-being of the Canadian public and where psychology's contributions can be felt.

This plan reflects the needs of our priority stakeholders – our members and affiliates, funders, policy-makers, researchers, practitioners, educators, and the public at large.



Our Strategic Goals

Our strategic plan is founded on a vision that the science and practice of psychology has broad and deep relevance to public policy and the public good. CPA's intent is to realize this vision through all its principles, policies and activities. It is in its role as psychology's national voice, that CPA as an organization helps ensure that the discipline and profession contribute to the health and well-being of Canadians. CPA's strategic priorities target the activities that will help us hone this contribution. The impact of our contribution will be measured by the focus and success of our activities, organized to support education and training in psychology, the development and application of research, and the accessibility of psychological practice.

1. Contribute to transforming the health system to improve mental health care for all Canadians.

There is growing awareness of the importance of psychological well-being to the success of society and a growing demand for mental health services and supports. The importance of investing in the mental well-being of children and youth, the health needs coincident with an aging population, the incidence and prevalence of chronic disease and mental disorders, the impact of psychological health and well-being in the workplace, post-traumatic stress and other disorders within military populations, and the significant unmet needs of rural and remote populations are only a few of the health concerns on the minds of Canadians and Canadian decision-makers. Psychological treatments are among the most effective for many mental disorders, particularly those most common like depression and anxiety. Despite the fact that we can offer treatments that work for Canadians who need them, psychological services are not accessible because of the way in which mental health services are funded through Canada's public and private health insurance plans. CPA has a key role to play in enhancing access to psychological services and integrating the services of psychologists into primary care. CPA also has a key and unique role to play in informing the policies and programs that support a healthy, resilient and skilled citizenry at home, in communities, in school, and in the workforce. We will accomplish this by focusing our efforts on the following:

- strengthening strategic partnerships and coalitions with stakeholder organizations and health care providers in calling for access to needed psychological services in Canada;
- developing and implementing a government and stakeholder relations strategy through which CPA can impact public policy;
- addressing the human resource issues necessary to ensure that psychologist practitioners are in sufficient number, and have the necessary competencies, to respond to the mental and behavioural health problems that Canadian face;
- working with funders and decision-makers to help ensure that health system change happens to the benefit of the mental and behavioral health of Canadians;
- solidifying CPA's position as the go-to organization for stakeholders of mental and behavioral health care;
- working with partners and stakeholders across private and public sectors in promoting health, well-being and resilience through program and policy; and



- increasing the understanding of the role and value of the profession and practice of psychology to society.

Our work in this area will not only improve the mental health care available to Canadians, but can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the health care system at large – the right care, delivered right has many clinical, economic and personal benefits and cost offsets.

2. Be the national voice in support of psychological science and its import for public policy.

Psychological research and science are the foundation of the discipline and profession of psychology. Psychological research helps inform what we know and understand about basic human functions like thinking and perception, about how people feel and behave individually and in groups, about how children and adults learn, as well as about how to maintain health and effectively prevent, manage and treat illness. Accordingly, the science of psychology can play a key societal role by informing public policy that relates to the development and well-being of Canada's citizenry. From policy that impacts how children learn and develop, how health problems are treated and services delivered, how people are supported in health and disability, and how organizations can function most effectively (to name only a few), psychology's relevance to the public good is both broad and deep. As the national association of psychology in Canada, CPA has a key role to play in promoting psychological research, educating the public and policy makers on significant research findings, and increasing support for the science of psychology. We will accomplish this by focusing our efforts on the following:

- lobbying for increasing funding and support for psychological research with government and other funders;
- increasing accessibility to and promotion of psychological science and works;
- working in partnership and collaboration with peer societies and federal granting councils to advance the reach of psychological science; and
- engaging and respond to the needs of scientists and students in relation to the research enterprise.

3. Deliver and communicate a unique and responsive value proposition to Canadian psychologists and students.

CPA exists because of the investments of its members and affiliates. Their revenue and operational support are critical to our organizational success and CPA takes seriously its commitment to its members and affiliates. As an organization, we must respond to and reflect the needs and views of the psychological communities we represent. CPA must continue to enhance the value of membership – a value that members and affiliates define as advocacy for the discipline and profession, knowledge exchange through journals and other publications, peer networking, financial discounts on services and supports, and annual scientific conventions.

While membership in CPA continues to sustain and increase over the years, opportunities exist to enhance engagement of specific psychology communities – namely psychology researchers engaged in basic science, students, and researchers and practitioners from the province of Quebec where clearly



half of Canada's practitioners reside. A key priority for CPA over the next five years is to develop innovative means of attracting new members and affiliates while continuing to enhance our value proposition to both existing and potential members and affiliates. This will be accomplished by focusing our efforts on:

- developing the role and value of member and affiliate status in CPA by engaging Canadian psychology;
- promoting the role and value of member and affiliate status in CPA to under-represented groups;
- increasing the engagement of scientists and practitioners from among the full range of the discipline's areas of specialty; and
- increasing and promoting the value of sustained affiliation for student representatives so that they transition to membership status once they graduate.

4. Be a leading and valued provider of continuing professional development that helps enhance the competence and relevance of psychologists.

To competently and effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities as scientists, educators and practitioners, psychologists need access to relevant, quality, and timely training and education. CPA has a role to play in supporting the lifelong development of skills, competencies, and professionalism in the field of psychology. This includes key activities at the graduate level – such as accreditation through which psychologists practicing in Canada can receive a solid education and internship experience – but also through the workshops and materials CPA develops and promotes for the post-graduate scientist and practitioner. To accomplish this, CPA will focus on:

- collaborating with regulatory boards and national and international psychology associations to define and promote principles and standards for education and continuing professional development for the practice of psychology that effectively respond to the needs of the individuals, families, communities and organizations that practitioners serve;
- identifying and responding to evolving education needs at the undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate stages of psychologists' careers;
- identifying and promoting the pre- and post-graduate skills and competencies that will equip psychologists to carry out their roles as evidence-informed scientists, educators and practitioners; and
- working with decision-makers to align regulatory requirements for practice across Canada's jurisdictions with the standards and requirements of accreditation and of the programmes that educate and train psychologists in Canada.

5. Continue to deliver excellence in strong fiscal management, stewardship of resources, and organizational effectiveness.

CPA has demonstrated strong fiscal management over the past decade, resulting in surplus funds over recent years. As a not-for-profit organization, CPA must ensure it maintains sufficient funds to support: on-going operations; contingencies and unanticipated events; and strategic projects and investments. Over the next five years, we will develop a focused financial strategy to ensure sufficient sources of



revenue to support our on-going operating needs and to target the use of surplus funds for strategic initiatives that respond to the needs, and advance the priorities, of CPA's membership and Canadian psychology. Meeting these needs and advancing these priorities will require strong and engaged leadership and internal human resource.