

The View from Here: Rural & Northern Perspectives

Volume 8, Issue 2

Winter, 2013

Message From the Chair



Submitted by Dr. Cindy Hardy, R. Psych. (cindy.hardy@unbc.ca)

Welcome to the Rural and Northern Section Newsletter for Fall 2013. As I write this our country is sinking into the depths of winter; many of us experienced the first really cold days of the season last week. Work has begun on preparations for next year's CPA convention and I have to say the thought of spending a few days in Vancouver in June 2014 is looking pretty good right now.

I want to thank the membership for electing me to serve as Chair of the Rural and Northern Section. Our section is thriving, with approximately 300 members. I look forward to meeting many of you at the next convention. I am preparing a team to review abstracts submitted to the Rural and Northern Section, and I'm hopeful this convention will have the best rural and northern content to date.

One of the themes I promised to focus on as Chair is the challenge of making rural and northern psychology accessible to all students in psychology. The membership of the Rural and Northern Section includes many students. I know students are eager to learn more about psychology in rural and northern Canada, and to obtain training that will support practice in rural and northern communities. Most university training in psychology is offered in large urban centres and the transition to rural and northern life, with psychological credentials in hand, can be tough. Unique ethical issues, lack of colleagues in close proximity, and difficulty accessing relevant psychological literature are all part of that challenge. As Chair of the Section, I am eager to work with you to support students interested in rural and northern psychology. Without giving too much away, I think it is safe to say that this year's convention program will tackle training and other issues affecting our work as psychologists in rural and northern Canada.

The minutes from last year's Rural and Northern Section Annual Business Meeting are included in this newsletter. As always, the annual meeting brought renewal and change for the Rural and Northern Section executive team. Please join me in welcoming new and returning members of the executive: **Karen Dyck** as Past Chair, **Shelley Goodwin** as Secretary/Treasurer, and **Simon Lisaingo** as Student Representative. Subsequently, **Amanda Lints-Martindale** volunteered to serve as Newsletter Editor. Please join me in thanking Judi Malone for her work as Chair, Jeffery Ansloos for his work as Student Representative, and Laura Armstrong for her work as Newsletter Editor.

I wish you a warm and happy winter season and look forward to meeting you in Vancouver. Please contact me if you have ideas and suggestions for the Rural and Northern Section's work. Best regards!

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A Week in the Life of a Rural Psychologist



Submitted by Dr.
Karen Dyck, C.
Psych.

“As you might expect, I often feel as though there is no ‘typical’ week for me.”

I'm currently on faculty in the Rural and Northern Psychology Programme in the Dept of Clinical Health Psychology, Faculty of Medicine, at the University of Manitoba. I've been in my position for approximately 17 years and currently hold the position of Associate Professor and Director of the Rural and Northern Psychology Programme. Within the context of this position I'm involved in a variety of activities including clinical work (assessment and treatment across the full age spectrum), interprofessional education, capacity building, supervision of psychology residents and newly hired faculty, research, program development and evaluation, and administration. As you might expect, I often feel as though there is no “typical” week for me. Nonetheless, I've selected a week that best illustrates the variety I experience in my job.

Monday began with a 50 minute drive into Winnipeg to attend a research meeting at the University. It was a beautiful crisp fall morning and the sky is absolutely amazing. Despite the chill, I couldn't resist opening my sun roof and enjoying some fresh air as I sipped my warm coffee and listened to the morning radio show. The research meeting was related to a CIHR Planning Grant that our team (psychologists and government partners) had received. Although I have the option of attending meetings via videoconferencing, it's still nice to connect with people face-to-face and, given my relatively close proximity to Winnipeg, I am able to do so from time to time. I was particularly enthusiastic about attending this meeting as one of the psychologists on our team had arranged a Skype meeting with Dr.

David Clark from the UK. Many of you may be familiar with Dr. Clark's work on stepped care. This proved to be a highly informative and inspiring meeting. After the meeting I took a short 40 minute drive to my office in Selkirk. I hadn't been in my office since the middle of last week as I was completing some training, so I was greeted with a flurry of emails and voice messages. The content varied considerably; a former resident requesting a reference letter (I always enjoy hearing from past residents), an invitation to be a site visitor for CPA, requests from Community Mental Health Workers' for consultations (i.e., opportunities to discuss a particular client and have some assistance with treatment planning, etc.), an invitation to give an educational presentation to the Community Mental Health Team on psychological assessments with children and youth, an invitation to review a journal article, and emails related to the residency training program. Fortunately I've learned the hard way, to set some time aside after I've been away from the office for a few days to respond to my messages, so that's how I spent the next couple of hours. In the afternoon I had a telephone therapy session with an adult client (presenting issues include Panic Disorder, Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder) and reviewed the files of clients I would be seeing tomorrow. I packed up my assessment tools and toys (I'll be seeing a preschooler) and left for the day. I enjoyed a beautiful 40 minute drive home to Anola.

The next day, I drove 2 ¼ hours to a community office where I had two assessments scheduled. With hot coffee and muffin in hand, I turned up the radio and settled in for a relaxing drive (I always chuckle when I listen to the morning radio show and hear about all the traffic jams in the city, as I just breeze along with highway!). In the interest of being efficient, I had already completed parent interviews by phone. I've often found that clients prefer phone to videoconferenc-



Dr. Dyck 's office

A Week in the Life of a Rural Psychologist, Continued

ing and, quite honestly, the process involved in setting up videoconferencing can, at times, discourage its use. In most cases I find the phone works just as well. I arrived at the itinerant space and was greeted by many familiar faces. I'm particularly fortunate today as the Community Mental Health Worker is also in the office that day. There are some unfamiliar faces here today, but I quickly remedy that and introduced myself. This is a beautiful new community office with great staff, who always make me feel welcome! That day I was there to assess a preschooler and a teenager who were referred to me for diagnostic clarification (querying Autism Spectrum, Anxiety Disorder, Mood Disorder). I completed my work for the day and made arrangements to see both clients again next week. I say my "goodbyes" to the staff and head back home.

On Wednesday I was back in Selkirk. I spent the morning completing some administrative tasks and met with the other regional psychologist from the Rural and Northern Psychology Programme. She and I were in separate regions until recently, when our health regions were amalgamated. As she puts it "we went from cousins to sisters;" and a wonderful sister she is! While the amalgamation has been stressful for many, it has allowed us opportunities to collaborate on various projects, including developing a modified DBT Program in our health region. We spent time that morning reviewing our screening appointments, planning our upcoming appointments, and discussing the DBT manual that we've been working on. We meet with our DBT team again next week. In the afternoon I met in-person with a client (presenting issues include Social Phobia, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Bipolar II Disorder, and Unspecified Personality Disorder) for our weekly therapy session. After this I had a telephone consultation with an Adult Community Mental Health Worker regarding a client she had been seeing for

some time with little improvement. She updated me on another client we had discussed a couple of months ago (I was happy to hear she was doing much better). We ended our call by discussing a mutual client and planning a meeting with the various care providers to ensure an integrated "care plan." The remainder of the day was spent responding to referrals to our DBT group and reviewing assessment referrals.

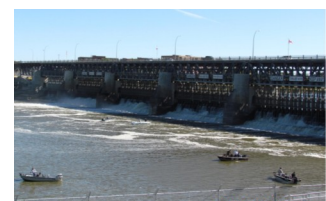
I was back in Selkirk the next day. I always look forward to Thursdays as that's the day my administrative support person is in the office. Although I only have her one day per week, she's made my job so much easier. She's such a warm and friendly person, efficient, and always eager to take on new projects. I honestly don't know how we would be putting together the DBT manual without her! After spending some time with her, I got ready for my weekly telephone supervision meeting with one of the other rural psychologists. We reviewed a complex assessment that she recently completed and discussed our respective experiences with DBT. The remainder of my day was spent completing administrative tasks, reviewing test data from my assessments two days ago, and setting up appointments for two new referrals. One of these referrals is for treatment for a child who has been engaging in self-harm behaviors and the other is for an assessment for an adult woman (diagnostic clarification). The child is not new to me; I had consulted with the Community Mental Health Worker on this situation in the past and psychiatry had also been involved. Unfortunately there had been little change and, given the presentation I agreed to see the child myself. Given the extremely limited psychology resources in the region, I typically carry only a very small therapy caseload. Consultation/capacity building is typically the first step of my involvement.

On Friday I spent the morning and early afternoon reviewing client files and



One of the many beautiful old stone churches in the Interlake area, of Manitoba—St. Andrews Church

***"Consultation/
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Fishing in Lockport, MB



Selkirk Mental Health Centre

**“...the scenery
and wild life
were now her art
galleries.”**

A Week in the Life of a Rural Psychologist, Continued

completing a diagnostic assessment with an adult (query Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Personality Disorder, Mood Disorder). My final appointment of the day was at a nearby community health office. On my 30 minute drive over to the office I had the opportunity to briefly watch as several horseback riders rounded up a large team of horses that had gotten loose from their corral; I have always been amazed how they make this task look so effortless. My afternoon appointment was a joint meeting with an Adult Community Mental Health Worker and a client who had recently been referred to our DBT program. I shared the results from our DBT screening appointment and offered treatment recommendations that appeared better suited to the client's presentation. From there I headed home to my little piece of heaven in Anola; my day ending with a bald eagle sighting. We're so fortunate to live on a 5 acre property that is heavily treed and full of wildlife (all sorts of birds as well as rabbits, deer, bears, and even the occasional fox). Our home faces west, so we also have a perfect view of the sunset. I remember reading an article some time ago that was written by a psychiatrist who left her urban position for a rural one. She remarked on how the scenery and wild life were now her art galleries. I know exactly how she feels.

Editor 's Comments



Submitted by Dr. Amanda Lints-Martindale, C. Psych.

Hello and welcome to the Rural and Northern Newsletter! As your new newsletter editor, I am looking forward to bringing this newsletter publication to Canadian rural and northern psychologists! I'd like to thank the executive of the Rural and Northern section for their warm welcome as I start this new role, and send my appreciation out to former newsletter editor, Laura Armstrong.

It is my hope that *The View from Here* can be an avenue to connect rural and northern psychologists across Canada, and provide articles that increase our readers' enthusiasm for rural and northern practice. If you would like to submit something to the newsletter, please contact me (lintsmar@cc.umanitoba.ca) or our Chair, Dr. Cindy Hardy (cindy.hardy@unbc.ca). Submissions can include: an article for our regular feature "a week (or day) in the life of a rural/northern psychologist", research findings, information on upcoming training and conference opportunities, articles on experiences of a rural practitioner, photos, ethical dilemmas/considerations, challenges of rural/northern practice, and/or any other related topic.

A big thank-you goes out to our contributors! Your thoughtful articles and wonderful photos are what makes our newsletter interesting and appealing to our readers.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Student Column

Reasons to Practice Rural: Exploring Graduate Students' Thoughts on Rural Practice

Submitted by Simon Lisiango, Student Representative

After graduating from university, I decided to start my teaching career in rural Yukon. My wife and I, recently married, wanted an adventure after having grown up in and around city centers. Evidently there were some learning curves and challenges to this change, but for us, as we look back on our experiences, the positives stand out. Now we are both back in school pursuing further education, myself in School Psychology and herself in Law school. The reasons for moving up north and the factors that played into our decision were not simple, but it worked for us. In this article, I hope to explore why other graduate students would consider practicing in rural or northern communities.

I am certain the audience of this newsletter is fully aware of the challenges of recruiting professionals to northern and rural communities. The field of medicine has certainly made it their priority to recruit doctors to the rural communities in Canada. As a student in a graduate school psychology program, I am very aware of the shortages of school psychologists in rural communities and the ever growing demand for school psychologists in general (Saklofske et al., 2007).

As in the medical field, the question remains: how do we entice highly educated individuals to practice in rural and northern communities? Numerous strategies have been suggested and implemented in health care with varying degrees of success: financial incentives, rural medical training campuses, and clerkship programs (Bilbey & Lalani, 2011). Certainly, there is no one approach that can solve this problem. The practice of psychology in northern and rural communities can learn from these strategies,

yet we have our own unique challenges that also need consideration. In this ongoing discussion, I hope to bring students' voices to the table.

Students in graduate psychology programs are on the cusp of starting their new career. They are making very important life decisions that will shape the way they practice and potentially impact the lives of many real families. Since most university programs for school psychology, and indeed professional psychology as a whole (clinical, counseling, school) are in urban centers, why would they choose to uproot and move to a rural or northern community? Is it for the money, because they grew up in a small town, or for the experience and allure of the north? The reasons are diverse and complex.

To gain some insights on the thoughts of today's students, I decided to ask them. I emailed a survey to graduate students at the University of British Columbia in the School Psychology program. Of 18 respondents from both masters and doctoral graduate programs, just over half of them had lived in rural communities at one point in their life. When asked how much consideration they had given to working as a school psychologist in a rural community, just over half of the respondents indicated that they have or will seriously consider working in rural communities. The types of concerns and incentives students raised included: possible financial benefits, career opportunities, personal preference or aversion to small town living, family restrictions, caseload and travel

“...you never know the impact you may have on the people you meet...”



**“By
connecting
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profession. “**

Student Column , continued

concerns, and personal lifestyle preferences.

The picture portrayed by this small sample of convenience (with, admittedly, questionable reliability and validity) is that today's graduate students are prime candidates for working in rural communities. According to a study on personal characteristics and experiences of long-term health professionals in rural communities, rural health professions had early on in their studies chosen to practice rurally, had past positive experiences in rural communities, and had personal preference for adventure (Manahan, Hardy, & MacLeod, 2009). The interest is in place and the personal experiences and values are in place, but evidently one piece in the puzzle is still missing. Somewhere between graduate school and the actual profession, individuals are drawn more strongly to urban centers.

Before I put forward a potential solution to the problem, let me explain my past positive experience and why I am interested in returning to the rural and remote regions of northern Canada. The Yukon was an amazing place; I could walk to work in the summer, and snowshoe to work in the winter. But, at the end of the day, it was the people that made it memorable. One of such people was a school psychologist who took the time to get to know me and support me in my classroom challenges. Ultimately, he sparked my interest in psychology through suggesting I consider a career in school psychology.

I believe we need more people like this. As practicing professionals, you never know the impact you may have on the people you meet. By identifying, encouraging, and mentoring passionate individuals (teachers, students, colleagues, friends, etc.), you may also spark an interest in the profession.

I believe that one of the missing pieces to the puzzle is the mentoring of students to work in rural and remote areas. Graduate students are eager and interested

but lack a real connection to actual lived experiences and understandings of rural community practice. In our school psychology program, internships typically occur in and around our urban center, in large part due to the limited opportunities for supervision by registered psychologists; they do not offer opportunities to experience practice in rural communities. Urban applied psychology programs could do more to offer or require a rural component of internship.

You spend most of the year on your own as a practicing rural psychologist, why not take a few minutes to speak to and support eager students in your field. By connecting with students, you have the potential to shape the future of the profession. I assure you they will forever be grateful.

References

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Welcome to our Student Representative!



Simon Lisaingo (MA student) grew up in Port Moody, B.C. He completed a B.Sc. degree in Genetics and a B.Ed. in Middle Years education at UBC. While teaching in rural Yukon, he discovered an interest in how the field of psychology could be better applied to the classroom. He pursued this academic interest while living and working in Ottawa. Returning to UBC to study School Psychology, he hopes to utilize his experiences in the classroom to better inform his new path. He is interested in studying how students overcome challenges they face at school and at home. As a school psychologist, he hopes to help bridge the gap between the practice of education and the research in psychology. When not at school or at work, he can be found on the soccer field or in the great outdoors.

Rural and Northern Section Business Meeting Minutes from CPA 2013

Present

Chair – Judi Malone

Secretary-Treasurer – Shelley Goodwin

Chair Elect – Cindy Hardy (telephone)

Past Chair -- Karen Dyck

Section Members –Monica Tomlinson, Michelle Haugen, Bob McIlwraith, Zoe Therrien, Simon Lisaingo, Michelle Dermenjian. Non section members: Martin Tomlinson

Quorum not established: Information sharing meeting only

2012 Annual Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the 2012 meeting were reviewed.

Section Chair Annual Report

Judi provided the Chair report. In summary, there are 275 members in our section with approximately half being students (188). It was a busy year with lots of involvement in CPA activities and initiatives. Our speaker for this year is Pierrette Desrosiers and her much anticipated presentation is titled, *“Une Psychoach dans la Champ”*. We were able to provide full translation services for her presentation. Considerable correspondence was generated from our section related to numerous CPA initiatives including Ethics committee Code of Ethics revision, CanLearn, Listserve capabilities, and fact sheets.

Financial Report

Presented by Shelley. The cost of new cheques was discussed and it was agreed to order them.

Business Arising from the Minutes

- Shelley and Karen reported that things have stalled with the student loan repayment initiative. Karen noted we are waiting for the CPA Education survey in order to get numbers on student debt load.
- Karen advised that she and Karen Cohen had written a letter to Minister Aglukark advocating that psychology be included in the loan repayment program project (CanLearn) for those working in rural areas.
- The newsletter was discussed. We all liked the new format and were disappointed to learn that Laura was unable to continue as she had done a wonderful job revamping the format of the newsletter. It was agreed that a new editor

Business Meeting Minutes, Continued

would be polled from the membership by Karen. Judi highlighted the technological issues around the website and the newsletter.

- Update on changes to the by-laws relating to the student representative position and the request for a graduate and undergraduate representative. It is hoped that the executive can look at this for 2014. Bob suggested that if we are changing the by-laws that we also look at reducing the number for quorum.
- Student representative Jeffery Ansloos will be moving on and advised us that he would be stepping down from his position. We have appreciated his wonderful contribution to our section over the past year. Both Simon and Monica expressed an interest in the position and it was agreed that Karen would connect with Cindy to complete a vote this summer.
- Karen reviewed the idea again of provincial representation. It was agreed that a list of all provinces would be put in the next newsletter seeking representatives. Michelle offered to do Ontario but preferred we post it first to see if there were others who would volunteer.

Committee Reports

Judi presented a report on the ongoing work of the Professional Affairs Committee.

New Business

- We are all very proud of Judi's successful election to the CPA Board of Directors. As she cannot continue to sit on the executive of a section while in this Board position Cindy will step forward into the position of chair a year earlier than planned.
- Convention planning was discussed for next year. Judi and Karen discussed the option of collaborating with other sections on upcoming convention programs. Sections mentioned included SWAP, Aboriginal psychology section and community psychology section. Paulette Regan, Victoria, was mentioned as a possible presenter in Vancouver. She authored *Unsettling the settler within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada*.
- Research Project - Karen, Judi and Cindy have developed a survey that is currently being circulated. This survey looks at practice variables. They have partnered with researchers located in Australia as well. They reported that CPA has been very supportive.
- (Judi left the meeting and Karen assumed the Chair)
- Karen and Rob discussed advocacy of the profession at the provincial level and how it connected with the President Frain's presidential address for advocacy in our profession

North Star Student Award

Unfortunately there were no candidates for the award this year.

Section Reception

A successful section reception was hosted as the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30

Respectfully Submitted,
Dr. Shelley Goodwin



Secretary/Treasurer, Dr. Shelley Goodwin

Save the Date!

CPA's 75th annual convention will be held in **Vancouver, BC, June 5-7, 2014**, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

The Rural and Northern section of CPA will hold the annual business meeting during the convention as well as a reception. This is an excellent opportunity to meet your fellow rural and northern colleagues. Watch for further details in the spring edition of the newsletter. We hope to see you there!

Submission Information

Do you have something to submit to the section's newsletter, *The View from Here: Perspectives from Rural & Northern Psychology*? If so, we want to hear from you!

Please contact our newsletter editor, Dr. Amanda Lints-Martindale (lintsmar@cc.umanitoba.ca) or our Section Chair, Dr. Cindy Hardy (cindy.hardy@unbc.ca) with your submission.

The Newsletter is produced by the Rural and Northern Section of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) and is distributed to members of the Section. The purpose of the Rural and Northern Section is to support and enhance the practice of rural and northern psychology. The goals of the section are: 1) Establish a network of professionals interested in the areas of rural and northern psychology (this may include individuals currently practicing in rural/northern areas of those with an interest in this area), 2) Enhance professional connectedness by facilitating linkages between rural and northern practitioners, 3) Distribute information relevant to the practice of rural and northern psychology, 4) Provide a forum to discuss practice issues unique to this specialty, and 5) Introduce students and new or interested psychologists to rural and northern practice.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are strictly those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Canadian Psychological Association, its officers, directors, or employees.

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