

# CPA'S HUMAN RIGHTS & SOCIAL JUSTICE IN PSYCHOLOGY COMMITTEE

## MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Dear Committee and Working Group Members,

I hope this message finds you and your families well as we become once again increasingly concerned about the impacts of the pandemic. This month our newsletter highlights the work that the CPA has been doing to advocate for people with disabilities and those who are homeless and or living in poverty. These populations have been, disproportionately, negatively affected by the pandemic. Difficulties with the vaccine roll-out to the homeless population and the complications of getting booster shots to those who are immunocompromised are just two examples of the many challenges faced by members of these groups and communities. As well, it is important to keep in mind that housing insecurity counts for 40% of poor health outcomes.

As winter is upon us, it is ever so important that we consider the human rights that members of these communities are entitled as outlined in the "United Nations Declaration of Human Rights". The right to dignity (article 1) security of person (article 3), and the right to social security including economic, social and cultural rights (article 22). Importantly, article 25 states that, "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of {them}self and of {their}family including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services". This article specifies that we all have the right to these services under all conditions including unemployment, sickness, and disability.

During these challenging times, as we move this work forward let us continue to be aware of the most vulnerable among us and recognize that each effort we make matters. We are grateful to be able to co-Chair a committee of dedicated professional and students who generously volunteer their time and who are working diligently to address the societal inequities that lead to these horrible human rights violations. We thank you for your commitment to this work.

We wish you well during this season and hope you have a wonderful, happy, and healthy New Year.

Sincerely,

Ada L. Sinacore, Ph.D. and Kerri Ritchie, Ph.D., C.Psych.

## CPA IN ACTION

Below are a few highlights of the CPA's activity to and application of psychological principles, knowledge, science, and practices to promote human rights and social justice, particularly as pertains to the issues of homelessness, poverty and food insecurity.

### Disability Advisory Committee Addresses Poverty Among Persons with Disability

The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC), appointed by the Minister of National Revenue, is charged with advising the Minister and the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) on ways to improve administration and interpretation of tax measures for Canadians with disabilities <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/corporate/about-canada-revenue-agency-cra/disability-advisory-committee.html>. The CPA's CEO, Dr. Karen Cohen, co-Chairs the DAC. Among the many procedural and legislative issues being addressed by the DAC, are those related to poverty and access to supports for persons living with disability.

Some highlights discussed in the DAC's first and second annual reports include <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/cra-arc/corp-info/aboutcra/dac/dac-report-2020-en.pdf>:

- Access to the federal, one-time, tax-free non-reportable payment of \$600 to assist persons living with disability to address pandemic-related costs.
- Challenges faced by persons with disability, who have disproportionately higher rates of poverty, in paying up front for disability related costs.
- A need to review and revise the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) which has assumed a larger and central role in access to disability-related programs and supports.
- The need for the Ministers of National Revenue; Finance; Families, Children and Social Development; and Sport and Persons with Disabilities to work collaboratively to
  - reduce disproportionate poverty among Canadians living with disability,
  - make the DTC a refundable, rather than a non-refundable credit
  - ensure that poverty alleviation of persons with disabilities is a focus for the Ministers and
  - ensure no provincial/territorial claw back of new or improved federal disability-related measures
- Raise awareness of the disability supports deduction for persons with disability who incur disability-related costs to earn income or attend school.
- Ensure that people can keep all contributions made to a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) for periods during which they qualified for the DTC.
- A series of recommendations to redress the barriers faced by Indigenous persons in accessing the DTC. The disability rate among Indigenous people is almost twice that of non-Indigenous people.

In 2022, the DAC looks forward to discussing the government's commitment to create a Disability Benefit Act, intended to benefit low-income Canadians living with disability <https://liberal.ca/our-platform/introduce-a-disability-benefit/>

## HRSJ WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Working Groups					
Homelessness, Poverty and Food Insecurity	Ableism and Accessibility	Climate Change	Decolonizing and Systemic Racism	Immigrant, Refugee, Ethno-cultural, and Racialized Peoples	Societal and Sexual Violence

The Working Group on Homelessness, Poverty and Food Insecurity meets every other month. Amongst its current priorities is the development of one or more fact sheets specific to each of the areas covered by the working group that will highlight the role of psychology/psychologists in addressing the issues, as well as the interplay with each other and the other working group focus areas.

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*“numerous biopsychosocial factors impact one’s entrance and exit from homelessness”*

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## HRSJ IN MOTION: CPA RELEVANT RESOURCES

Below a snapshot of some CPA resources of relevance to the Homelessness, Poverty and Food Insecurity Working Group.

### ***Psynopsis***



**Issue on Mental Health, Homelessness and Housing**

**Winter 2016, Vol. 38, No. 1**

<https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Psynopsis/winter2016/html5/index.html?page=1&noflash>

### ***CPA PodCasts***

Youth Homelessness with Charlotte Smith, Avery, and Dr. Nick Kerman

[https://soundcloud.com/user-389503679/youth-homelessness-with-charlotte-smith-avery-and-dr-nick-kerman/snPzj6IFwCEl?si=6305f97082bf46e897559ffe56b5e6ac&utm\\_source=clipboard&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=social\\_sharing](https://soundcloud.com/user-389503679/youth-homelessness-with-charlotte-smith-avery-and-dr-nick-kerman/snPzj6IFwCEl?si=6305f97082bf46e897559ffe56b5e6ac&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing)

Talking Food Insecurity with Allyson Lamont, the CPA's 6000th Twitter Follower

[https://soundcloud.com/user-389503679/talking-food-insecurity-with-allyson-lamont-the-cpas-6000th-twitter-follower?si=d4e39da754c14dabaab7e509dd751b79&utm\\_source=clipboard&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=social\\_sharing](https://soundcloud.com/user-389503679/talking-food-insecurity-with-allyson-lamont-the-cpas-6000th-twitter-follower?si=d4e39da754c14dabaab7e509dd751b79&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing)

***CPA Psychology Works Fact Sheets:*** <https://cpa.ca/psychologyfactsheets/>

Fact Sheets on various Addictions: Alcoholism, Gambling, Quitting Smoking, Substance Abuse, Cannabis Use

Fact Sheets on various Mood Disorders: Bipolar Disorder, Depression

Fact Sheet on Psychosis: Schizophrenia

**CPA Webinars and Educational Courses:**

<https://cpa.ca/professionaldevelopment/webcourses/catalogue> AND  
<https://beacon360.content.online/xbcs/S2283/catalog/main.xhtml>

Evidence-Based Treatment of PTSD within Military Populations

Evidence Based Correctional Practice (EBCP) for Managing and Treating Offenders with Mental Illness

Transition Assessments for Criminal and Violence Risk: Theory, Ethics, and Application

Hope as a Skill: A New Approach to Understanding and Managing Suicide Risk

**CONTACT US**

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