

Happy Birthday to our Code of Ethics

John Service Ph.D.

It is with great personal pleasure that I join in the celebration of the 25 birthday of the *Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists*. It is one of the many activities and initiatives of which CPA and Canadian psychology can be justly proud. To celebrate the event, *Canadian Psychology* has published a Special Edition on the *Code*. (See August 2011 issue.)

I fondly remember my first introduction to the grand project to create a code for Canada. I was attending a meeting of the Council of Provincial Associations of Psychologists, now known as the Council of Professional Associations of Psychologists (CPAP) in the Alpengruss Hotel in Wakefield, Quebec. I was the newly minted delegate representing the Association of Psychologists of Nova Scotia when we were visited by Dr Carole Sinclair. She wanted a few minutes to describe how she and her CPA Applied Division Committee, with the involvement of Dr. Jean Pettifor, proposed to develop the code and to enlist our assistance.

It was a fascinating presentation. They proposed a rather radical approach. Instead of constructing the *Canadian Code* from the best of the codes of other associations around the world using a committee of experts, they proposed an empirical approach using psychologists from across Canada as respondents. This allowed them to develop the Code using the 'real and on-the-ground' experiences of psychologists.

I went home to Nova Scotia with a mixed reaction. I was excited by the 'ground up' and inclusive approach, but anxious. Could they really pull this off? In a few months I received materials asking me to resolve hypothetical ethical problems/dilemmas that often confront psychologists, and to explain my reasoning. That was not difficult because ethical issues such as dual relationships abound in a rural practice. The work continued for some time and the *Code* began to take shape.

The *Code* was designed to be aspirational instead of prescriptive, better reflecting the real life dilemmas facing us all, which are rarely black and white. Being aspirational, it is also instructive/educational, giving psychologists tools to help make very difficult decisions. The use of the decision-making model, which is essentially the scientific problem-solving method, was brilliant. The hierarchical architecture of the code is based on values, reflecting the reality that, when in conflict, a psychologist's relationship with and respect for the dignity of those they serve in their practice, research, and teaching generally should be given more weight in ethical decision making than societal rules, law, and authority – although all of these need to be considered.

The *Code* has continued to develop through the interactive and inclusive process of feedback and consultation. The result

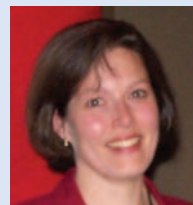


Drs. Jean Pettifor and Carole Sinclair

is a code of ethics that is very unique and has received acclaim in Canada and around the world. Congratulations to CPA for strongly supporting the *Code*. Congratulations to all the CPA members who have worked on the *Code* over the years. And finally, congratulations and thanks to Carole and Jean for taking the risk of developing the *Code* in a new and fresh way with such integrity and for shepherding it so effectively over the past quarter century. It was a labour of love.

So read the Special Edition of *Canadian Psychology*. It is well worth it.

Congratulations to...



Dr. Jennifer Veitch, an environmental psychologist and researcher at the National Research Council of Canada, was awarded the Waldram Gold Pin Award by the International Commission on Illumination (CIE) at its 27th Session this July in Sun

City, South Africa. CIE is an international organization devoted to information exchange, scientific consensus, and standards documents in all matters related to the science and art of light and lighting. It bestows the Waldram award once every four years for exceptional contributions to applied illuminating engineering research and practice. Dr. Veitch was recognized for her scientific contributions to understanding lighting quality, health, and well-being and the application of this information in lighting and architectural design. At the same meeting, she also began a four-year term as the Director of CIE Division 3 (Interior Environment and Lighting Design).