



EDUCATIONAL AND SCHOOL  
PSYCHOLOGY  
SECTION  
PSYCHOLOGIE ÉDUCATIONNELLE  
ET SCOLAIRE

# MORNING ANNOUCEMENTS

Spring 2026  
Edition

Education and School Psychology  
Section Newsletter

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## EDITORIAL TEAM

**Co-Editors:**  
Laurie Ford &  
Sara King

**Designers & Editorial  
Team:**  
Ivy Debinski &  
Paige Walker

**Cross Country Check  
Up Lead:**  
Simon Lisaingo

## Land Acknowledgment

In the spirit of Reconciliation, we would like to acknowledge the Original Nations of Canada: the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people whose knowledge has existed on this land for thousands of years. We are grateful for the opportunity to live, learn, work, and play on these lands.

# CHAIR ELECT'S MESSAGE



Yuanyuan Jiang, Ph.D., C.Psych.

## Greetings

### **We are stronger together.**

Timely access to specialized and comprehensive mental health services at schools for children and families means not needing to wait during a critical period of a child's development, not needing to pay out-of-pocket costs, and not needing to navigate different systems.

Individuals with neurodevelopmental and mental health needs can benefit substantially from early home- and school-based responses that prioritize the strengths, individuality, and well-being of individuals. Being able to easily access specialized school-based mental health services can transform the developmental path and well-being of children, building a compassionate understanding of oneself and of others that is life-affirming.

### **What do we need?**

1. **Rapid response:** prompt mental health services for children at their most formative stages, from school-based professionals with specialized training
2. **Accessibility:** services available at their school, where children and their families may feel more familiar
3. **Proximity:** services provided by professionals who interact with children in their everyday context, attending first-hand to their experiences with others in the classroom and understanding the uniqueness of their particular school

Addressing the need for universal access to specialized school-based mental health services is a complex issue that requires all perspectives. **School psychologists are a crucial voice in the conversation.** We want to work collaboratively, inter-disciplinarily, and with respect for various fields, systems, and governments.

We all want what's best for the generations ahead, so let's keep working on moving closer to the goal of **specialized services offered with no wait and no cost to our children.** They grow up fast.

I'm honoured to have the responsibility of serving as the incoming Chair of the Educational and School Psychology section of the Canadian Psychological Association. Thank you for helping us continue to build our collective voice.

Yuanyuan Jiang, Ph.D., C.Psych.

# CHAIR ELECT'S MESSAGE



Yuanyuan Jiang, Ph.D., C.Psych.

## Bonjour

### **Nous sommes plus forts ensemble.**

L'accès rapide à des services de santé mentale spécialisés et complets dans les écoles pour les enfants et leurs familles signifie des services sans attente pendant que l'enfant est dans une période critique de son développement, sans frais à payer et sans avoir besoin de naviguer dans différents systèmes.

Les personnes avec des besoins neurodéveloppementaux et de santé mentale peuvent bénéficier substantiellement de services rapides à la maison et à l'école qui priorisent les forces, l'individualité et le bien-être des individus. La capacité d'avoir un accès facile aux services de santé mentale dans les écoles peut transformer le sentier développemental et le bien-être des enfants, ce qui permet de construire avec compassion une connaissance de soi et des autres, une perspective qui célèbre la vie.

### **De quoi avons-nous besoin ?**

- Des services rapides : des services de santé mentale disponibles sans délai pour les enfants dans les étapes les plus formatives de leur développement, par des professionnels en milieu scolaire ayant une formation spécialisée
- L'accessibilité : des services disponibles à l'école, un lieu où les enfants et leurs familles peuvent se sentir plus à l'aise
- La proximité : des services fournis par des professionnels qui interagissent avec les enfants dans leur contexte de tous les jours, portant une attention directe à leurs expériences avec les autres dans la salle de classe tout en comprenant le caractère unique de leur école particulière

Fournir un accès universel aux services de santé mentale spécialisés à l'école est un sujet complexe qui nécessite toutes les perspectives. **Les psychologues scolaires sont une voix cruciale dans la conversation.** Nous voulons travailler ensemble, de façon collaborative avec les différents disciplines et avec respect pour les divers domaines, systèmes et gouvernements.

Nous voulons tous le meilleur pour les générations à venir, donc continuons à travailler pour atteindre le but d'offrir des **services spécialisés sans attente et sans coût pour nos enfants.** Les enfants grandissent vite.

Je suis honorée d'avoir la responsabilité de servir dans la rôle de présidente entrante de la Section de la psychologie éducationnelle et scolaire de la Société canadienne de psychologie. Merci de nous aider à continuer de construire notre voix collective.

Yuanyuan Jiang, Ph.D., C.Psych.

# CO-EDITORS MESSAGE



Laurie's dogs Gracie Belle & Cooper



Sara's cats Henry & Pippa

Dear Educational and School Psychology Section Members,

Now that spring is in full swing and we think of new beginnings, this issue of our newsletter is dedicated to themes that matter most - well-being, growth, and connection. Our **special section on wellness** offers practical insights and strategies to support mental health and resilience, both personally and professionally. In a time when balance feels elusive, these contributions remind us that caring for ourselves is the foundation for caring for others.

We're also excited to feature an excellent **book review** of a new text on assessment of visually impaired children, which will be of interest to psychologists working in schools who are constantly looking to broaden their skill sets. In keeping with this commitment to equity and excellence in education for all students, be sure to read the piece on using the Instructional Hierarchy in the context of **gifted education**, which explores innovative approaches to meeting the unique needs of exceptional learners.

In our **Cross-Country Check-In**, we are pleased to feature our first ever update from PEI, and update from Ontario, and details about the new school and clinical psychology internship beginning in New Brunswick in the fall of 2026. Our **committee updates** keep you informed about ongoing initiatives and opportunities to get involved, ensuring that our collective efforts continue to make a meaningful impact.

Finally, we have included a **day-by-day schedule** of Educational and School Psychology Section events at the upcoming CPA convention in Montreal to make it easy to plan your time. We hope to see lots of you there in June!

Thank you for being part of this vibrant community and for your contributions to Morning Announcements. Your engagement and dedication fuel our shared vision.

Laurie and Sara

# MEET & GREET YOUR SECTION EC



## **Chair Effective June 2026**

Yuanyuan Jiang, Ph.D., C.Psych.  
l'Université Saint-Paul / Saint Paul  
University



## **Secretary-Treasurer**

Kerry Spice M.Ed., R.Psych  
Heartland Psychological Services



## **Past Chair:**

Maria Kokai, Ph.D., C.Psych.  
Private Practice



## **Chair Elect June 2026**

Steven R. Shaw, Ph.D.  
McGill University



## **Member-at-Large:**

Simon Lisaingo, Ph.D., R.Psych. **Conference Chair & Member at Large 2026**  
University of British Columbia



Tasmia Hai, Ph.D.  
University of Manitoba

# YOUR SECTION EC

Continued...



**Member at Large:**

Luke Hupton, M.A.

Provincial Child & Youth MH  
ProgramBC Ministry of Children &  
Family Development



**Newsletter Co-Editor:**

Laurie Ford, Ph.D.

University of British Columbia



**Student Representative:**

Laine Jackart, Ph.D. Candidate  
University of British Columbia



**Member At Large & Newsletter Co-Editor:**

Sara King Ph.D, R.Psych.

Mount Saint Vincent University

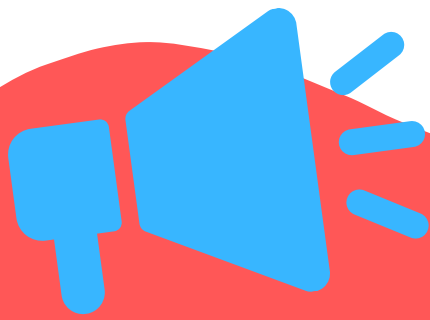


**Student Representative:**

Lena Seltzer, PsyD Student  
Adler University

**Student Member June 2026:**

Rachel Cluett  
McGill University



# ADVOCACY COMMITTEE UPDATES

Maria Kokai, Ph.D., C.Psych.

As reported previously, we have been engaged in the process of collecting and analysing data about access to and availability of psychological services in publicly funded school boards across Canada. We initiated a survey following a pilot in BC in 2022-23, and concluded it at the end of June 2025. We wish to thank everyone who helped to facilitate this very challenging data gathering process! Currently we are working on analysing and disseminating the data. As reported earlier, the survey was focused on two areas:

A. available vs. unfilled vs. desirable school psychologist FTEs, compared to the size of student population per school district, so we can determine the psychologist to student ratio in each province/territory;

B. the scope of practice: the different roles and responsibilities of school psychologists.

One way the data will be used is in the work of the **ESP working group focusing on psychology services in the public sector**. This working group has been established to address the erosion of psychological services in publicly funded school systems across Canada, making access to psychological and mental health services for school age youth difficult. The co-chairs of this working group are Gillian Stanley and Maria Kokai, and the members are from various provinces. We are grateful to Glenn Brimacombe, CPA Director of Policy & Public Affairs, and Stewart Madon, CPA Director, Professional Affairs & Registrar, Accreditation, for their expert support.

The current work has been focused on creating a template for a brief advocacy document on school psychology with key messages and talking points. This will be adapted by provinces/territories to reflect their specific and unique circumstances and needs, including data to be used (e.g., the number of school psychologists by province, number of SP positions and job vacancies; salary ranges for SP employees vs other types of public sector, vs income in private practice; examples/case studies of successful advocacy)

Our group will be reaching out to contacts in each province and territory to start this process of advocacy soon. **We are counting on the support of provincial/territorial psychological associations and school psychology associations for advocacy.** We will also need to find interprofessional allies and consumer associations (e.g., related to ASD, ADHD, LD, Dyslexia, etc.) in each province/territory.

Stay tuned!

# CJSP UPDATES

Dr. Virginia Tze will finish her term as the Editor-in-Chief (EIC) in December 2026, and the Canadian Journal of School Psychology is now looking for a new EIC to start the term in 2027. This is an excellent opportunity to contribute to the field. Dr. Tze is happy to meet and chat with those who are interested in this and discuss this further. She can be reached at [Virginia.Tze@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Virginia.Tze@umanitoba.ca).

# STUDENT RESEARCH INFOGRAPHICS

We are looking to add student research highlights each edition. Create an infographic of your thesis, dissertation, or other research you are doing as a student and we will share them in our newsletter.

Please submit your research infographic to  
[laurie.ford@ubc.ca](mailto:laurie.ford@ubc.ca)



# Why Being Understood Matters: How Perceptions Impact the Well-Being of Individuals with FASD

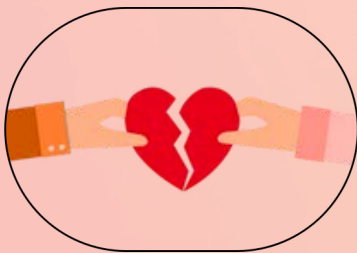


## Understanding Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Individuals with FASD often face misunderstanding and stigma. These experiences affect emotional well-being, belonging, and mental health. My Honours research explores what being understood - or misunderstood - feels like.

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### 1. Misunderstanding Causes Emotional Harm



Feeling judged, blamed, or dismissed hurts mental well-being

### 2. Stigma Leads to Fear and Hiding



Hiding FASD due to fear of discrimination

### 3. Understanding Helps People Feel Supported and Safe

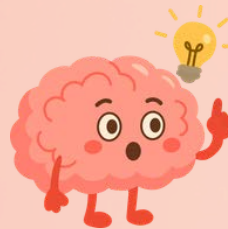


Empathy and listening restores hope, belonging, and wellness



## Why It Matters

- Social perceptions shape wellness
- Stigma can affect daily life
- Feeling understood supports mental health
- Supportive perceptions promote safety and wellness



## What Helps

- Strengths-based understanding
- Curiosity over judgment
- Improving FASD awareness
- Community education
- Listening to lived experiences

By understanding and supporting individuals with FASD and their caregivers, we can reduce stigma, strengthen mental health, and promote well-being for the community.



ACCERT



women & children's  
health research institute

Based on interviews with individuals with FASD and caregivers as part of a qualitative study.

A special thank you to the participants whose voices make this work possible and to the committed partners on the IMPACT (Integrated Mental Health Partnerships for Advancing Care and Treatment) team.

Kanzah Rabbani (BSc Honours Psychology)  
University of Alberta, Department of Psychology  
More info at: <https://kanzahrabbani.owlstown.net/>

## Study Summary



# NEURODIVERSITY-AFFIRMING PRACTICE



## Through the Lens of Live Autistic Experience

This research was conducted at the University of British Columbia with approval from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board #H21-02472. Laurie Ford, Principal Investigator, Juliane Dmyterko, Co-Investigator (study lead).

### What were we trying to learn?



- **Purpose:** Explored how autistic adults perceive neurodiversity-affirming practices.
- **Focus:** Identified how professionals can collaborate in ways that respect autistic identities, needs, and strengths.
- **Method:** Surveys and interviews with 30 autistic adults about their diagnostic and support experiences.
- **Participants' Experiences:** Reflected interactions with doctors, therapists, educators, and support workers.
- **Core Principle:** The study is grounded entirely in autistic adults' voices and perspectives.

### Neurodiversity-Affirming Practice

consists of six interconnected parts:

1

#### Neurodiversity-Affirming Lens

The practitioner's overall perspective, shaped by the neurodiversity paradigm, that influences all their actions and interactions.



2

#### Approach/Way of Being

Qualities like:

- warmth
- kindness
- humility
- willingness to learn and admit mistakes,
- trauma-informed
- cultural awareness



3

#### Environment

Involves creating spaces and processes that are:

- accessible
- sensory-aware
- supportive for all
- accommodations



4

#### Actions

Include:

- providing individualized, strength-based care
- listening to lived experience
- using respectful language
- offering relevant
- practical recommendations
- following up after assessments or support

5

#### Experiences of the Neurodivergent Person

feeling validated  
safe  
understood  
increased identity  
more connected to community



6

#### Impact on Society

Positive experiences lead to:

- advocacy
- giving back
- challenging stigma



### What did we learn in this research?

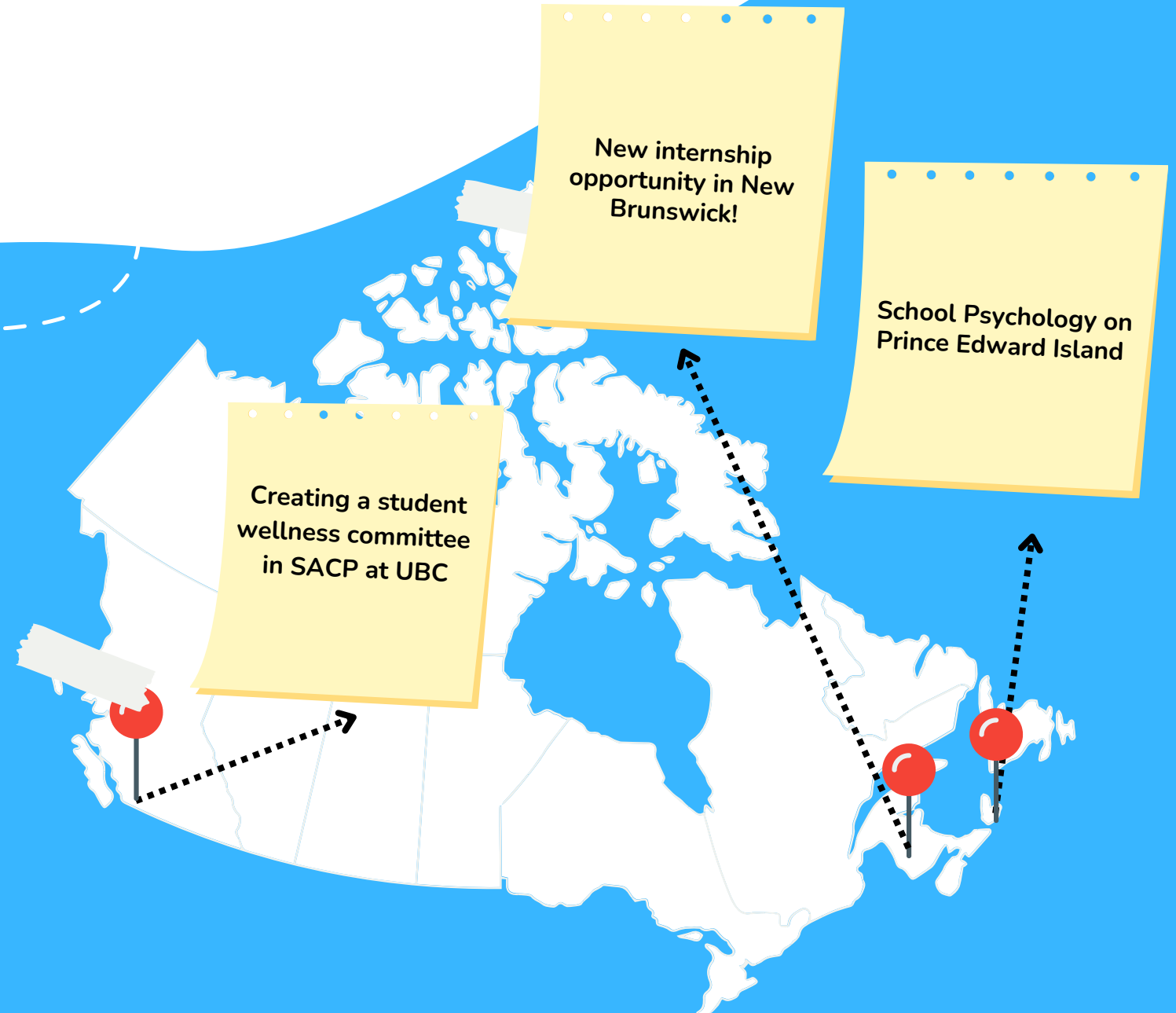
The most important factors in whether the service the participants received felt affirming were:

- How professionals saw and treated the person
- When a neurodiversity-affirming lens was used
- The professional's strengths-based perspective
- When the social model of disability was used
- Not focusing on "fixing" people to be more "typical" but celebrating people for who they are



# CROSS COUNTRY CHECK IN

SECTION EDITOR:  
SIMON LISAINGO, PH.D.R.PSYCH



## Introduction to Cross Country Check In

We introduced the "Cross Country Check In" in our Fall/Winter 2023 newsletter edition. One purpose of this column is to help us better understand what is happening in educational and school psychology practice across the country. Our hope is that we can learn from and support each other with not only our challenges but also share positive developments and successes. We encourage multiple contributions in each edition. If you're interested in learning more, know someone with valuable insights, or wish to contribute, please reach out to our Cross Country Check In section editor, Simon Lisaingo at [simon.lisaingo@ubc.ca](mailto:simon.lisaingo@ubc.ca).

# FOSTERING WELLBEING AND CONNECTION: CREATING A GRADUATE WELLNESS PROGRAM

TEIJA YLI-RENKO, ANISA NASSERI, NIMRIT JHINJAR, & IVY DEBINSKI

The School and Applied Child Psychology (SACP) Wellness Committee is a program-sanctioned, student and faculty-led committee at the University of British Columbia that hopes to make lasting impacts and support incoming students/faculty in their academic and wellness journeys. The SACP Wellness committee was born out of a response and need identified through the results of a social justice survey hosted in our program, which highlighted inequities in students' wellbeing and limitations on student-faculty relationships. Our work and advocacy as students on this committee is guided by a pledge towards meaningful work and change in our holistic definition of wellbeing and the determinants of mental health for graduate students.

## **Building our Committee**

First, we created a mission statement to guide our journey that matches the needs identified by our program. Our mission is to promote the wellbeing of students, faculty, and staff through education and initiatives that: 1) increase awareness of the factors and resources contributing to wellbeing, 2) advocate for and build capacity for wellbeing, 3) inspire and empower individuals to take responsibility for their own and others' wellbeing, and 4) promote and support wellbeing as a sustainable value in our community.

To address the needs of our community, we conducted a brainstorming activity with SACP faculty and students during our 2025 Program Town Hall Meeting, highlighting the SACP program's needs in relation to the UBC Wellbeing Strategic Framework. Results of this focus group were summarized in a thematic analysis, which identified the following areas: physical activity, mentorship and social connection, food and nutrition, and financial wellness. These results were consistent with those of a previous survey distributed to the program in 2024. These responses (n=19) underscored the multifaceted nature of wellness and the importance of taking a holistic approach to promoting wellbeing.

## **Continuing to Grow**

For the 2025-2026 year, our committee decided to have a primary focus on increasing social connection within the SACP program, as conceptualized by the UBC Wellbeing Strategic Framework. Specifically, we aim to promote a) a feeling of community among students and faculty within our program and b) to foster an inclusive environment based upon mutual respect. In addition to improving social connection, our events simultaneously target other aspects of wellbeing, including physical activity, food and nutrition, and mental health and resilience.

Additionally, we include nature-based activities that will strengthen participants' connection between individual and environmental health. We intend for our group activities to target multiple aspects of well-being alongside our primary focus on social connection.

Although wellbeing and wellness are ongoing areas of growth, individually and as a community, it has been rewarding to hear from students participating in art socials, community walks, and board game afternoons that they feel closer to those outside of their cohorts. We continue to invite faculty and students to join socials and share meals, facilitating conversations and student-professor relationships. We acknowledge the systemic imbalances inherent in building a safe and supportive environment where all program needs are heard, acknowledged, and respected.

Despite limited funding and being a small program, we are mighty! Moreover, will continue to find new ways to navigate and support the wellbeing of our community and its resiliency.

*\*A special thanks and acknowledgement to the founding members and alumni of this committee- Dr. Dorna Rahimi, Erika Thauberger, and Dr. G. Thomas Schanding who continue to support this community!*

# NAVIGATING CHANGE: UPDATES IN ONTARIO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

DR. KRISTIN SCHAUB, C. PSYCH  
PROGRAM MANAGER PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES AND BEHAVIOURAL ANALYSTS  
OTTAWA CARLETON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

The field of school psychology in Ontario is currently experiencing a dynamic period marked by both significant opportunities for expanded roles and considerable concerns regarding professional standards. The most contentious and far-reaching update surrounds the College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario (CPBAO) proposed revisions to the registration requirements for psychologists and psychological associates.

While the changes are intended to be a response to directives to remove barriers to entry and facilitate inter-jurisdictional mobility (particularly with the "As of Right" legislation), they have sparked considerable debate within the professional community. The College has been consulting on proposals that could potentially lower practical training and educational standards, including moving away from a required doctoral degree for all psychologists, reducing years of supervised practice, and streamlining licensing examinations.

## Regulatory Concerns and Professional Standards

Critics, including the Ontario Psychological Association (OPA) and the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA), argue that these changes risk compromising public safety and the quality of care by significantly lowering the training and supervision benchmarks required to practice. For school psychology, this raises concerns over whether competency will be able to meet the needs of the complex work in schools. School psychologists deal with complex, high-stakes issues, including the differential diagnosis of developmental and learning disorders, and the assessment of serious mental health and behavioural conditions. A significant reduction in supervised clinical hours raises concerns about whether new registrants will possess the necessary depth of experience for this critical work. In addition, eroding the traditionally high standards could damage public confidence and the reputation of psychology as a profession dedicated to rigorous, evidence-based practice.

Despite the regulatory concerns, the centrality of school psychologists in the broader educational and mental health systems is becoming increasingly important, particularly in light of heightened student mental health needs post-pandemic. The Ministry of Education has implemented new policies focusing on strengthening both academic foundations and mental health services, directly impacting the day-to-day role of school psychologists.

## Enhanced Role: Right to Read and PPM 169

A major provincial development has been the fallout from, and implementation of recommendations from, the Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC) Right to Read Inquiry. This inquiry investigated reading barriers and the effectiveness of Ontario's public education system in teaching children to read. Its findings have profoundly reinforced the need for early and effective reading instruction.

- **Reinforced Role in Assessment:** The findings reinforce the school psychologist's vital role in conducting high-quality psychoeducational assessments that use the "science of reading" principles to accurately identify and diagnose learning disabilities, specifically dyslexia. Assessments must inform specific, evidence-based interventions.
- **Focus on Early Intervention and Prevention:** The inquiry's focus on the system of instruction emphasizes the need for school psychologists to consult with educators on implementing evidence-based, structured literacy approaches at the universal (Tier 1) and targeted (Tier 2) levels. The goal is to prevent reading difficulties from becoming severe, thereby reducing the reliance on intensive, Tier 3 assessments.
- **Advocacy for the Continuum of Support:** School psychologists are critical in advocating for a resource-rich continuum of support necessary to close achievement gaps and ensure all students have equitable access to effective instruction.

# NAVIGATING CHANGE: UPDATES IN ONTARIO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

## CONTINUED

Moreover, the release of PPM 169 (Policy/Program Memorandum) mandates a comprehensive framework for student mental health and addictions. This document formalizes a crucial role for mental health within the educational setting:

- **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS):** Boards are directed to use an MTSS approach to deliver school-based mental health services. This structure requires school psychologists to contribute not just to intensive, individualized supports (Tier 3), but also to universal prevention (Tier 1) and targeted early intervention (Tier 2) through consultation and program development. School psychologists are uniquely positioned to provide the expertise necessary to implement evidence-based programs across all three tiers, consult on system-wide change, and ensure the fidelity of interventions.
- **Joint Local Planning:** The policy emphasizes the need for coordinated planning between school boards and community-based child and youth mental health providers (**Right Time, Right Care** initiative). School psychologists are central to implementing these coordinated systems, serving as the critical link between the school and community mental health resources to establish clear pathways for students needing external services.

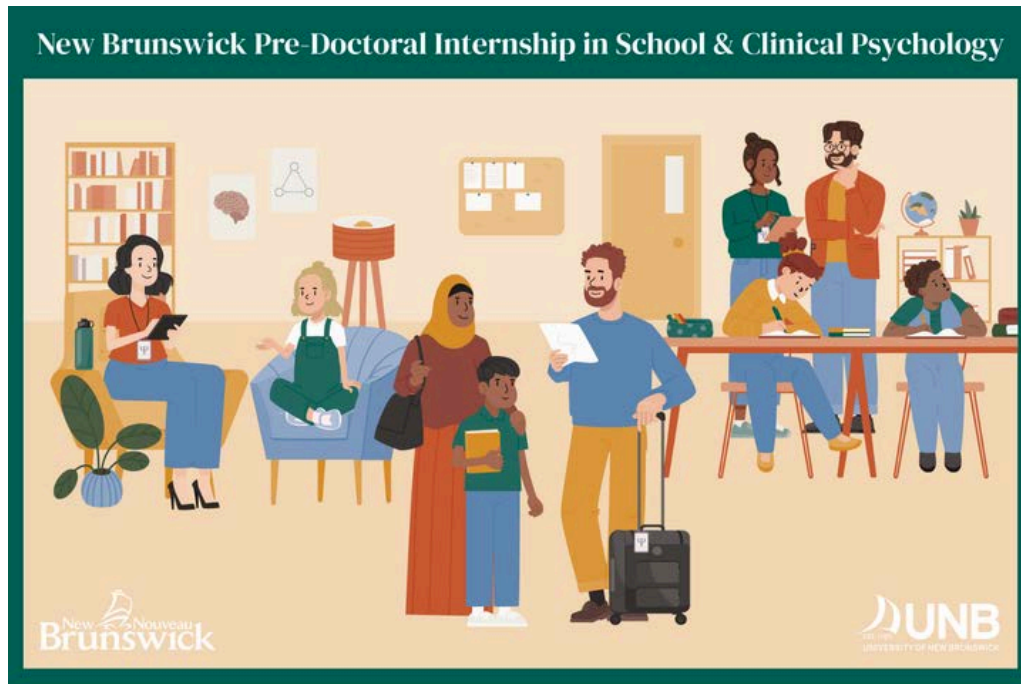
### Barriers and the Future of the Profession in Ontario

The issue of the psychologist-to-student ratio remains a major barrier to providing timely, accessible, and comprehensive services across the province. Despite recommended ratios of 1:700 to 1:1000, the average ratio in Ontario schools remains significantly higher, leading to services that are often restricted to assessment for special education placement rather than a full continuum of prevention and intervention. Most school psychologists desire to engage in a broader professional role beyond just psychoeducational testing, including more direct student intervention, consultation with teachers, and system-level capacity building. It is likely that recruitment and retention could be improved by boards adopting an expansive, evidence-based view of the school psychologist's contribution, moving away from an older, assessment-centric model. Continued advocacy for this shift in practice in schools is essential to effectively support students.

The updates collectively define a profession in flux. The regulatory changes create uncertainty regarding the standards of entry, however the Ministry of Education's push for structured literacy (in response to Right to Read) and multi-tiered mental health support (PPM 169) actively strengthens opportunities for school psychology to highlight their unique skills as experts in both academic and social-emotional development.

Ultimately, the coming years will be crucial for the profession to advocate for a path that effectively addresses the access crisis while firmly maintaining the high standards of training and competency required to ensure effective, ethical, and safe service delivery for Ontario's students.

# NEW INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY IN NEW BRUNSWICK!



N.B.'s Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) and the University of New Brunswick (UNB) have partnered to offer a new pre-doctoral internship opportunity for students interested in school and clinical psychology.

Starting in September 2026, two interns will complete concurrent rotations in both school and clinical settings, where they will have the opportunity to:

- Gain well-rounded experience in the practice of school and clinical psychology across urban and rural settings.
- Support children, youth, and families with diverse backgrounds, circumstances, personal and cultural identities, and presenting concerns.
- Practice within a comprehensive school psychology service delivery model that includes consultation, assessment, and intervention.
- Consult and collaborate with school staff, professionals, and other service providers to deliver effective and holistic client care.
- Develop supervision skills by providing mentorship and clinical supervision to junior doctoral students.
- Participate in special projects that align with interests, skills, and internship goals.
- Build cultural competence and humility; learn about Wabanaki cultures and ways of knowing.
- Access UNB's library services, Department of Psychology events and workshops, and the UNB Student Health Centre.

Applications for the 2026-2027 internship year are still being accepted; the original deadline of November 15th has been extended. Detailed program information and application instructions can be found in the **Intern Handbook**:

[https://www.unb.ca/fredericton/arts/\\_assets/documents/psychology/internship-handbook.pdf](https://www.unb.ca/fredericton/arts/_assets/documents/psychology/internship-handbook.pdf)

Questions? Contact [SchoolPsychNB@gnb.ca](mailto:SchoolPsychNB@gnb.ca)

# SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY ON PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

ROBIN ANNE ETTLES, M.A.PS., C.PSYCH.  
CHRISTINA GALLANT-MACLEAN, M.A., C.PSYCH.  
WITH INPUT FROM MEMBERS OF THE PSB PSYCHOLOGY TEAM

PEI is home to an English-language Public Schools Branch (PSB) and the French-language Commission scolaire de la langue française (CSLF). Within the PSB, there are fifty-six schools and approximately 20,000 students. As of September 2025, the PSB's school psychology team consists of 11.6 FTE among 12 psychologists. The CSLF is comprised of six schools and under 700 students, with one psychology position. PEI schools are located in a mix of urban and rural settings. Single-school populations range anywhere from ~50 to 1200 students.

The Island has a regulatory body, the Psychologists Registration Board of PEI (PEIPRB); and a voluntary professional association, the Psychological Association of PEI (PAPEI).

The PSB psychology team is part of a larger student services division that includes counseling, inclusive education, autism, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, services for students who are blind or visually impaired, services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, and community access services. We also consult with the Province of PEI's English as an Additional Language (EAL) services and programs. PEI continually welcomes newcomer families to its school communities, with this population increasing remarkably within the last few years.

The PSB's psychology service model is based on the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) standards and practices, as well as Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS). Primary services consist of psycho-educational assessment, consultation, and re-evaluation. Where referral questions fall outside of these, we can offer different types of consultation.

In addition to direct service, members of the PSB school psychology team participate in standing and ad hoc committees; as well as consultation with off-site, specialized learning and behaviour programs. Team members sit on various committees and boards within community and professional associations. We are trained in crisis response and behavioural threat assessment and management (PREPaRE and BTAM), with train-the-trainer programs. Our team meets monthly for discussion of system-related issues, case-specific consultation, and professional development offerings.

We are often in communication with other services and providers in the community, such as mental health practitioners, paediatricians, other medical specialists, and more. We advocate for students in different areas of learning and well-being. Some examples include coverage for early vision care programs, access to accommodation, protection of information, development of self-advocacy skills, etc.

PSB psychology services are in a stronger position in terms of staffing following a recruitment and retention campaign that ran more intensively around 2018. Waitlist times for psycho-educational assessment, while still surpassing a year, have been greatly reduced. There are private practitioners doing psycho-educational assessment work on PEI. However, the bulk of this service is provided by PSB psychologists.

Supervision of students and holders of provisional licenses takes place occasionally. This continues to be challenging as student-to-psychologist ratios are still somewhat high. As much as possible, supervision is extended to those pursuing school psychology as an area of special interest. It is a bonus when the individual is looking to live on the Island and work within the public system. Over the past seven years, we have welcomed three supervisees who have remained with the PSB.

Meanwhile, there is a strong possibility of a retirement exodus within the next ten to fifteen years, given the increasing wisdom of the current team.

# SPECIAL HEADLINES

## FOCUS ON WELLNESS

**Self-care and Well-being for School Psychologists**  
Ester Cole Ph.D. and Maria Kokai Ph.D., Toronto,  
Ontario

**Routine, Belonging, and Belief: Rethinking  
Willpower for Wellness in School Psychology**  
Simon Lisaingo Ph.D., R.Psych.

**From Me to We: Combating Hyper-Individualism  
Through Social Prescribing**  
McKinley Hogan, BSc and Stefanie Ng, BA

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Crandall University



# SELF-CARE AND WELL-BEING FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

ESTER COLE PH.D. AND MARIA KOKAI PH.D.,  
TORONTO, ONTARIO

The multi-factorial role of school psychologists continues to be much in demand, given the ever-growing needs identified within each school and its unique characteristics. While we continue to advocate for expanded roles to serve communities, self-care and well-being often take a back seat for many of our national colleagues, and require mindful advocacy within the profession (Miller et al., 2023; Pike et al., 2024). We continue to highlight positive psychology practices for those we interact with, yet compassion fatigue (CF) is more endemic to our daily reality. We wrote about the phenomenon this year in the book edited by Andrews & Saklofske (2025)[1]. In it, the following sections (in italics) are applicable to our reflections on advocacy for self-care habits.

## **Positive psychology, compassion fatigue, and self-care**

*“These concepts relate to a road well-traveled by psychologists in both schools and community services. Positive psychology has gained international acclaim as intertwined with personal and professional outreach programs and practice involvement. Seligman’s publications (for example, 1990; 2002; 2011) have been impactful in both academia and in mental health interventions.” “The study of positive psychology has been cited by noted psychologists as contributing to their professional research, frameworks of analysis and model development (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Haidt, 2006; Fredrickson & Kurtz, 2011). Applying positive psychology in schools has been similarly studied. Molony, Hildbold & Smith (2014), provide a roadmap for practice in contrast to a deficit model of services. They reflect that for school psychologists the application of positive psychology strategies “can communicate the benefits of increasing positive affect, identifying and using character strength, expressing gratitude, engaging in flow activities, learning the skills of optimism, and enhancing hope to increase individual well-being, as well as improve school-climate” (p.388-389).*

According to Paiva-Salisbury & Schwanz (2022), compassion fatigue “or extreme stress and burnout from helping others, is widely considered to be harmful to a professional’s well-being” (p.40). Their research, and that of other authors (e.g., Rupert & Dorociak, 2019; Schilling et al., 2023), propose the application of a variety of approaches to promote self-care among practicing psychologists. Building resilience; that is, finding the right resources and developing the right coping strategies, as per Unger’s framework of resilience, (<https://resilienceresearch.org/>, n.d.), establishing habits of prevention and self-monitoring, as well as teaching awareness of symptoms to watch for, are important ways to mitigate risks of CF, along with a stronger focus on the positive aspects of our helping profession: compassion satisfaction (Schwanz, 2022).

[1] Cole, E. & Kokai, M. (2025). Psychological Health and wellbeing within school organizations: Clinical reasoning for assessment and intervention, in Andrews, J.W. & Saklofske, D. (Eds). Clinical reasoning and decision making in school and child clinical psychology. Pp. 385-430. Elsevier. <https://shop.elsevier.com/books/clinical-reasoning-and-decision-making-process/andrews/978-0-443-13552-1>

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Environmental/workplace factors such as unmanageable caseloads, long waitlists, and unrealistic expectations also play an important role in stress, burnout, and CF for school psychologists. (Schilling et al., 2023). Modifying tasks, including breaks, establishing work and personal boundaries, seeking out professional and peer support, and advocating for improved working conditions are approaches that serve as protective factors.

*“The schema of connecting awareness about CF, linking it to self-care with strong social supports, and building resilience can continue to strengthen professionals’ quality of life. Higher levels of compassion satisfaction in the role as a helping professional, may lessen stress associated with the effects of CF (Schwanz & Paiva-Salisbury, 2022; Stamm, 2010, [www.proqol.org](http://www.proqol.org) ).*

*Self-care can be perceived as an aspirational goal for psychologists and others. On the other hand, mindful self-care practiced consistently with the use of daily monitoring tools, can strengthen mindset habits and become habitual. Cook-Cottone & Guyker (2018) developed The Mindful Self-Care Scale as a proactive measure of self-report towards monitoring. Its subscales are consistent with evidence-based research findings including the following six components: Mindful Relaxation, Physical Care, Self-Compassion and Purpose, Supportive Relationships, Supportive Structure, and Mindful Awareness. For school psychologists, given the rhythm of the academic year and its demands, setting realistic practice goals based on self-knowledge will help perseverance.” (p.390)*

*“Following self-care guiding publications can engage resources and strategies for balance in the workplace (Dunn & McMinn, 2021), fostering social connectedness (Dozois, 2021); professional undertakings to prevent isolation and burnout (see for example, Moench & Smith-Ackerl, 2022), and links to toolkits and programs.” (p.389). CPA’s “Psychology Works” factsheet on burnout contains helpful strategies (<https://cpa.ca/psychology-works-factsheet-workplace-burnout/>); APA has a publication to be downloaded for free titled Self-Care for Psychologists(<https://www.apa.org/members/content/secure/self-care> ); NASP (2021) has similarly posted updated resources including podcasts and articles about self-care for school psychologists <https://nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources>*

While self-care is often perceived as an aspirational goal, in fact it is our ethical responsibility. The CPA Code of Ethics (2017) states that psychologists should “Engage in self-care activities that help to avoid conditions (e.g., burnout, addictions) that could result in impaired judgment and interfere with their ability to benefit and not harm others” (p.20; Principle II: Responsible Caring, II.12).

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### Take-aways for self-care and well-being among school psychologists:

- The context of each school and its culture, requires daily multi-level activities and demands for interventions. This pace is unlikely to change. At the same time, research concerning self-care and resilience-building for school psychologists continues to teach us to view it as a foundational skill rather as an add-on. It is an ethical component of our role that will help in minimizing high stress levels and compassion fatigue.
- Since the cycle of the school year and its demands are predictable, we advocate for setting realistic goals that are achievable, specific, and easily monitored. SMART objectives provide an example that can be reviewed and set as a goal to be monitored with colleagues. CASEL (2023) competencies provide another example to be borrowed from and applied to school psychologists themselves.
- Consulting about the topic of psychological health in multidisciplinary teams can result in professional development planning, peer support, evaluation, and better self-monitoring.
- School psychologists, supervisors, and students share and practice evolving evidence-based knowledge and skills for scientist-practitioners. Why not include self-care monitoring and evaluation as part of supervision? By doing so, ethical, mental-health and self-care growth goals are more likely to become part of proactive and integrated habits wherever one practices.

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# ROUTINE, BELONGING, AND BELIEF: RETHINKING WILLPOWER FOR WELLNESS IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

SIMON LISAINGO PH.D., R.PSYCH.

As school psychologists, we often teach others how to manage stress, regulate emotions, and persevere through challenges. Yet sustaining our own wellness can be equally complex. Between assessments, consultations, and paperwork, it can feel like there's little space for rest or reflection. But research in motivation and self-regulation suggests that the same principles we teach our students can also sustain us.

According to *Self-Determination Theory* (Ryan & Deci, 2000), human well-being depends on meeting three core psychological needs: **autonomy**, **belonging**, and **competence**. When these needs are supported, we feel more motivated, effective, and fulfilled. When they're not, exhaustion and disengagement follow. These pillars can serve as a framework for wellness in our work.

## **Autonomy: Finding Stability Through Routine**

Autonomy refers to feeling in control of our actions and time. For school psychologists, that sense of control can easily slip away under competing demands. One way I maintain it is through predictable routines: I carve out time each week to play competitive soccer and dedicate at least one full day to being with my kids. These aren't luxuries... they're strategies that help anchor my week.

Research supports this approach. Establishing intentional routines can reduce decision fatigue and preserve self-regulatory energy (Duckworth, Gendler, & Gross, 2016). In unpredictable work settings, structured routines provide small but powerful sources of control. These are moments that help restore our sense of autonomy amid competing demands.

## **Belonging: Connection as a Buffer**

The second pillar, belonging, refers to our need to feel connected to others. It's ironic that many school psychologists, surrounded by classrooms full of people, often work in isolation. Whether we're the only psychologist in a district or balancing multiple schools, we can lose that sense of professional community that keeps us grounded.

Peer consultation groups, case discussions, or simply checking in with colleagues can make a difference. Research has shown that belonging and collegial support buffer against burnout and compassion fatigue (Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2016). When we create space to debrief, laugh, or problem-solve together, we remind ourselves that we're not doing this work alone. Belonging, in that sense, becomes both preventative and restorative.

## **Competence: Developing and Sustaining Our Effectiveness**

Finally, competence involves both our actual capability and the sense of effectiveness

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that comes from using our skills well. As school psychologists, our competence grows through supervision, practice, and the many daily moments when we apply our expertise to help students, families, and teams. This isn't about perfection... it's about mastery through continued learning and reflection.

In Self-Determination Theory, competence is strengthened when our environments provide opportunities to practice, receive feedback, and experience success (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Maintaining this sense of effectiveness also depends on how we manage our energy and motivation. Research on willpower (Job, Dweck, & Walton, 2010) suggests that people who view effort as something that can be renewed, rather than depleted, are better able to persist and apply their skills over time. In that way, sustaining motivation becomes a means of sustaining competence.

As school psychologists, we can nurture our competence by seeking professional growth, embracing feedback, and recognizing our progress. Each successful interaction, whether calming an anxious student or guiding a team discussion, reinforces both our capability and our confidence to keep growing.

### **Wellness in Practice: Our Shared Values**

In our UBC School & Applied Child Psychology practicum course, students co-created a working definition of wellness that reflects these same principles:

*We value the importance of mental, physical, and emotional well-being, advocating for balance in our work. We seek to foster belonging, autonomy, and competency through our actions. We practice flexibility, care, and adaptability while attending to the needs of clients, peers, and ourselves.*

We also discussed examples and non-examples. Checking in with peers after a tough week, hosting wellness events, or setting boundaries on workload—those are examples. Running on little sleep, competing rather than collaborating, or blaming others without reflection—those are not.

Importantly, students emphasized that wellness looks different for everyone. Each of us has different capacities, cultural practices, and rhythms. Recognizing that diversity of balance helps us create an inclusive climate where everyone's well-being matters.

### **Bringing It All Together**

When we nurture autonomy through consistent routines, belonging through genuine connection, and competence through ongoing learning and effectiveness, we strengthen the foundation of our professional wellness. These are not abstract ideals... they're daily practices that sustain us in complex work.

# ROUTINE, BELONGING, AND BELIEF: RETHINKING WILLPOWER FOR WELLNESS IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

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So when your energy dips, pause and ask yourself:

**Do I have routines that give me control?**

**Do I feel connected to others in my work?**

**Do I recognize my growing capability to meet challenges?**

Wellness isn't about endless willpower; it's about nurturing the structures, relationships, and skills that renew it.

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# FROM ME TO WE: COMBATING HYPER-INDIVIDUALISM THROUGH SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

MCKINLEY HOGAN, BSC AND STEFANIE NG, BA

Recent cultural shifts suggest that society is tilting increasingly toward a model of hyper-individualism (Santos et al., 2017; Humphrey & Bliuc, 2022), one that elevates personal autonomy and self-sufficiency while diminishing the value of community, reciprocity, and shared responsibility. We bring forth an emerging critique highlighting how the prioritization of independence has the potential to undermine the social connections that support psychological and emotional wellness. Anecdotal reports have seen social connections being cut off in the name of “protecting one's peace”, and “putting oneself first”. Our critique notes that the recent modern emphasis of self-care, while important in moderation, has in some cases evolved into a reluctance to tolerate the small inconveniences, compromises, and mutual obligations that community life inevitably requires. We argue that trending towards and teaching individualistic ways of being may be costing community and collectivist connections that are positively associated with wellbeing (Nezlek, & Humphrey, 2023).

Canadian literature on this topic is emerging. A 2022 review (Humphrey & Bliuc, 2022), investigated the effects that individualism can have on young people's psychological health within Western environments. The review found traits that were common in individualist orientations that seemed harmful to mental health were: poor social support, competitiveness, and emphasis on self-reliance over community. Canadian research studies on the topic are limited; however, findings that support our argument have been found through a United States study. The study examined relationships between well-being and individualism and collectivism among 1906 emerging adults in the US, aged 18–25 (Nezlek, & Humphrey, 2023). Their findings indicated that emerging adults who held collectivistic values, especially those emphasizing cooperation, equality, and interdependence, tended to report better mental health outcomes across multiple domains, whereas higher individualism was generally linked to poorer well-being (Nezlek & Humphrey, 2023). This further supports the critique of societal hyper-individualism compromising social connectedness and overall well-being among young people in Western societies.

It is important to consider that applying these findings to a Canadian context may yield different results. Canada's broad multiculturalism means that collectivist subcultures may persist even within a predominantly individualistic society, which limits the generalizability of such findings. On the other hand, one could argue that teaching individualistic cultural ideals in Canada, such as autonomy and personal freedom, offers macro-level benefits that may support overall well-being. However, evidence suggests that these positive associations often disappear when examined at the individual (rather than macro) level (Humphrey & Bliuc, 2022). Given this, we would like to put forth an intervention that works to address the pitfalls of hyper-individualism and increase the sense of community and belonging.

Social prescribing has emerged as an alternative and promising response to the growing

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concern that hyper-individualism is limiting children and youths' well-being. In contrast to approaches that focus primarily on individual skill-building or self-management, social prescribing is rooted in the understanding that well-being is developed through social contexts, such as relationships, roles, sense of belonging, and participation in community life. Through this holistic model, individuals are supported by a designated "link worker", who connect them to non-clinical, community-based resources, such as mentorship programs, arts and recreational activities, and cultural groups (Abbing et al., 2018; Ascenso et al., 2018; Aughterson et al., 2024; Clatworthy et al., 2013; Fancourt & Tymoszuk, 2018; Wakefield, 2020). For school and educational psychologists, this shift represents a more collectivist and relational approach to supporting mental health and well-being, one that may complement existing school-based interventions by strengthening students' social connectedness beyond the classroom.

In Canada, interest in social prescribing has grown as service systems face increasing strain, including overburdened and rising demands for mental health support services, workforce shortages, and cost-of-living stress (Canadian Institute for Social Prescribing [CISP], 2024). Aligned with national modernization efforts, such as team-based and person-centered care, and community planning models that emphasize collaboration and shared responsibility for well-being, social prescribing offers an integrated, community-based alternative to individualized approaches (CISP, 2024). Current Canadian data highlight substantial impact of social prescribing for youth mental health and well-being, including a projected \$59.9 million annual increase in employment income across the working lives of youth aged 15 to 17 who currently report anxious or depressive symptoms, 1.9 million fewer primary care visits per year for Canadian youth aged 15 to 24 with poor or fair perceived mental health, and an estimated \$114 million in annual health system savings (CISP, 2024). Together, these findings highlight the promise of social prescribing as a community-oriented approach that provides tailored support to diverse groups, including populations who may historically be underserved in Canadian health and social systems.

While evidence on the use of social prescribing specifically with students and youth is still emerging (Davies et al., 2023; Muhl et al., 2023), broader growing evidence in Canada suggest that social prescribing may meaningfully improve mental health and wellbeing by addressing social and relational dimensions that traditional, individual-focused approaches often overlook. Canadian case examples illustrated this potential clearly; for instance, a rural resident experiencing depression after relocation reported improved mood, renewed companionship, and even a leadership role in a community food program after being socially prescribed to local supports (Mulligan, 2024). Research from the UK further pointed toward the same mechanisms of impact: strengthened social connections, increased sense of purpose, improved confidence, and healthier routines, all of which contribute to better mental health outcomes (Aughterson et al., 2024; Fancourt et al., 2021).

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Despite this growing promise, social prescribing programs in Canada may face implementation challenges. Gangji et al. (2025) described how many community-based support requires stable funding, committed project leadership, and ongoing infrastructure, conditions that are not always guaranteed, especially in rural or remote areas with limited gathering spaces or public transportation options. Furthermore, individuals experiencing socioeconomic inequities or with previous negative interactions with public systems may be harder to engage, even though they may benefit the most (Gangji et al., 2025). Still, early provincial efforts demonstrate momentum and feasibility. In Alberta, initiatives such as Healthy Aging Alberta have begun training link workers to connect individuals with community resources, with more than 82% of trainees reporting confidence in applying their skills (Healthy Aging Alberta, 2023). These early successes highlight the provincial potential to advance social prescribing within Canadian health, education, and community systems. As evidence continues to grow, social prescribing as a method to counter hyper-individualism by fostering connection, inclusion, and community-based support offer a practical pathway toward more collectivist ways of being that enhance mental health and well-being for children, youth, and families.

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# LEARNING FROM OUR PAST AND MOVING SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TOWARD QUEER JOY

JUSTIN MOASE, BA, THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

A large body of research has shown that Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and asexual (2SLGBTQIA+) youth experience unique social and emotional challenges compared to their cisgender, heterosexual peers (Fish et al., 2020; McBride, 2021; Rivers et al., 2018). While safe and responsive schools support the social, emotional, and academic learning of 2SLGBTQIA+ students (Day et al., 2019; Kuhlemeier, 2024), only 37% of Canadian teachers report implementing 2SLGBTQIA+-inclusive practices or events (Meyer et al., 2019). The reality that 2SLGBTQIA+ students continually face homo/transphobia without specialized well-being supports signals that Canadian schools are not meeting the needs of our most vulnerable students (Peter et al., 2021; Taylor et al., 2011). Given the growing anti-trans climate, psychologists should pause to consider their role in supporting the well-being of 2SLGBTQIA+ students. In doing so, we must first understand psychology's history with 2SLGBTQIA+ populations if we are to undo the harms of the systems we helped create.

With the removal of homosexuality from the DSM-II in 1973, psychologists began to advocate for the normalization of homosexuality in adults. However, the affirmation of gay and lesbian parents was contingent on the “gender and sexual normalcy of their children” (Hegarty, 2017, p. 18). Such attitudes led to the creation of Gender Identity Disorder (GID) in the 1980 publication of the DSM-III, which was diagnosed and treated with the goal of preventing adult “transsexualism” (Hegarty, 2017). While 2SLGBTQIA+ mental health research has steadily grown over the past 40 years, minority stress models (Hendricks & Testa, 2012; Meyer, 2003) are born from a deficit model that prioritizes risk over resilience. From this, we risk perpetuating the idea that mental health challenges are an extension of 2SLGBTQIA+ identities and overlook the ways in which practitioners can help youth thrive (Horn et al., 2009; Robinson & Schmitz, 2021). Mental health professionals play a critical role in shaping public perception of gender expansiveness and helping 2SLGBTQIA+ students and families access services. Yet, our current conceptualization of gender dysphoria requires youth to experience significant distress to access gender-affirming care, which gatekeeps the resources they need to feel well. Instead of only focusing on challenges, practitioners should move toward gender *euphoria* and give greater attention to the spaces, people, and practices that lead to queer joy.

Practitioners play a key role in creating gender-affirming schools where gender diversity is valued and students are unconditionally accepted. School-wide social and emotional learning programming can help spark conversations about gender, integrate 2SLGBTQIA+ representation in classroom materials, and provide teachers with the opportunity to intervene. To amplify youth voices in the systems change process, practitioners can leverage small-group interventions designed for 2SLGBTQIA+ students, such as *Proud and Empowered* (Goldbach et al., 2021) and *Affirmative Support Safe and Empowering Talk* (ASSET; Craig, 2013). By reinventing schools to be gender-affirming spaces, we can move beyond coping with adversity and support the experience of queer joy. Those interested in

# LEARNING FROM OUR PAST AND MOVING SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TOWARD QUEER JOY

CONTINUED

gender-affirming education are invited to scan our QR to access more resources and materials from Egale Canada.



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# ENHANCING GIFTED EDUCATION THROUGH THE INSTRUCTIONAL HIERARCHY FRAMEWORK

DIANA CASSIE, PH.D., C.PSYCH

The Instructional Hierarchy (IH) has experienced a recent resurgence of attention reflecting a broader emphasis on evidence-based pedagogy. Despite its growing prominence, discourse regarding the IH has been largely confined to the realm of academic remediation. What remains notably absent is the potential relevance of the IH to gifted learners. This oversight suggests a missed opportunity to leverage a well-established model for supporting these students. While gifted education typically focuses on inquiry-based approaches, little attention has been given to how the IH's structured progression of skill mastery could inform gifted pedagogy. This article offers preliminary commentary regarding the relevance of the IH vis-à-vis gifted pedagogy to expand the scope of professional dialogue. By exploring how the IH might enhance instructional design for gifted learners, the article encourages further research and broader application of the IH across the learning continuum.

The Instructional Hierarchy, initially introduced by Haring and Eaton in 1978, serves as a framework for understanding the sequential stages through which learners progress in acquiring and mastering content. The fundamental principles of this hierarchy emphasize the predictability of learning stages and the optimal alignment of instructional strategies with the learner's developmental stage. As a corollary, employing instructional approaches that are misaligned with the learner's stage have the potential to hamper learning. The instructional Hierarchy comprises four distinct stages: Acquisition, Fluency, Generalization, and Adaptation. Progression through these stages infers mastery of each stage before advancing to the subsequent one.

The Acquisition stage is the beginning stage in learning a new skill or new content. Student in this stage are grappling with accuracy and the main goal of the Acquisition stage is for students to independently produce accurate responses. Once students are consistently capable of producing accurate responses, they enter the Fluency stage. At the outset of this stage, student responding, while accurate, is slow and laborious. During this stage the main goal is for the student is to be able to produce accurate responses effortlessly and automatically. Students in the Generalization stage produce accurate responses fluently. During this stage, students practice the skill across a variety of situations in order to learn to recognize and discriminate between the target skill and other skills. In the last stage, Adaptation, students are tasked with adapting the newly acquired skill to novel situations and incorporating other skills, as needed, to solve novel problems or situations. In more recent models, the Generalization and Adaptation stages have been merged and in yet other variations, a Maintenance stage has been included.

Since its inception, the Instructional Hierarchy has been generally accepted as a research-based heuristic that guides educators in selecting appropriate instruction given students' stage of learning. Recently, the Instructional Hierarchy has experienced a resurgence in the

# ENHANCING GIFTED EDUCATION THROUGH THE INSTRUCTIONAL HIERARCHY FRAMEWORK

## CONTINUED

educational discourse. This resurgence is likely to be a response to factors such as the increased adoption of and research focus on system-wide instructional models such as Response to Intervention (RTI) and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) which emphasize the importance of evidence-based practices, coupled with the adoption of educational policies and state laws mandating an evidence-base for educational interventions as well as provincial commissions imploring the same (e.g., Ontario Human Rights Commission's "Right to Read Inquiry Report", OHRC 2022). In an article by VanDerHeyden and Burns (2023), referencing work from Shonkoff (2017) they draw attention to an important point largely overlooked in legislation and unaddressed in most educational models - the fact that instructional interventions are only evidence-based if they are effective with respect to the student's stage of learning, since "no evidence-based intervention can be similarly effective for all students in all environments". Their assertion harkens back to one of the main tenets of the Instructional Hierarchy framework.

A number of researchers have outlined the instructional practices that align with each stage in the Instructional Hierarchy. Most notably, explicit instruction has been described as the backbone of Acquisition, with performance and corrective feedback, modeling and demonstrations also demonstrating evidence of effectiveness during this stage. One of the main instructional strategies evidenced to promote the development of fluency (Fluency stage) is timed practice. In Generalization and in Adaptation, inquiry-based approaches that provide opportunities for independent practice, discrimination training, simulations, and problem solving are emphasized.

In spite of the increased attention recently paid to the Instructional Hierarchy in the extant literature, it's noteworthy that the focus of this attention is primarily on remediation to address gaps in learning rather than on educational enhancement that is characteristic of gifted programming. In fact, a literature search using the main educational and psychological databases using keywords "instructional hierarchy" and "gifted" yields 0 hits. Interestingly, within tiered educational models such as RTI and MTSS, both remedial programming and enhancement programming are conceptualized as Tier 2 and Tier 3 services. This begs the questions: If the Instructional Hierarchy applies to all students, how is it relevant to instruction for gifted students?

Nonetheless, there are some very well established interventions from which gifted students (and other cognitively advanced students) benefit. Among them, Acceleration has the strongest support in the literature. In fact, Acceleration has even been touted as the most evidence-based academic interventions (Jonathan Plucker, Chalk & Talk) and there is reams of support for this approach specifically for gifted and high ability students. Acceleration refers to moving through curriculum at a faster pace than is typical. Because research shows that gifted learners have already mastered 60-80% of content within their

# ENHANCING GIFTED EDUCATION THROUGH THE INSTRUCTIONAL HIERARCHY FRAMEWORK

## CONTINUED

same grade at the beginning of the school year, Acceleration is considered most often for these students. Although there are many forms of Acceleration, grade skipping and subject acceleration are among the most well known. Yet, there is little information available regarding research-based processes for decision-making vis-a-vis Acceleration aside from research demonstrating the Iowa Acceleration Scale (IAS) as a useful tool in this regard.

Regardless, it is the assertion of the author that there is a case to be made for the relevance of the Instructional Hierarchy when program planning for students embarking on these forms of Acceleration. When students bypass a considerable amount of formal instruction and are parachuted into a higher level of study, whether for a single subject or for multiple subjects, there are likely to be some learning gaps. In content-heavy subject areas such as the maths and sciences, students may be missing prerequisite knowledge that would facilitate full engagement in the new level of study. This highlights the importance of a comprehensive transition plan for the student as well as continuous monitoring of student learning (which should be viewed as crucial for all students). Since gaps in prerequisite knowledge are not uncommon in classrooms, pre-testing students prior to introducing a new unit provides the teacher with information about the nature and extent of learning gaps that can impact success with the new unit. In this way, the teacher can incorporate missing prerequisite content into their lesson plans. When doing this, the teacher is well-advised to heed the Instructional Hierarchy. As some students may be new to specific content (in the Acquisition stage), explicit instruction is likely to be helpful, while other students may just need opportunities to practice the skill or content (Fluency stage) prior to applying it (Generalization and Adaptation stage). For the gifted student in particular who is undergoing subject-specific or whole-grade Acceleration, it may also be a best practice to acquire information about learning gaps prior to the accelerative transition. This would allow for targeted instruction in these areas with the particular student.

Another strategy often associated with gifted pedagogy is Enrichment. Enrichment is the most widely offered gifted programming strategy, in spite of a lack of robust research to support it as a uniquely gifted pedagogical approach or even as a highly effective learning approach. Some researchers validly posit that the lack of evidence in support of enrichment may be reflective of the variability in how Enrichment programming is operationalized. Practically, Enrichment programming typically emphasizes inquiry-based methods such as problem-based learning. In the context of the Instructional Hierarchy, such approaches therefore assume students have already progressed through Acquisition and Fluency stages of learning for the target skills/content. This can potentially lead to a mismatch between the instructional approach and the student's stage of learning. Perhaps, the lack of clear and consistent evidence to support Enrichment in practice relates, in part,

# ENHANCING GIFTED EDUCATION THROUGH THE INSTRUCTIONAL HIERARCHY FRAMEWORK

## CONTINUED

to a lack of attention paid to the Instructional Hierarchy in Enrichment programming.

Regardless of the instructional approach or theoretical orientation for gifted and high ability teaching, the Instructional Hierarchy reminds us that even gifted students benefit from explicit instruction when they are in the Acquisition stage of learning. Moreover, it promotes an intentional progression toward depth and complexity, it supports differentiated pacing based on the stage of learning, and it emphasizes the ultimate goal of enhancing the ability to flexibly apply and integrate skills in complex real-world problems. Recognizing the untapped potential of the Instructional Hierarchy in the field of gifted education invites a critical shift in how we conceptualize gifted programming and more importantly how we program for gifted students. By integrating the Instructional Hierarchy into gifted pedagogy, educators can more effectively design instructional experiences that move beyond enrichment for its own sake and instead foster mastery, fluency, and adaptability in advanced learners. This broader application not only disrupts the common assumption in practice that gifted students do not need structured support or direct instruction, but also underscores the importance of implementing systematic, evidence-based approaches that nurture their full cognitive potential. It is with this goal in mind, that this article aims to serve as a preliminary step toward re-imagining the role of the Instructional Hierarchy in enhancing educational equity and excellence across the full spectrum of learner skills and abilities.

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# PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF BLIND LOW VISION CHILDREN REVIEW

ROBERT B. WILLIAMS, PH.D., NCSP  
CRANDALL UNIVERSITY

I was drawn to the topic of this book as it reminded me of several situations where my own psycho-educational evaluations could not be completed. They resulted in the need for referrals for ophthalmological examinations. One was a first grader whose parents advised that the ophthalmological finding was that the youngster was blind in one eye. A ninth grader's assessment solution was prescription lenses. These and other youngsters with vision issues would have benefited had I known then what I learned in preparing this review—especially concerning social, emotional, and mental health issues.

This is an outstanding and meaningful resource for all school psychologists. Readers will likely agree that reading this book is like being immersed in a very thorough course. In fact, the authors acknowledge the contributions of Marnee Loftin to a "... course that was the precursor to this book" (p. 3).

The thirty-five topics covered in this book are clustered in six parts. Part I introduces the anatomy and functioning of the eye and visual pathway to the brain. It includes illustrations and links to a visual system crash course. Part II concerns conditions affecting the visual system by explaining the terminology, visual conditions, cortical/cerebral visual impairment, and visual field loss. Part III's focus is blind and low vision children's development and education via discussions of language and social development, cognitive and concept development, mental health and emotional development, physical, motor, and sensory development, expanded core curriculum, braille basics, team of professionals working with blind and low vision students, and legislation and educational resources in Canada and the United States. At the conclusions of each of these first three parts readers will encounter check your knowledge links to questions about the content of the material. It is also noted that interactive elements have been excluded from this version of the text but links to them are available on pages 10, 12, and 24.

Part IV details the elements of psycho-educational assessment that includes planning for the assessment, interacting with blind and low vision students, collaboration with other professionals, review of special reports and documentation, awareness of the impact of visual impairments on testing, testing room and materials adaptations during assessments, overview of test selection, important areas to assess, observations, tests designed for blind and low vision students, rating scales, assessment in children with severe cognitive and motor disabilities, and assessment of deafblind children. Also, psychologists testing individuals with visual impairments are encouraged to read the position paper "Comprehensive Evaluations of Individuals with Visual Impairments" (Engle et al., 2024) via its cited link.

Part V reviews interpreting and reporting test results, recommendations, and report writing with attention to the issue of diagnostic evaluations of intellectual developmental disorder, academic development and specific learning disorders, and autism spectrum disorder.

# PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF BLIND LOW VISION CHILDREN REVIEW

## CONTINUED

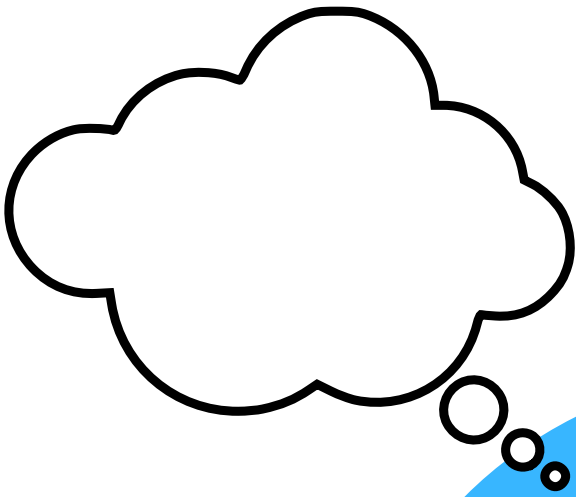
Part VI discusses providing information for the teachers of the visually impaired (TVI) via psycho-educational assessments and the role of the TVI in the psycho-educational assessments process. It is noteworthy that the 35 topics covered provide references and links to informative and supportive resources. The text ends with an appendix with links to the Council of Schools and Services for the Blind with specialists serving blind and low vision students and educational resources for students.

Readers can have a great deal of confidence in what has been shared by the authors. Jennifer Engle is a Member of the Vision Inter-professional Assessment Team at Sunny Hill Health Centre, British Columbia, Canada. She is a registered psychologist and board certified in pediatric neuropsychology. May Nguyen is a member of the California School for the Blind Assessment Center team. She is a licensed educational psychologist and a nationally certified school psychologist (NCSP). Adam Wilton, PhD is the Program Manager of the British Columbia Provincial Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired.

Lastly, this is a worthwhile resource that can be accessed and downloaded at no cost: Engle, J. A., Nguyen, M., & Wilton, A. (2024). ***Psycho-educational assessments of blind and low vision children***. BCcampus. <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/vision/>

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# DID YOU KNOW....

## **VIDEO CONFERENCE FATIGUE IS REAL....?**

According to Dr. Sahar Yousef, cognitive neuroscientist, UC Berkeley:

- Video conference fatigue is the result of cognitive overload, caused by the area of the brain that is processing faces, which cannot be turned off.

*How can you mitigate it?*

- Limit video conferences to 30 min or have a 1 min break at 30 min
- Use audio only, or hide self-view

## **SMARTPHONE PRESENCE REDUCES AVAILABLE COGNITIVE CAPACITY....?**

University of Texas researchers found that the mere “...presence of one’s smartphone reduces available cognitive capacity and impairs cognitive functioning, even though people feel they’re giving their full attention....”

<https://news.utexas.edu/2017/06/26/the-mere-presence-of-your-smartphone-reduces-brain-power/>

*How can you mitigate it?*

Switch off notifications; monitor screen time; use grayscale.

# ESP SECTION PEOPLE & PLACES



Congratulations to UBC School & Applied School Psychology on their CPA Reaccreditation

Congratulations to the South Fraser Residency Program in Clinical & Counselling Psychology on their initial CPA Accreditation

Welcome Dr. Dorna Rahimi as a Lecturer in SACP at UBC

Congratulations to OISE School & Child Psychology on their CPA Reaccreditation

Congratulations to Dr. Melissa McGonnell on promotion to Full Professor at MSVU

Congratulations to Western University School & Applied School Psychology on their CPA Reaccreditation

Congratulations to McGill School & Applied School Psychology on their CPA Reaccreditation

Congratulations to Dr. Yuanyuan Jiang on promotion to Associate Professor at Saint Paul University

## Share Your Updates With Us

We would like this to be a place to celebrate good news in an effort to get to know our ESP community better. Do you have a colleague who got a promotion? received an award? started a new position? made a move? Let us know and we will share and celebrate together as an ESP community. Here are few things happening with our ESP section people recently.

# CANADIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION

IN ST. JOHNS NEWFOUNDLAND  
JUNE 2025



It was great to see many of our members at CPA in St. John's. We had a full convention program from our section with 98 sessions across virtual and visual posters, review sessions, workshops, symposium, snapshot sessions, paper sessions. Dr. Steven Shaw did our Keynote session "Being Credible in the Era of Misinformation and AI". After the business meeting we had a fun pub night at the Embassy Pub and Eatery. In between taking in conventions sessions attendees enjoyed the lovely weather that welcomed us in Newfoundland, ate good seafood, saw glaciers and puffins, beautiful hikes, and few got screeched.



## 2025 ESP Section Award Winners

### Student Conference Contribution Awards:

Carlie Unrau, University of Calgary  
Katelyn Ford, Mount Saint Vincent University  
Jeremy Roberts, University of Manitoba

### CPA ESP Student Research Grant:

Laine Jackart, Ph.D. Student, University of British Columbia  
Dissertation: Bio-Psycho Strengthening: An Investigation of the Effect of Strength Training on Adolescent Depression and Self-Efficacy

Yasmin Elliott, M.A. Student, University of British Columbia

School Psychologist of the Year: Peggy Hann –St John's  
Newfoundland

Contributions to School Psychology: Dr. Laurie Ford, University of  
British Columbia

# CANADIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION

IN ST. JOHNS NEWFOUNDLAND  
JUNE 2025



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# CANADIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION



IN ST. JOHNS NEWFOUNDLAND  
JUNE 2025



# CANADIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION



**SAVE THE DATE**  
For the CPA 87<sup>th</sup> Annual  
National Convention

REGISTRATION OPENS  
IN EARLY 2026

June 4 - 6, 2026  
Montréal, Québec





## Educational and School Psychology Section Events

### Thursday June 4

Time	Presentation Type	Speaker	Title	Location
10:00-10:55	Snapshots			Notre Dame
11:00-11:12	12-Minute Talk	Nimrit Jhinjar	Exploring Aspirations of Autistic Individuals Preparing to Graduate	St. Antoine B
11:15 – 11:27	12-Minute Talk	Michelle Zak	Shared Adjustment of Diverse Teachers	St. Antoine B
11:30 – 11:42	12-Minute Talk	Duofei Lui	Neurodiversity and Higher Education	St. Antoine B
11:45-11:57	12-Minute Talk	Abida Rasool	Ethical AI & Academic Integrity	St. Antoine B
12:00-12:55	Symposium	Sara King	School Psychology & Newcomer Youth	St. Antoine B
14:30-14:55	Conversation Session			Montreal Ballroom
14:00- 15:25	Workshop	Michael Charron	Explorer le WIAT-4 CDN-F	Ramezay
15:30-15:55	Review Session	Khaled Taktek	Leportefeuille des competencies pedagogiques	Ramezay
16:00 – 16:55	Section Featured Speaker	Judy Wiener	Relationships of Youth with Neurodevelopmental Disorders	Ramezay
17:00-17:55	Section AGM			Ramezay
18:00-18:55	Section Awards & Reception			Ramezay



**Friday June 5**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Presentation Type</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Location</b>
9:30-9:55	Conversation Session			Montreal Ballroom
11:00-11:12	12-Minute Talk	Jeremy Roberts	Predictings of First Generation Outcomes	St. Antoine B
11:15-11:25	12-Minute Talk	Jess Whitley	Canada School Attendance Crisis	St. Antoine B
11:30-11:42	12-Minute Talk	Yajie Song	Teacher Feedback & Math Achievement in PISA 2022	St. Antoine B
11:45-11:57	12-Minute Talk	Yimei Zhang	Inservice Teachers Application of CT Skills	St. Antoine B
12:00-12:12	12-Minute Talk	Alice Neiley	Elixir of Survival: Metaphor of Resilience	St. Antonie B
12:15-12:27	12-Minute Talk	Snimer Nagi	Correlated of Absenteesim Among Canadian Students	St Antonie B
12:30- 12:42	12-Minute Talk	Emilie Longtin	Longitudinal Outcomes in Writing Workhops	St. Antoine B
12:45-12:57	12-Minute Talk	Laura Coon	Identifying At-Risk Readers in French Immersion	St. Antonie B
14:00-14:55	Snapshots			LeMonye
14:00-15:25	Workshop	Angele Debois	Tranforming School Psychology Through MTSS	Ramezey



**Saturday June 6**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Presentation Type</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Location</b>
08:00- 08:12	12-Minute Talk	Deborah Ajumobi	Alignment of MTSS, CASEL Areas, and Intervention Activities by Mental Health Professionals for School Students.	St. Antoine B
08:15-08:27	12-Minute Talk	Achol Jones	Study Buddy Learning in Undergraduate Science.	St. Antoine B
08:30-08:42	12-Minute Talk	Samantha Mackie	Tracing Tech Trajectories.	St. Antoine B
08:45-08:57	12-Minute Talk	Julia Therrien	ToT: Teacher Preparation Training on Wellness.	St. Antoine B
09:00-09:55	Poster Session	Grand Hall		
11:00-11:55	Symposium	Yuanyuan Jiang	Access to School-Based Psychological Services.	St. Antoine B
12:00-12:12	12-Minute Talk	Claire Reed	Bullying Effects on Adolescent Well-Being.	St. Antoine B
12:15-12:27	12-Minute Talk	Danielle Impey	Social Media and Student Well-Being.	St. Antoine B
12:30-12:42	12-Minute Talk	Laine Jackart	Peers for Adolescents - Pre/Post.	St. Antoine B
12:45-12:57	12-Minute Talk	Laine Jackart	Strength and Depression: Preliminary Results.	St. Antoine B
13:00-13:12	12-Minute Talk	Farah Charania	Reimagining Newcomer Student Wellness.	St. Antoine B

**HIRING!**



Join our Continuing Education committee!  
Offering continuing education events to  
psychologists involved in the field of  
educational and school psychology is one of the  
mandates of our section. We are seeking ESP  
section members to join the section CE  
committee. Please connect with Maria Kokai  
[mariamkokai18@gmail.com](mailto:mariamkokai18@gmail.com) if you are interested.



# PARLEZ-VOUS FRANÇAIS?

## Do You Speak French?

We would like to have a few articles in each newsletter edition translated in to French. We are looking for a few French speaking (and writing) educational and school psychologists to join our editorial team. This is a great opportunity for a graduate student or others looking for some editorial experience. If you are interested reach out to Laurie ([laurie.ford@ubc.ca](mailto:laurie.ford@ubc.ca)) or Sara ([Sara.King@MSVU.CA](mailto:Sara.King@MSVU.CA)) or respond to our survey at the link below.

[https://ubc.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0GjhqDxdB8Ez3RI](https://ubc.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0GjhqDxdB8Ez3RI)

## Parlez-vous français?

Nous aimerions que quelques articles dans chaque édition du bulletin soient traduits en français. À cette fin, nous recherchons quelques psychologues pédagogiques et scolaires francophones (parlé et écrit) qui seraient intéressés à joindre notre équipe éditoriale. Ceci s'agit d'une excellente opportunité pour un(e) étudiant(e) diplômé(e) ou pour toute personne cherchant une expérience éditoriale. Si vous êtes intéressé, SVP contactez Laurie ([laurie.ford@ubc.ca](mailto:laurie.ford@ubc.ca)) ou Sara ([Sara.King@MSVU.CA](mailto:Sara.King@MSVU.CA)) ou répondez à notre sondage en cliquant sur le lien ci-dessous.

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*Merci*

# JOIN OUR MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS TEAM!



Sara King PhD, RPsych.



Laurie Ford, Ph.D.

We are very excited about the new directions for the ESP Newsletter. We hope you are enjoying the updates and changes. To keep our momentum we need YOU! If you would like to join our editorial team and help put the editions together let us know. We are looking for section members to help support with leadership on reviews (books, media, tests, intervention programs), student column, practice column, training column, recruiting infographics, and people and places. If you have other ideas, let us know. If you cannot commit to the editorial team, then submit a short article or contributions to one of our current columns. This is a great avenue to share ideas and experiences. Faculty, encourage student to submit or join us. Submissions for the Fall Edition will be due in mid November. If you are interested reach out to Laurie ([laurie.ford@ubc.ca](mailto:laurie.ford@ubc.ca)) or Sara ([Sara.King@MSVU.CA](mailto:Sara.King@MSVU.CA)) or respond to our survey at this link: [https://ubc.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0GjhqDxdB8Ez3RI](https://ubc.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0GjhqDxdB8Ez3RI)