

Rural and Northern Perspectives: The View from Here

Spring 2022 Volume 17, Issue 1

Message From the Chair

Once again spring has sprung - or it has on the island of Newfoundland, I recently heard from someone representing the “Northern” part of our section that life up there still resembles winter. The sun shining and flowers peeking through in my front yard give me new energy and encourage me to look forward. Look forward to warmer temperatures and more time with family, but also look forward to CPA’s annual



Convention and my second year as Chair of the Rural and Northern Psychology section. We have a number of exciting submissions to the convention from our section that are listed in this newsletter. I want to draw your attention in particular to the “chair’s address” I’ll be giving on Sunday titled *The future of Rural and Northern Psychology section: Where have we come from and where are we going?* Although for convention purposes it’s labeled as an address, I am hoping it will be more of a conversation session, where we celebrate the gains we have made and look forward to the future to see how as a section we can best support you, our members. As someone who practised in an urban setting for almost a decade before switching to rural practice, I have a deeper appreciation for the fact that practicing in rural (and northern) areas are truly specialities unto themselves. In that regard, if you have thoughts on how the section might be able to help you – regardless of whether you are able to attend the convention– I would welcome you to

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Message from the Chair, continued...

share those thoughts with me via our new section email address:

Rnpsychology.cpa@gmail.com I will in turn share those during the talk and hopefully come up with new ways we can support one another and guide the future activities of our section.

Please note our section meeting will be hybrid this year – so those attending CPA can join me in person bright and early Sunday morning for a breakfast meeting while the rest of you can join us in your PJs should you so desire via zoom (a link will be sent out closer to the date). I'd also like to draw your attention to the quickly approaching deadline for the North Star Student Award and Award for Distinguished Professional Contributions to Rural and Northern Practice (May 31, 2022 for both). More information is found later in the newsletter. My gratitude extends to Amanda Lints-Martindale, our past chair who has been a huge help during my first year as chair as well as to the rest of the executive without whom our section could not function. A special shout out goes to our newsletter coordinator Michelle Conan for all her time, organization and formatting skills to put this together. I look forward to seeing at least some of you in person again in Calgary!

Veronica Hutchings, Ph.D., R. Psych.
Rural and Northern Section Chair

Volunteer Opportunity: Provincial Representatives

Thank you to all of our rural and northern section provincial representatives for volunteering their time!

- Northwest Territories & Nunavut: Merrill Dean
- British Columbia: Sandra Thompson
- Alberta: Tiffany Mitchell
- Saskatchewan: Jocelyn Pooch
- Manitoba: Jolene Kinley
- Ontario: Matthew Pickard
- Nova Scotia: Shelley Goodwin
- Newfoundland and Labrador: Veronica Hutchings



Would you like to be more involved in the Rural and

Northern section of CPA? **The Rural and Northern section of CPA is currently looking for provincial representatives from New Brunswick, Quebec, Prince Edward Island, and the Yukon.** If you are interested in representing your province, please contact our chair, Dr. Veronica Hutchings at Rnpsychology.cpa@gmail.com.

Call for Nominations for the Distinguished Professional Contributions to Rural and Northern Practice Award

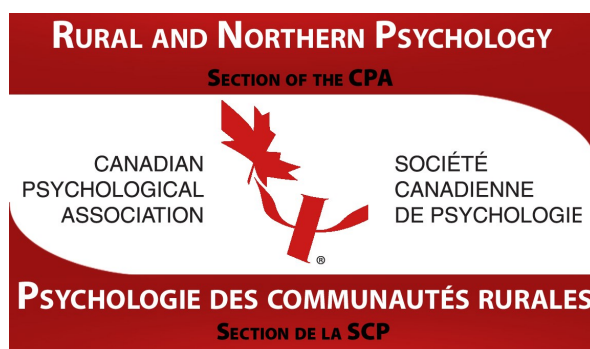
This award is intended to recognize outstanding rural and northern practitioners in psychology. Nominations will be considered for psychologists working in any area of rural and northern psychological practice (e.g., education and health services provision, consulting); and/or provide services to any patient population or professional clientele in a rural and northern setting. Services provided to diverse client groups or patient populations, including but not limited to children/adolescent/adults/older adults/elders, rural/remote/northern populations, minority populations, and persons with serious mental illness will be considered. Contributions may be judged distinguished by virtue of peer recognition, advancement of the public's recognition of psychology as a profession, advancement of rural and northern practice through supervision/research/scholarly pursuits, relevant professional association honours, or other meritorious accomplishments denoting excellence as a rural and northern psychologist, including advancement of the profession.

Nomination packages must include:

1. A letter of nomination from a current Rural and Northern Section member detailing the nominee's distinguished contribution.
2. At least two letters of support from individuals (beside the nominator) who know this person's distinguished contribution to rural and northern practice. The letter is to be current, meaning written in the last calendar year.
3. A current curriculum vitae for the nominee.

Deadline for submission is May 31, 2022.

The recipient will be announced at the AGM of the Rural and Northern Section. Send nomination packet *by email* (in pdf format) to Rnpsychology.cpa@gmail.com.



Rural and Northern Section Interview with Dr. Matias Mariani

Submitted by Dr. Matthew Pickard, C.Psych.

Dr. Mariani is a clinical psychologist and neuropsychologist that currently has a private practice in Sudbury, Northern Ontario. As many other psychologists, Dr. Mariani began practicing as part of a team in a hospital. He worked as the sole psychologist at the Regional Cancer Centre from 2009 until 2016. However, he quickly realized that he was limited in the clientele he could help so he began a part-time private practice in 2011, which eventually became a full-time endeavour in 2016.

When asked why he started his private practice, Dr. Mariani stated that he enjoys the autonomy, including having the option of providing pro-bono services to those in need. He also enjoys the wider range of clients he can work with, the development and management aspects of the business, and the direct collaboration with community partners. Lastly, Dr. Mariani noted that he enjoys supervising and mentoring graduate students and more junior colleagues.

At his clinic, Dr. Mariani and his team provide a wide range of services spanning the full lifespan for the individuals and families they serve. Examples of the type of assessment and treatment provided include neurological examinations, TBI's, anxiety, mood, cognitive, behavioural, academic and other psychological deficits. They complete motor vehicle assessments, work with the Indigenous population, veterans and police officers. Psychotherapy is provided using a wide range of treatment modalities.

Dr. Mariani at times, also teaches classes at the northern school of medicine. Geographically speaking, Dr. Mariani's practice spans an area of approximately 440,000 km², including anywhere north of Parry Sound, east of Thunder Bay, and west of the Ottawa region. Having such a large catchment area and being one of the few neuropsychologists in the North are unique aspects of practicing in Northern Ontario.

When asked how he enjoys practicing as a psychologist in a rural/northern setting, Dr. Mariani discussed how there are aspects that he really enjoys and some aspects he finds uniquely challenging. Some aspects he enjoys include working with a wide variety of populations, and the feel of a small town. This brings a humbling and personal approach to his work. Due to the low number of psychologists in the community, he feels very welcome both professionally (by his peers) and by his community peers.

An aspect that is a challenge includes being one of the few neuropsychology clinics in the north. This can provide a sense of needing or trying to provide services to as many people as possible, with work-life balance at times leaning heavier towards "work" than "life". Thus, the possibility of burnout from wanting to help as many people in his community is continually present. However, having a 13-minute commute to his office is a pro because it can help him spend more time with his family or other life activities.

Other unique work challenges encountered from working in a rural and/or northern setting includes having a limited amount of resources, and feeling like they need to spend more time educating agencies or individuals about their level of specialty or expertise, especially

in helping agencies and/or others understand the difference between social workers, psychotherapists, and psychologists. All have a unique role to play, but sometimes the differences in services are not fully understood. Dr. Mariani also noted that “the world moves a little slower up here” which can be both a pro and a con in delivering treatment services, with a con being that it can take longer to be approved for services or for setting up appointments with clients.

Dr. Mariani indicated that the North needs a significantly greater number of psychologists, psychological associates, and other healthcare professionals to appropriately serve the needs of the community. Given the dearth of psychology professionals in the North, there are quite a few gaps in services and waitlists can be quite long. Paradoxically, the constant demand for services does not often allow time to spend developing specific foundational programs and community partnerships to be able to widen the services in the community to close the gaps. At the practice level, individuals in the North are demographically and culturally distinct from what is typically found in metropolitan centres. For example, approximately 30% of Sudbury’s population speaks French in some fashion.

Another concern is that the norms or pre-existing data does not exist for their unique population, so this needs to be gathered and created. Dr. Mariani reports that this can be a positive also as it presents an opportunity to provide specific services to people living in the north.

Dr. Mariani also discussed some of the unique ethical concerns when working in rural or northern communities. This can include the need to work with or around multiple dual relationships because he is the only neuropsychologist or one of the very few neuropsychologists or clinical psychologists in the area. An example includes attorney’s calling for a Motor Vehicle Assessment, then the insurance calling about the same person. Thus, he can be asked to be the assessor in an Insurance Medical Examination, and at the same time, be asked to provide treatment by a different party. Dr. Mariani reports that when this occurs, explicit consent from all parties need to take place. This takes a lot of time on his behalf, time that he is not reimbursed for.

Another conflict of interest can include working with spouses or be asked to work with spouses. The conflict arises when an insurance company asks him to work with one spouse, but then a law firm asks him to work with another spouse. Or, the spouses are suing one another and both law firms ask his clinic to assess and treat each spouse. The lack of psychology professionals also means that a patient/client may refer a family member to the clinic, which poses “sticky” ethical issues that need to be addressed.

Even in Sudbury, which has a population of approximately 160,000, there is increased chance of bumping into a patient/client in public (e.g., at the supermarket, retail stores). As such, northern practitioners must often account for potential scenarios when going through the expressed consent process.

Dr. Mariani also discussed having significant wait lists which can become an ethical concern due to the thought of “do I take more patients and risk quality control issues but people will get help sooner or do I ensure maintaining a high level of care but this results in reducing the access to the community?” Despite these challenges, Dr. Mariani is happy to work and serve in a rural and or northern area.

North Star Student Award — Now Accepting Applications



Are you a student member of the Rural and Northern section of CPA and presenting at the 2019 convention in Halifax?

The **North Star Student Award** (\$200 value) has been established by the Rural and Northern Psychology Section in 2008 to recognize the student with the most meritorious submission to the Rural and Northern Section of the CPA annual convention.

Any student whose presentation/poster has been accepted into the Rural and Northern Psychology Section Program is encouraged to apply. There are two categories of competition: poster presentations and oral presentations (symposia, review, conversation sessions). *One award will be available within each category.* Students with multiple convention submissions across these categories may apply for the award in both categories. Winning submissions will be recognized with a certificate and a monetary award, presented during the section's annual business meeting. The student will also be invited to describe his/her work in the fall issue of the Rural and Northern Psychology Newsletter, *The View from Here: Perspectives on Northern and Rural Psychology*.

To be eligible for this award you must:

- Be first author of a presentation/poster that has been accepted into the Section Program at the annual CPA convention, and a student at the time you did the work described in the paper.
- Notify the Section Chair that you wish to be considered for this award.
- Be prepared to attend an award ceremony at the convention (awards will be presented during the section's Annual Business Meeting).
- Be a member of the Rural and Northern Psychology Section at the time of the submission.

Deadline for submission is May 31, 2022.

Please contact Chair, Dr. Veronica Hutchings, via e-mail at Rnpsychology.cpa@gmail.com if you wish to be considered for this award or if you have any questions.

Schedule for Rural and Northern Section Events at CPA 2022

Friday, June 17, 2022

11am-12pm Poster Session

Saturday, June 18, 2022

1pm-2pm Panel Discussion, Fiona Cunningham (“A distributed model of clinical psychology doctoral education”)

Sunday, June 19, 2022

8am-9am Annual General Meeting (in-person and online)

9am-10am Invited Speak, Reagan Gale (“Strange things done in the midnight sun: Advocating for regulation”)

11am-11:30am Conversation Session, Julia Riddell (“What does it take to practice Two-Eyed Seeing?”)

11:30am-12:15pm Chair’s Address, Veronica Hutchings (“The future of Rural and Northern Psychology Section”)

1:30pm-2pm Conversation Session, Veronica Hutchings (“Lessons learned from an unaccredited predoctoral rural residency”)

2pm-2:15pm 12-Minute Talk, Conor Barker (“Defining clinical competency among rural school psychologists”)

2:15pm-2:45pm Conversation Session, Yvonne Faller (“Questioning what we know: Reflections of trainees”)



What's Your View Photo Challenge!

We encourage our readers to submit their photos from around the country! *What's Your View?* Send us your favourite picture of the geography outside your door, and we will post it in the newsletter!

Below:
Near Dauphin, MB

Submitted by Michelle Conan



Editor's Comments

Submitted by Dr. Michelle Conan, C. Psych.



I hope that you have enjoyed this spring issue of *The View from Here*—our Rural and Northern Newsletter. I am pleased to have had the role of newsletter editor for our section for the past few years.

Submissions to *The View From Here* can be made at any time, and can include:

- **an article for our regular feature “a week/day in the life of a rural and/or northern psychologist”**
- research findings and summaries
- information on upcoming conferences and training opportunities
- articles on the experience, challenges, and benefits of practicing in rural and/or northern locations
- photos
- ethical dilemmas
- book review(s)
- any other topic related to rural and northern psychology in Canada!

If you would like to make a contribution to *The View From Here*, or would like to serve in the role of newsletter editor, please contact me or Dr. Veronica Hutchings at Rnpsychology.cpa@gmail.com.

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

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

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