

Season's Greetings from the NSCDA!

I would like to take this opportunity to reflect back on the past year and the accomplishments of the NSCDA. Through the hard work and dedication of many volunteers the association had another successful conference this past spring. This professional development event is a wonderful opportunity to network with our colleagues and peers in our career development profession. Special thanks goes out to the hard work and dedication of the voluntary certification committee in advancing our field as we move into 2014 and closer to the reality of certification as career development practitioners. I am truly impressed with the calibre of work and professionalism that has been demonstrated amongst so many hard working volunteers and staff of the NSCDA. I am truly honored to work with such inspired and passionate individuals who do what they do every day from a sincere desire to help others and advance our field.

I would like to extend the warmest of wishes to you and yours this holiday season. May your hearts be filled with joy and love as you enjoy precious time with family and friends. It is my hope that 2014 be a year filled with health, happiness, and positive growth.

All the best to you & yours!

Sheri Taylor-Wood

NSCDA Chair

The Benefits of Certification

Benefits for our Field

Certification raises the bar for our field, demonstrating to our employers/funders, policy makers and the public that our work is grounded in professional excellence. It defines our scope of practice, supports quality and ensures accountability.

Benefits for Individual CDPs

- Certification confirms your mastery of critical professional competencies and recognizes your professional development and growth.
- Certification demonstrates to your clients, competitors, suppliers, peers, employers and funders that you use industry-respected best practices.
- Certification can improve your overall performance, remove uncertainty and widen market opportunities.
- The process of achieving and maintaining certification helps ensure that you are continually improving and refining your practice.
- Certification could enhance your career/promotion opportunities and/or your income.

- Certification can increase your recognition by peers, employers and recruiters/funders. It can set you apart from the competition to gain a competitive edge professionally.
- Certification establishes you as an expert and leader in your field.

Benefits for Employers of CDPs / Funders

- Certification can differentiate between hiring candidates. Beyond considering an individual's experience, you can assess their knowledge and interest in professional growth and development.
- Certification helps you to identify those who have the competencies to move into a leadership position.
- Certification is a tool to help you in targeting your staff training and professional development.
- Certification helps you to demonstrate to funders and other stakeholders that your business is run effectively.
- The regular assessment process in certification will improve staff responsibility, commitment and motivation.
- Top-performing companies understand that properly training employees leads to direct, measurable bottom-line benefits.

For the Public

- Certification affords the public the opportunity to make an informed selection of services based on the knowledge and training demonstrated by certification.
- Certification protects the public, setting a standard for excellence and a visible accountability they can trust.

Voluntary Certification Update

It's hard to believe that we're more than half way through the NSCDA's Voluntary Certification Project already! In October, we told you about working with the CTHRC to develop the framework for a legally defensible, reliable and attainable certification program. We're very excited to be able to tell you that we have taken delivery of the final versions of the NS Career Development Association Core Competency Profile and Assessment Tools.

The NS Career Development Association Core Competency Profile, the companion to the Canadian Standards and Guidelines, which clearly outlines the competencies that you will demonstrate as part of your evaluation when you apply for certification. The full profile is on the NSCDA website. Click [here](#) to view.

The Multiple Choice Exam Tests and Bank have been prepared and are ready to go.

The Structured Interview Tool, will be used to guide the in-depth interview which makes up the third prong of the certification process.

Early in the new year, we will be asking our members to take part in an individual self-assessment aimed at helping us (and you) identify the gaps that may need to be filled in practitioners' knowledge before going through the certification process. This will aid us in developing training "top-up" programs as we go forward with our certification program.

We are well underway in training the individuals who will serve as assessors in the program. As we mentioned last month, the NSCDA has partnered with the NSCC as the education provider for our Assessor Training course. The first group of assessors is nearing the end of their training and selection of the second group of assessors is underway. The NSCDA hopes to have 14 trained assessors in January 2014. This was planned to mesh with the first Certification Pilot Program, tentatively scheduled for late January 2014.

We are working on the information package to accompany the call for participants in this program, which will go out early in January; the package will include such things as a self-assessment checklist, fee structure and application information. Following the successful completion of the Pilot Program, expected in April 2014, the NSCDA will officially begin the full Voluntary Certification Program.

The other part of CTHRC work for us is the Sustainability Report. This report will provide us with a framework upon which to base the sound foundation of the certification program, and allow us to successfully build toward the future.

Now that the actual process of certification has been finalized, we are turning our attention to the development of the Member Registry. Project Co-ordinator Doris Fox, who has done an incredible job since the beginning of the project, has left to take on a wonderful career opportunity in another province. Paula Romanow has taken over as Project Co-ordinator, as well as taking on the role of interim Registrar, in order to concentrate on setting up the Registrar's position and member registry.

As always, you can find additional information, as well as project updates on our website www.nscda.ca. We thank everyone for their support in developing this program, and welcome any comments and feedback on the process at certification@nscda.ca.

2014 NSCDA Conference Update

Save the Date! The NSCDA's 16th annual conference will be held at the Atlantica Hotel and Marina Oak Island on May 29th and 30th, 2014. Planning is well underway, and we are excited to present what promises to be another fantastic learning and networking opportunity!

Board Announcement

The NSCDA consists of dedicated volunteers from across Nova Scotia who are employed in the career development field.

The following is a list of the 2013/14 Board of Directors:

Sheri Taylor-Wood ~ Chair	[Cape Breton Region]
Janet Davison ~ Director	[Northern Region]
Brenda MacKay ~ Director	[South West Valley Region]
Juliana Wiens ~ Director	[Metro Region]
Amanda White ~ Secretary	[Northern Region]
Phil Long ~ Treasurer	[South West Valley Region]
Rebekah Skeete ~ Vice-Chair	[Metro Region]

Membership Benefits

There has never been a better time to become a member of the NSCDA. 2014 is an exciting year as we move forward with Voluntary Certification. Our conference is attended by over 200 professionals in this field and is the only event dedicated exclusively to Career Development in Nova Scotia.

Receive updates on professional development opportunities, become a member of the Board or a Committee yourself, keep up to date on career and employment trends, and network with colleagues across this province. Your membership will enhance your credibility as a professional working within this dynamic and ever changing industry. Want more information? email us at info@nscda.ca or call us at (902) 869-0330.

NSCDA receives funding from CERIC for phase two of mental health research project:



Setting the Compass: A Career Service Workers Toolkit for Supporting Mental Health Clients

CERIC has agreed to fund the development of a web-based training manual for career service workers that will: improve employment and educational outcomes for people living with mental health issues by enhancing the knowledge, skills, abilities, recovery beliefs, and improving practice policies of Canada's mainstream career service workers. Training materials will be developed drawing on expert advice from leading organizations and by building on best practices in mental health, peer support, recovery, and employment. People who experience mental health issues will provide important experiential expertise. First person videos, from diverse perspectives will bring key messages and training content to life.

Why is this project important? Because employment is a critical cornerstone of social inclusion, yet people living with mental illness face the highest unemployment rate of any disability group. Although people want to and are able to work, employment for many remains an illusive goal. Career Practitioners (CDPs) are a critical resource in supporting clients in meeting their full employment potential. To better understand the training needs of career practitioners CERIC funded [Charting the Course: Mapping the Career Practitioner Role in Supporting People with Mental Health Challenges](#). Through regional focus groups, multi-sector stakeholder roundtables, meetings with career resource centre managers, presentations at provincial and national career planning conferences the challenges people face were identified including:

- Increasing numbers of clients are disclosing mental illness as a factor in their employment.
- CDPs feel hampered by a lack of knowledge and the skills needed to support these clients;
- Clients may not feel CDPs have the knowledge and skills they need to help them;
- Both CDPs and clients acknowledge stigma and discrimination as a barrier to accessing services.
- Reduced access to career planning services negatively impacts employment prospects.
- CDPs are motivated to improve their knowledge and skills and want targeted training tools.

Project partners in the toolkit development process include: CERIC, Nova Scotia Career Development Association; Canadian Mental Health Association – National; Psychosocial Rehabilitation Canada, Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace; Mental Health Commission of Canada (approval pending); and the Healthy Minds Cooperative and Consumer Initiative Centre.

To learn more about this project visit: <http://chartingthecourse.nscda.ca>.

If you are interested in getting involved, please send an email to: Neasa Martin, neasamartin@primus.ca.

Proudly supporting:

The Cannexus National Career Development Conference is now less than six weeks away, taking place, Jan. 20-22, 2014 in Ottawa.

NSCDA members continue to benefit from [discounted registration](#).

