

Newsletter

Fall 2014



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Welcome to our New Board of Directors

Message from the Chair of the Board

As the Nova Scotia Career Development Association enters its 12th year, it is time for us to reflect on how far we have come!

With a mandate that includes the advancement of career development in Nova Scotia, we continue to provide leadership to our members and community in many ways.

Our annual conference has proven to be the most sought after professional development event in Nova Scotia, with national and internationally renowned keynote speakers, and workshop presentations that cover topics of interest and importance to the career development community.

Development of the certification process for Career Practitioners is now complete and fifty individuals, chosen from a large group of applicants, are taking part in a pilot project that will measure their competencies against the Nova Scotia Career Development Framework.

A career services training manual for working with mental health clients is underway, along

with numerous other professional development and training opportunities for practitioners.

We are thriving!

This is going to be a very exciting and busy year for all of us. The Board of Directors is now in full operation with every position filled by dedicated professionals representing all regions of the province. At a recent strategic planning meeting, the new board mapped out a vision and mandate for the organization which will ensure that the career development community in Nova Scotia continues to flourish and grow in strength and numbers.

As the new Chairperson, I would like to welcome you to the Nova Scotia Career Development Association. The future is bright and we are delighted to have you aboard!

Kathy McKee

NSCDA Chair



The 16th Annual NSCDA Career Development Conference – “Encouraging Discovery, Supporting Growth” was held on May 28th – May 30th, 2014, at the Atlantica Oak Island Resort. As in the past, the conference offered Career Practitioners across the province the opportunity to connect with one another and participate in learning and professional development opportunities.

This year’s vision was to create a more intimate and participatory experience where delegates would have the environment and forum to connect with one another in a more meaningful way, and connect with the career development community. The conference had many interesting and informative presenters who delivered 15 workshops on a wide variety of topics to 205 conference registrants.

[Mark Franklin](#) facilitated the pre-conference workshop. Participants had the opportunity to play the “**Who You Are Matters**” game. Those present expressed that they felt the game had great value from a personal perspective and for their clients. There was also great interest regarding how to get training in the [CareerCycles](#) narrative method presented by Mark.

A plenary session facilitated by [Tim Merry](#) offered Conference Delegates the chance to discuss their experiences of career development in Nova Scotia with one another in a structured, **World Café** format. This [NSCDA World Café session](#) was very successful. It yielded valuable feedback from conference delegates around their concerns, challenges and perspectives on career development in Nova Scotia.

It has also opened the door for the NSCDA to provide a forum to its Membership to share their experiences and concerns with their colleagues.

In the following page, you will find a summary of the delegates feedback by topic. To see the compilation of all the comments posted by the Conference Delegates on the World Café Wall go to: www2.nscda.ca/index.php/conferences-and-events



Become a 2015 Conference Committee Member

One of the most exciting and rewarding ways to contribute to the career development community in Nova Scotia is to be a part of the NSCDA Conference Planning Committee!

The annual conference takes place every spring and is the most significant professional development and networking opportunity for the career development community in the province. This year’s event at Oak Island was one to remember!! It is time, once again, to look for a team of dedicated volunteers to make the 2015 Conference just as memorable!

We are looking for **GREAT THINKERS** and **GREAT DOERS**! If you think that you would be interested in joining us, we have created an outline and application form for your information. [\(Click here\)](#)

Please give us a call if you have any questions or would like more information.

We look forward to hearing from you!

SAVE THE DATE!

2015 Annual
Conference will
be held at the Old
Orchard Inn in
Wolfville!

The Board of Directors
has voted and The Old
Orchard Inn in Wolfville
has been chosen as the
destination for the
NSCDA's 17th Annual
Conference!

The dates will be:
May 27th to 29th, 2015.

We will be organizing a
Networking event at one
of the local wineries and
hope to offer you another
unforgettable experience!

We have also secured our
Keynote speaker and are
working on a very exciting
variety of workshops and
presentations.

Registrations will open in
early 2015. We are looking
forward to having you join
us again!



NSCDA World Café

By Tim Merry at the NSCDA Annual Conference

The following is the summary of all the comments posted by the Conference Delegates on the [World Café Wall](#) during the session led by [Tim Merry](#) at the NSCDA's 16th Annual Conference. Tim inspired the group to bring forward and share their comments about what they would like the Career Development Sector in our Province to look like. We think that by sharing these comments, we will help create change by starting the conversations that may help shape the future of Career Development in Nova Scotia.

- Paperwork does not support people's life paths
- We work with people – the linear model does not represent
- Flexibility
- Hard for people with criminal records
- There are some resources out there
- Need more grey areas
- Growing corporate sector financial support
- Empowered clients

Topics Addressed:

- **ENGAGING EMPLOYERS**
- **INTERACTION BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS**
- **SHARE INFORMATION**
- **FUNDING**
- **CONNECTING/NETWORKING WITH A PURPOSE**
- **BETTER COMMUNICATION**
- **SHIFTS IN THE SYSTEMS**
- **CLIENT ENGAGEMENT**
- **CONTINUED CONVERSATIONS**
- **TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
- **ADVOCACY & POLICY CHANGE**

What's it like working in the
Career Development Sector in
Nova Scotia these days?

How would you like it to be?

- Outcome driven world
- Employers educated on benefits of hiring clients
- Bring employers to the table
- US as clients
- Security and support for our own programs
- Piles of people don't fit the boxes
- No "one size fits all" model
- Outreach
- Conversation helps
- We want to develop our economy
- 3-way conversations
- What does Career development mean to us?
- We need self-development training

To see the compilation of all the comments posted under each topic, go to: www2.nscda.ca/index.php/conferences-and-events



“The challenge for the career development sector is not to ignore the fact that there are structural issues that affect our clients”.

On Social Justice

By H. Patrick Brush

Registered Social Worker who has worked in the Career Development field for the past 15 years.

Between June 4-6, 2014, I attended the *International Conference in Guidance and Career Development*, sponsored by the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), held in beautiful historic Quebec City. What a great opportunity for a career practitioner to go to an international conference so close to home.

During the conference, there were an incredible number of workshops and symposiums to choose from covering a wide array of topics dealing with both practical and theoretical concepts. My own personal interest was to attend sessions where I could collaborate with, and learn from, international experts in the field who are committed to the inclusion of social justice in career development practise.

The concept of including social justice concerns in workshop sessions at a career development conference was something that I had yet to experience. It is always a challenge to transform theory into practice, and this is particularly true when talking about the importance of ‘social justice’-- a term that is often not well understood or easily articulated. The question is: how can we, as career professionals, commit ourselves to values that may run counter to the dominant culture, and conflict with prevailing political, economic, and social discourses?

On the first day of the conference, I attended the symposium entitled: “International Perspectives on Social Justice”. This, - was facilitated by Nancy Arthur from the University of Calgary, and included presentations from an international panel of five experts within the career field. Each panelist provided their own definition of social justice, and shared their research on, and thinking about, this topic. The question presented was: “how is social justice shaped and brought to life in your practise”. This excellent thought provoking (and radical) question aims to get to the root of the problem, which is *whose interests are career practitioners really serving?* The requirements clients have to meet for funding, or to gain entrance into programmes, often become obstacles that stand in the way of their aspirations and/or goals. Many clients become overwhelmed by the process, and give up even before they start. Many clients don't fit the criteria that they all too often had no role in shaping, thus they are merely expected to conform. Which makes me wonder whether we are here to do client-centered work; or do we perpetuate a system that forces clients to jump through often unjust hoops. In addition, the fact that a career practitioner's job, and hence their own survival, is tied to policing people ensuring their

compliance seems to be counter intuitive. For example, we force clients to do countless items on a return to work action plan, to demonstrate and prove that they are in need and that they are *deserving* of receiving assistance. This further humiliates people whose only crime is that they are unemployed or living in poverty.

The dominant view today blames poverty on the individuals' "spirit" and personal life choices. Yet, as was reinforced over and over by the international speakers at the conference, poverty is socially produced and is the result of systemic inequality. My own view of poverty is that it is not an 'individual' problem, instead the problem is broader and one that has to be dealt with collectively as a society.

In my experience as a career practitioner in an extremely wealthy country, when I encounter clients who face countless barriers to employment, including issues of food insecurity, and who may be homeless,

or at risk of finding they have nowhere to call home, I feel outrage.

However, these are often the very clients who do not fit into the available programmes and services. What should I do when the person does not qualify, or they are not willing or able to complete the tasks assigned? What is my ethical responsibility? As the person's needs are sometimes immediate, should I feel responsible for ensuring that 'the process' is adhered to, or providing whatever support I can to the person?

One of the keynote speakers— Professor Rachel Mulvey from the University of London East, UK said (and I am paraphrasing) *we cannot career counsel people into jobs that do not exist.*

On Social Justice

continued

She was referring to areas of chronically high unemployment—such as rural Nova Scotia. This is so true—we can certainly provide good quality career development services, but to ignore the fact that there are simply not nearly enough jobs for everybody is unethical. Not only does it tend to blame the client for their unemployment, but it is my belief that we have to work at influencing dramatic social change in policy so we can better meet the needs of people in a more equitable way. When people go to the hospital they do not have to demonstrate that they are deserving of treatment, they simply have to show up and the service is provided.

In addition, a colleague of mine used to say that he never celebrated when one of his clients landed a job, because he realized that in a region with chronically high unemployment, when one of his clients won a competition for a job, then another one of his clients lost that competition. Our total caseload size never changes—except to increase. Instead of having competition for jobs, so that they we have winners and losers, why don't we strive to have full employment, because if we all have work, we all win.

When talking about social justice at the conference, there was a clear consensus that not all the problems a client faces are of their own making. In fact, in many cases, the problems they face are external to themselves, and the solution to the problem is often beyond their individual control. Much of the work that we do as Career Practitioners is constantly focused on the individual, and expecting them to change, never really addressing the systemic structural issues of inequality and unemployment.

The problem in Canada, and much of the world, is not a lack of wealth, but how this is concentrated and distributed. If we are to truly be client-centered in our work, we need to be willing to work with communities, and challenge systems that actually create the social and economic marginalization of our clients. If we are not willing to address these challenges and approach our work in ways that are socially just, we participate in a system that contributes to, and blames, our clients for their poverty and unemployment.

The challenge for the career development sector is not to ignore the fact that there are structural issues that affect our clients. Nelson Mandela once said that "Poverty is not an accident. Like slavery and apartheid, it is man-made and can be removed by the action of human beings".

In closing, while at the conference, I learned that the IAEVG has been attempting to bring more attention to the issue of social justice within the field of educational and career guidance and counselling. A year ago, at the IAEVG conference in Montpellier, France they released a "Communiqué on Social Justice in Educational and Career Guidance and Counselling" which I provide the link below. In addition, in March of this year, there was a special issue of the International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance dedicated to "Social Justice, Prosperity, and Sustainable Employment as a Challenged for Career Guidance."

<http://www.iaevg.org/iaevg/nav.cfm?lang=2&menu=1&submenu=9>

The views of this article are those of the author alone and not of the NSCDA.

Setting the Compass ~ A Career Services Guide For Supporting Mental Health Clients

Progress is being made!

Here is a brief update on our progress and challenges in developing The Career Services Guide.

Video Update

Participants shared personal stories and insights on hope, barriers, enablers and best advice on how to improve their support and service to people living with mental health problems and illnesses. Now the fun/challenge is underway as we work to weave the interviews together in a compelling way.

Expert Advisory Team

We now have 40+ content and experiential experts from across the country working in diverse settings who are willing to review and field test the guide to make sure the content is clear, concise, has the right tone and level of detail and most importantly is relevant to their work.

Key Themes Survey

Our project partners and content experts were asked to complete an online survey to capture the key messages they would like to see included in the guide. A summary report is attached. <http://fluidsurveys.com/s/settingthecompassadvisors/>

Guide development - Getting the message 'right'

We are working to align the content of the guide to the values, beliefs, and knowledge within recovery - oriented practice. Doing so will put career service workers on the vanguard of practice change. Care is required to make sure the bridge between mental health employment research and recovery is sound.

Things take longer than you anticipate

Our goal is to get the project 'right' rather than just getting it done. We appreciate your on-going support and patience as we move forward.

In case you need a refresher on the project goals here is a project description: [hKp://ceric.ca/?q=en/node/788](http://ceric.ca/?q=en/node/788)

Voluntary Certification Update

By Paula Romanow

NSCDA Executive Director & VC Registrar

It's been a busy few months since our last update this summer. First of all, our eleven assessors completed their training through the NSCC, and are currently almost through the certification process. They wrote the exam in August, most have completed the structured interview process and submitted their evidence packages. They should all have their certification by the end of November. The assessors have been the "Beta testers" for our certification program; they've provided excellent feedback as they've gone through, which will make the process more streamlined and efficient for our pilot candidates.

The second big bit of certification news is that we had 72 responses to our July call for pilot participants. Once all the applications were in, the Registrar, Paula Romanow, coded them based on the demographic data that the applicants submitted. Then this information was placed into a spreadsheet, in which each participant was identified only by a number. From this anonymous coded list the members of the Voluntary Certification Committee conducted a blind selection process, choosing 50 applicants solely on the basis of getting the most diverse group possible. 50 were chosen initially because we only have 11 assessors, and part of the pilot is determining how long and how much work the assessment process will be.

The Registrar spent the month of October on the road, traveling around the province delivering the mandatory orientation sessions to both current candidates, and those on the waitlist.

This first step to certification will be followed by the exam for the 50, tentatively scheduled for the last week of November / first two weeks of December. It's hoped to get everyone through the exam before the holidays.

It's an exciting time for the Voluntary Certification committee as we finally are able to see almost 10 years of work coming to fruition! If you're interested in finding out more about certification, please contact the Executive director / Registrar, Paula Romanow at (902) 869-0277 or at certification@nscda.ca.

Spread the News!! Career Development Challenge COMING SOON!

The Canadian Council for Career Development (C CCD) is pleased to celebrate Canada Career Week November 3-7, 2014, and this year the members want to inform you about a new online career service tool, **the Career Development Challenge**.

The Challenge weblink is <http://careerchallenge.ca/>.

If you have any questions about the quiz, please don't hesitate to contact:

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Next Steps for you! Checklist for Members.

- ☐ Join the 2015 Conference Committee
- ☐ Plan to attend the Conference in May 2015
- ☐ Engage with Voluntary Certification
- ☐ Advise the NSCDA what you need for Professional Development
- ☐ Let the NSCDA know if you want to organize a networking social in your area



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