



IN THIS ISSUE:

NSCDA welcomes
new Registrar

Tips for dealing with
difficult people

Mohja Alia
discusses the rewards
and challenges of working
with immigrants

The NSCDA Newsletter is published by the the Nova Scotia Career Development Association, an inclusive not-for-profit organization that provides strategic leadership to Nova Scotia professionals in career development.

We welcome story ideas and submissions. We do not offer monetary compensation for articles, but provide a biography for contributors. We cannot guarantee articles will run, even with previous agreement. All submissions are subject to editing for style and space.

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Message from the Executive Director & Board Chair

March and April always seem to be “one step forward two steps back” kinds of months, with warm sunny days followed by snow, or ice, or rain, or occasionally all three at once. But for all the turbulent weather, this time of year is ultimately one of hope, of looking forward to better things to come.

These last few months have been extremely busy, and not a little stressful, for career development in Nova Scotia. That certainly has been true here at the NSCDA. Among other things, mandatory certification and its accompanying increased workload has meant that we’ve had to hire a full-time Registrar (see the Certification Update on page three), and we’d like to take this opportunity to introduce Phil Ward, CCDP, to everyone. Phil comes to us from The WorkBridge where he worked as a job developer.

One very bright spot on the horizon is our 18th annual conference, June 1-3 at White Point Beach Resort. This year’s theme is Synergy in Diversity, and we’re building a terrific program around it. The keynote speakers are Aboriginal author Joseph Bodyen, and well-respected African Nova Scotian scholar Dr. Wanda Bernard, both of whom are inspiring and powerful speakers. Last year’s pre-conference half-day session format worked so well that we’re doing the same this year. Nessa Martin will conduct a workshop on using the *Career Services Guide: Supporting People Affected by Mental Health Issues*, and Rich Donovan, a globally recognized subject matter expert on the convergence of disability and corporate profitability, will also be presenting. The two plenary sessions during the conference cover the idea of change. Brenda Allen will speak to the idea of change management, and Dwayne Cormier will introduce the *Military to Civilian Employment: A Career Practitioner’s Guide* which will provide any career practitioner with the tools, resources and confidence to work with a transitioning member of the Canadian Armed Forces, veteran reservist, or military spouse. For more information and to register, visit the conference website.

There are other changes coming for the NSCDA, which we’ll introduce in our next newsletter. For now, let’s just say stand by for some very exciting news about upcoming professional development opportunities! We’d also like to emphasize that among all the changes, the NSCDA is YOUR organization. We belong to the members, and everything we do is based on your wants, needs and ideas. We want to hear from you!!

Paula Romanow, Executive Director

Kathy McKee, Board Chair

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CERTIFICATION UPDATE

Paula Romanow
Registrar, NSCDA

There have been some exciting changes for the NSCDA's Certification Program over the last few months. The increased workload coming from the province's new mandate for certification has meant that I've been wearing both executive director and registrar hats up to now, but there is too much work for one person. So this will be my last update because I'm passing the Registrar torch over to Phil Ward, CCDP, who joined the NSCDA in March and is doing a terrific job.

Congratulations to our new CCDPs who recently completed the pilot exam rewrite: Angela Bear, Brad Whynot, Cindy Willcott, Elizabeth Hodder, Lisa Diggs, Cora Rogers-Martin, Jason MacDonald and Trina Pineo. Very well done!!

Currently, we have 115 candidates at various stages of the process. Until recently, we've had only had six active assessors, resulting in a backlog of candidates completing the Structured Interview (SI). Our six new assessors have now completed their mentorships, so things will be moving along more quickly. We apologize for the delay for those of you ready to write the exam. Because it's being written in

various locations, we needed a critical mass of people in order to set it up. We have now reached that number, and are scheduling the exam for mid-April. Phil will be contacting relevant candidates shortly. Once the exam is over, we'll be sending out another call for assessors.

For the first time, the exam will be available in both French and English, and we are in the process of translating all certification documents. Two of our new assessors are bilingual, so we already offer the SI in both languages.

Finally, there have been questions about certification for people who do not meet the prerequisite of 5400 hours over the last five years, yet will need to be certified under the new mandate. We are working on a Pathway to Certification for those in this category. More on that in the next newsletter.

It's been an interesting and exciting time getting the certification program up and running, not least because it allowed me to meet and work with so many NSCDA members. But I know I'm placing it in excellent hands. Take it away, Phil! 🇧🇪

NSCDA Welcomes New Registrar

The NSCDA would like to welcome new team member and Registrar, Phil Ward.

Phil has been working in the career development field for more than seven years, and is a familiar face to many of our members. He became one of Nova Scotia's first Certified Career Development Practitioners in May of 2015, as part of the certification pilot project. He recently completed his Voluntary Assessor training under the mentorship of Betsy Payne. His dedication and background give him a deep understanding of the challenges faced by both clients and members.

Phil is an honors graduate from the Business Administration program at NSCC, and he has a long history of adult learning dating back to 1989. As a proponent of life-long learning, Phil welcomes any opportunity to improve his skill set and share his knowledge with others.

Prior to entering the field of career development Phil spent 19 years in a manufacturing and production environment.

Phil enjoys time spent outdoors, especially in warmer weather, which he hopes is just around the corner. One of the most amazing things in his life is three-year-granddaughter, Kaylee. "I now understand why people say they would have preferred to have the grandchildren first!" He also enjoys time spent with his large family and dog, Fundy.

With this new and exciting opportunity with the NSCDA, Phil looks forward to guiding our members through the certification process and communicating with everyone. 🇧🇪



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MEMBER PROFILE

Mohja Alia
Manager, Employment and
Bridging Programs, ISANS



Mohja Alia has been helping immigrants adapt to life in Nova Scotia — and Canada — since 1997. For the last four years she has been the manager of Employment and Bridging Programs at Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS). ISANS is the largest immigrant-serving agency in Atlantic Canada, with more than 115 staff members from over 30 countries.

Originally from Jordan, Mohja worked in finance and banking in Kuwait for many years before she and her husband, Adel, immigrated to Nova Scotia, hoping to start their own fish packaging business, and to enable their older children to attend university. One of the first organizations the couple turned to was the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA), which eventually became ISANS, as we know it today. “I went there for help, met everyone at MISA and never left,” she says with a laugh. But, she’s not joking. After her first contact with MISA, she began working with them as a volunteer.

While the Alia’s dream of opening a fish packaging plant never materialized, they did open a laundromat with the support of MISA’s business team. By then, Mohja realized she really wanted to help others who were coming to this province for the first time and says, “I found my heart in employment counselling.” She’s thankful that she also found a mentor in a co-worker and was able to continue her education in the field, enabling her to begin employment counselling professionally around 2000.

The way Nova Scotia welcomes newcomers has changed considerably over the years since she arrived. “There were many services back 20 years ago, from settlement to language, business and employment, but with the increased numbers, diversified backgrounds and the highly qualified applicants we met, ISANS started offering customized programs to address the specific challenges immigrants face in getting their credentials recognized and finding employment.”

One of the areas ISANS has focused on is pre-arrival employment counselling, which prepares immigrants before they get to NS. In the fall of 2015, ISANS announced that they will be partnering with designated settlement agencies across the country in an innovative pre-arrival initiative

called Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA). The program will improve networking capabilities between pre- and post-arrival services using ISANS’ online tools, enabling immigrants to interact with staff, and access various skill development courses, before entering the country. With programs such as these, “90 percent of the pre-arrival immigrants accessing employment services at ISANS get jobs within six months of arrival,” she says.

ISANS also plays a major role assisting clients who need to obtain professional licenses to work in the province. “Forty percent come from regulated occupations,” she says. “We are doing a lot of work in the area of international qualifications, working closely with regulatory bodies and professional associations.” ISANS developed the Multi-Stakeholder Work Group model in collaboration with these regulatory bodies and other stakeholders to address issues facing internationally-educated professionals working in the areas of medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, engineering, nursing, medical laboratory technology, dietician services, law, teaching, architecture, and construction electrician trades.

“We meet quarterly to discuss the barriers to certification, and what we can do to remove those barriers. We realize our clients come with professional knowledge and experience, but they lack knowledge of the pathways to licensure, Canadian workplace culture and Canadian certification processes, so we help them get the training they need to fill the gaps.”

ISANS also has a loan fund program to help immigrants in regulated occupations pay for essential expenses to become certified in their fields. The Career Pathway Loan Fund is a community-based partnership that provides financial support to assist internationally-trained workers in overcoming barriers in the foreign credential recognition process, and to assist them in returning to work in their fields of expertise, or related fields, in Canada. The fund covers such things as exam fees, training, living expenses, travel and accommodations, and work tools.

For people interested in working as a Career Development Practitioner (CDP) with newcomers, “it’s very rewarding, but requires a lot of experience working with immigrants and understanding different cultures,” says Mohja. “There’s

no one pathway for everyone, but it's essential that CDPs understand what an immigrant needs to know to work in Canada, and that requires passion and patience." Mohja and the Employment and Bridging team at ISANS work hard to keep abreast of the procedures and changes in the certification process for regulated occupations. Immigrants arrive with strong educational and work experience backgrounds, but they need to understand the Canadian job search process and the Canadian workplace culture.

A CDP working with immigrants has to emphasize the importance of completing such training for successful integration and then retention. Many things, such as eligibility and legal status to work, have to be considered before trying to find a position for an immigrant. It's also important to match clients with the right employers and right jobs. "Immigrants are well informed adults and they can make their own decisions when looking for employment, we respect their decisions and support their career paths."



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New Guide Helps CDPs Working With Veterans

by Sharon Ferriss

Director, Marketing, Web & New Media, CERIC

The Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC) has partnered with Canada Company, the leader in military employment transition, to provide Canadian career service professionals with the tools they need to help veterans transitioning into civilian careers.

In 2016, there will be approximately 5,000 new, highly skilled veterans entering the competitive job market, and one in four will have difficulty transitioning to civilian life. Many will require help finding jobs after serving their country, despite having unique skills and experiences.

Military to Civilian Employment: A Career Practitioner's Guide is an essential resource for understanding the unique challenges and opportunities in supporting veterans to successfully transition to civilian employment. Career coaches, counsellors, HR professionals, hiring managers and others working with ex-military personnel will all benefit from this specialized guide.

"At CERIC, the projects we support are driven by need," said Jan Basso, Chair of CERIC and Director of Co-operative Education and Career Development at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, ON. "For the last few years, we have been hearing that career professionals across Canada are seeing more clients come to them from a military background. Career professionals are looking for a specialized resource they can use in helping veterans make the transition to meaningful and satisfying work in the civilian labour market."

Users of the guide will gain insights into military life and how to translate military experience and training into civilian terms, including "demilitarizing" resumes and matching skills with the right employers. Topics covered include career planning, job search, as well as coping and adaptation strategies. A chapter is also dedicated to the career development needs of military spouses.

CERIC and Canada Company worked closely with the Canadian Armed Forces, Veterans Affairs Canada, Military Family Services, employers, post-secondary institutions, career professionals, and veterans and their families to develop the guide. Authored by career development expert Yvonne Rodney, the guide incorporates the latest evidence-based research, but is written in a conversational style, drawing on interviews with current and former service members.

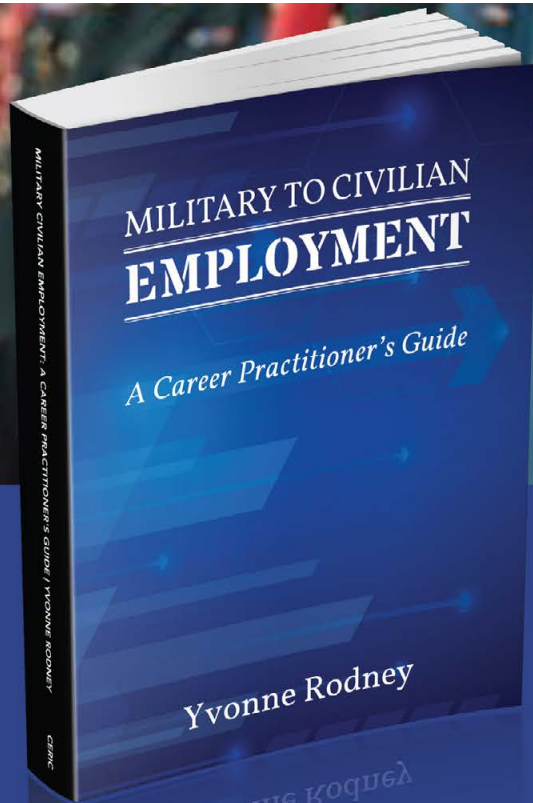
"Our nation is embracing the challenge of educating and empowering military members and veterans as they choose to take what can be an overwhelming step for their next career," said Angela Mondou, President of Canada Company. "We are proud of the huge difference thousands of well-informed career professionals will make in supporting the challenges of the veteran transition experience. *The Military to Civilian Employment: A Career Practitioner's Guide* helps Canada get one step closer to a nation that appreciates our members who have served."

The guide officially launched at Cannexus in January, with more than 900 people in attendance. General (retired) Walter Natynczyk, Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada was on-hand to deliver remarks during the launch, as was Lieutenant-General Christine Whitecross, the Canadian Armed Forces Chief of Military Personnel.

Dwayne Cormier, Director of Transition Services with Canada Company, will be presenting on the guide at this year's NSCDA Conference in June. Those attending the conference will receive a free copy. For those not able to attend, a digital version is available for free from the CERIC website, or it can be purchased online at Chapters.Indigo.ca and Amazon.ca.

CERIC is a charitable organization that advances education and research in career counselling and career development, in order to increase the economic and social well-being of Canadians. CERIC hosts Cannexus, Canada's largest bilingual career development conference; publishes the country's only peer-reviewed journal, The Canadian Journal of Career Development; and runs the free ContactPoint / OrientAction online communities, which provide learning and networking in the career field. www.ceric.ca.

Canada Company is a federally registered charity created in 2006 by Canadian businessman and Honorary Colonel, Blake Goldring M.S.M., LL.D., CFA. Canada Company connects businesses with military tested resources, and provides a seamless transition into the civilian workforce. Canada Company offers the Military Employment Transition – MET Program; hosts the National Transition Symposium and Strategic Knowledge Exchange; and funds Scholarships for children of soldiers killed while serving on an active mission with the Canadian Armed Forces. www.CanadaCompany.ca.



Military to Civilian Employment: A Career Practitioner's Guide

AUTHOR: YVONNE RODNEY



Knowledge and tools that equip career professionals to assist Canadian Armed Forces personnel with successful transition to civilian employment.

- Chapter 1** – Understanding the Needs
- Chapter 2** – Understanding Military Culture
- Chapter 3** – The Big Picture: Veterans Face Unique Challenges
- Chapter 4** – Employment and Employability: Tools, Services and Jobs
- Chapter 5** – Enhancing Coping and Adaptation: Strategies and Support Networks
- Chapter 6** – The Education/Qualification Conundrum
- Chapter 7** – Career Needs of Military Spouses
- Chapter 8** – Services, Programs and Resources

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Having spent the past several years delivering career transition services to military members and veterans, I am confident that this guide will be a valuable resource for anyone who chooses to, or finds themselves, in the privileged position of supporting and assisting veterans and their families. This much-needed resource does a remarkable job of helping career professionals understand military culture in a quick, easy-to-read format.”

– Paula Wischoff Yerama, CCDP, Executive Director,
Career Development Association of Alberta

Developed by CERIC in partnership with Canada Company and in consultation with the Canadian Armed Forces, Veterans Affairs Canada, Military Family Services, military-friendly employers and front-line career professionals.

A special thank you to the Knowledge Champions for career development who helped to make possible the publication of this guide.



Learn more: at ceric.ca/military

Dealing With Difficult People

by Floria Aghdamimehr

We have all dealt with difficult people and they come in every imaginable mix. They can be clients, co-workers, acquaintances, friends and even family members who do things that frustrate us. Some don't keep commitments while others talk constantly and never listen; some criticize any idea that is not theirs and some always want the last word; others compete for the spotlight, power or privilege. There may be cliques that leave you out. Difficult people can be present in any scenario, and each individual brings different characteristics that need to be addressed.

There are many strategies that can be employed to deal with difficult people, but the most important ones involve remaining calm, listening, and redirecting negativity. By doing these things, you're taking away the power the difficult person is yielding over you. Through research and practice I've developed seven strategies that can help you deal with the difficult people in your life:

1. Keep your cool

Don't get angry and do not lose your temper. If you find yourself getting too upset, walk away from the situation, count to ten, or arrange to meet and discuss the issue at a later date.

2. Be a good listener

Listening to understand rather than to respond is critical. Most people start preparing what they're going to say while the other person is still talking. This is a mistake. You cannot truly listen and think of a response at the same time. Sometimes just listening will defuse a situation because all the other person really wanted was to be heard and have his or her point of view validated.

3. Build relationships

Technology has taken much of the personal interaction out of communication. Voicemail, email, and texting can prevent us from truly connecting with other people on an emotional

level, and in an understanding way. Taking a few minutes to get to know a client, coworker, or business associate that you find difficult can go a long way in building a strong relationship, and perhaps even make that person a bit easier to deal with over time.

4. Don't take it personally

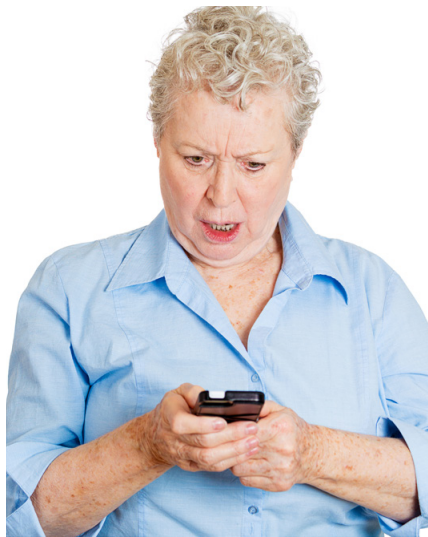
One common trait of difficult people is that they're not available when you need them, they don't return calls in a timely manner, or they miss appointments. If you're having trouble connecting with someone, don't automatically assume he or she is ignoring you. Sometimes people really are busy or unable to respond. Whatever the reason, it's them and not you. Don't let it bother you.

5. Pick your battles

Not all difficult people need to be addressed and dealt with. Sometimes it's better to just let things go. If someone is being rude to you while you're serving them at a counter for instance, they'll be gone from your life as soon as the next person comes along. There's no need to fight every battle.

6. Become the leader

Difficult people tend to lead and dominate conversations — often in a very negative manner. During a healthy conversation, the leader and follower will change, and all parties are



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given an opportunity to share their views and be heard. If you find yourself dealing with a person attempting to always lead the conversation in the direction he or she wants, try changing topics to create a more positive tone.

7. Stay objective

Detach yourself from the emotions of feeling offended. Staying objective and focusing on finding solutions to deal with an issue is both effective and reduces the stress of the situation.

These strategies will not only help you deal with difficult people, they will reduce your stress levels, increase your confidence and help you build better relationships through stronger communication. 🌟

Floria Aghdamimehr BScHE is a consultant, trainer, speaker and Workplace Productivity Coach.

Floria Aghdamimehr's work is SOLUTION based! She believes it is important to acknowledge challenges then fully focus on the Solutions.

Contact Floria at (902) 483-8400 or visit her website at RecognizeYourPotential.com





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Pre Conference



**Neasa
Martin**

Neasa will discuss The Career Services Guide: Supporting People Affected by Mental Health Issues. She is active in helping shape public policy and employment practices.

Many more sessions on:
CDP Practice,
Certification,
Management,
Wellness &
Self-Care.



**Rich
Donovan**

Rich created the "Return on Disability" concept and model. His proprietary and proven process translates disability success factors into specific actions that create sustainable value.

Keynote



**Joseph
Boyden**

Joseph's award-winning writing career has had a strong focus on the historical and contemporary experience of First Nations peoples. The common theme in most of his literary works is the inequality of the Native people. He has a passion to help those Aborigines who struggle against respect and equality.

Closing



**Dr. Wanda
Thomas Bernard**

Our closing speaker is highly regarded for addressing racial and cultural diversity in social work education and in the community. She has made major contributions to the field of Black masculinity, Black women's health and well being, and to an Africentric understanding of the strengths of Black families.