

The Conference Edition



NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2016



In This Issue:

An interview with
Joseph Boyden

Neasa Martin discusses
mental health & inclusion

Conference photos

Tools to stop negative thinking

Brian Walker talks about
his career & shares resources

New Steps to Certification infographic

The NSCDA Newsletter is published by 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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Conference photos taken by Bob Stevenson

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Message from the Executive Director & Board Chair

It looks like summer has finally gotten here after a long, dreary spring. And while we like to talk about the “lazy days of summer” that’s certainly not going to be the case here at the NSCDA!

With the addition of Training Development Coordinator Pam Tracz, who is joining us on July 12th, our staffing complement is now complete at six: Executive Director Paula Romanow, Registrar Phil Ward, Communications Coordinator Cathi Stevenson, Administrative Coordinator Chantelle Marshall, and Membership Coordinator Paulina Alfaro. It’s going to be a very busy summer for us all.

Pam will be travelling the province talking to members to find out what your professional development (PD) needs — and wants — are before she begins the development of an incredibly extensive program of PD to be rolled out in the fall. We’ll have more about that in our fall newsletter. Phil and Chantelle are getting ready for the next set of exams to be held in the upcoming weeks. They will also be rolling out both the recertification (don’t forget to send Chantelle your sheets from the conference!) and the new Career Pathways to Certification programs for those who don’t meet the three years out of the last five prerequisite for certification. We’ll be putting something up on the website about this in the very near future, so stay tuned. Cathi is working on our social media presence (don’t forget to like us on Facebook and Twitter) as well as a variety of other projects. And now that our annual conference is over, Paulina will be busy working on recruiting new members and increasing our benefits-for-members package.

Speaking of our 18th annual conference, the feedback from attendees shows that it was another resounding success. Paulina and her team, especially Coralyn Fraser, deserve a huge thank you for all their hard work. There’s lots of coverage in this edition of the newsletter for those of you who couldn’t make it. Next year’s conference will be held at the new World Trade and Convention Centre in Halifax. Looking forward to seeing everyone there.

Remember that 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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Welcome to our two new board members:

Carley Gloade
Millbrook First Nation, Millbrook
Member at Large

Lynn McDonagh Hughes
TIANS, Halifax
Member at Large





CERTIFICATION UPDATE

Phil Ward
Registrar, NSCDA

Happy summer everyone! I am very pleased to announce that we now have 102 Certified Career Development Practitioners (CCDPs) including 36 new CCDPs as of this newsletter. Congratulations! Please check our website to see the complete list of CCDPs. Everyone's dedication and hard work have led you, the members, to this milestone! All CCDPs should be very proud and know that they are at the forefront of career development services here in our province, and nationally.

We are very happy to have a new Training Development Coordinator starting soon. She will be developing an extensive professional development program, following consultation with our members. Over the fall and winter we will be providing opportunities to gain personal development as the NSCDA grows to better serve you. These sessions will count towards re-certification for our CCDPs. As communicated, the requirement for re-certification has been established at sixty (60) hours over three (3) years. Don't forget to submit your stamped sheet from conference to us by fax, mail, or email to Chantelle Marshall (administration@nscda.ca). She will be keeping track of CCDPs' recertification hours.

We are busy revising tools for the certification process such as the update of the exam and French translations. Very

soon, a protocol for persons who do not meet the minimum number of 5400 hours in the last five (5) years for the certification process, will be finalized. This will be called Career Pathways to Certification. Contact me for more information or watch our website. We'll be posting details there shortly.

We currently have 13 active assessors and are near completion of an Assessor's Guide. We put out a call for new assessors in May, but will be holding off on the training to allow people to get settled in their new workplaces in hopes that we will have a reasonably-sized group for training mid-summer.

Exams will also be held again this summer and fall, so keep working on your certification steps (see page 5 for Infographic). We will be getting as many people ready as possible to become certified. We have also been exploring changes in the exam delivery and will be rolling it out in a paper-based format for the next round. This will solve some of the issues that have been raised during exam times.

I am always available to answer questions. Please contact me any time at 902-835-0315 or registrar@nscda.ca.

NSCDA Welcomes New Administrative Coordinator

The NSCDA has welcomed new Administrative Coordinator, Chantelle Marshall.

Chantelle has been working in the career development field for more than three years, and brings with her an additional twelve years' experience working in community development. She has a wealth of knowledge that will benefit the NSCDA and its members, having worked in regional development, board governance, finance, and human resources. Her dedication and background gives her an intimate understanding of many of the challenges currently faced by our members.

In her spare time, Chantelle enjoys participating in dog shows and on weekends and can often be found in a different part

of the country. She has explored most of North America one exhibition ground at a time. When not travelling or working, she enjoys spending time with family and her canine companions.

Chantelle is excited to be working with the NSCDA and looks forward to getting to know our members. Aside from looking after office management, she is also working closely with Registrar Phil Ward administering the Certification Program.



Welcome to Our New Training Development Coordinator

The NSCDA is thrilled to introduce our new Training Development Coordinator, Pam Tracz, who will be joining our team on July 12th. She brings with her a wealth of training development experience and a deep knowledge of program management, adult education principles, and career development.

Most recently, Pam was employed with De Beers Canada working as training superintendent at a remote diamond mine in Northern Ontario. Prior to that she worked in Nova Scotia in a variety of sectors including IT, education, health care, and recreation, where she had an impressive track record of assisting a variety of groups, companies and people to achieve their professional development goals. She has extensive experience working with indigenous and immigrant populations, as well as people with disabilities. This has given her the ability to conduct needs assessments with diverse learners, then effectively design and deliver programming for them.

Pam's academic qualifications include an MA in Adult Education from St. Francis Xavier University, a BA in Physical &

Health Education from Laurentian University, and a Diploma in Recreation Leadership from Mohawk College.

Pam lives in Windsor, NS, with her husband, where she enjoys ski instructing for both downhill and Cross Country at Ski Martock. In her spare time she loves to garden, run, cycle and get ready for ski season.



Over the next couple of months, Pam will be travelling around the province visiting every Career Nova Scotia Centre talking to managers and staff to determine your needs and desires regarding professional development. Once this needs assessment phase is complete, she will be developing an extensive 2016/17 professional development program which will be rolled out in the early fall. Please join us in welcoming Pam to the NSCDA. 🇨🇦



LEFT: NSCDA Registrar Phil Ward and Marcus Jamieson, Systems and Services Manager for TEAM Work Cooperative, were recently awarded certificates by the Ability Employers in recognition of their outstanding commitment to enhancing knowledge, skills, and attitudes when working with and recruiting persons with disabilities.

RIGHT: Phil was also recognized by The Work Bridge and Judy Turner (left) for his service to the organization and their clients during the 15th AGM.



Let Us Know

Do you have an idea for a story? Would you like to submit an article?

Have you or another member won an award or been recognized for your accomplishments and hard work?

Contact Communications Coordinator Cathi Stevenson at communications@nscda.ca

Don't forget the NSCDA is on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

Steps to Becoming a Certified Career Development Practitioner



Please note: There are no deadlines for completing any of the steps.



**All Candidates must complete the Ethics Webinar before receiving their certificates.*



MEMBER PROFILE

Brian Walker

Case Manager /
Academic Accommodation
Coordinator / Assistive
Technology Specialist,
Employability Partnership

There isn't much Brian Walker hasn't seen or experienced when it comes to working through the challenges of having a disability. "I went to college for 13 years," he laughs, when talking about the long and winding road he took to find his "forever career" of helping others with atypical learning needs.

Brian is visually impaired, but can see with the proper glasses and treatment. He describes failing college three years in a row, leaving to work at a few different jobs, then returning to school to fail a fourth year. Although he has two degrees (one with honours) and various certificates and diplomas now, it's not something he wants anyone else to experience. As Case Manager / Academic Accommodation Coordinator / Assistive Technology Specialist for Employability Partnership in Sydney, Brian tries to ensure clients are following their dreams and desires and have access to the tools to achieve them.

Quite often people who have learning difficulties or physical challenges struggle academically from an early age. At some point, well meaning counsellors will tell them they should "work with their hands" and try to steer them into trades, he says. After a less-than-stellar academic career, when he couldn't read a text book more than 20 minutes, he tried many different jobs and trade programs, including an auto body course, which he realized he wasn't suited for after inadvertently lighting his hair on fire while welding a car door. "I can still smell it," he laughs. But, he would not have been in that class had a career counsellor not suggested it to him as an alternative to following his own interests and goals. Likewise, his short career training to be a barber in 1984 (although there were no reports of hair being lit on fire this time). He even had a brief career in the insurance industry as a bookkeeper and estimator.

Between 1984 and 1991 Brian was best known in Sydney as the guy who owned The Wiener Wagon and The Dog House carts. The popular chip truck and three hot dog carts catered

to snack-deprived late-night patrons of Smooth Herman's, The Crow Pub, Daniel's, and The Steel City. Those days are long behind him and now Brian's career truly is a labour of love as he tests and reviews new technologies that can aid people academically, professionally and personally. All the encouragement and support in the world won't help a person whose physical or intellectual limitations aren't being addressed, says Brian. Finding the right software or hardware that enables a person to accomplish their goals is what matters to him. "It's rewarding to introduce someone to a technology, watch their eyes open wide and hear them say, 'I can do that'."

During his spare time he's doing the same thing. He just can't get enough of it. "Very simple little things can make such a difference for someone and a lot of this stuff is free," he says.

To better assist clients, Brian has a website that includes links and information on various technologies that can assist people. At <http://www.betteranswers.ca>, you'll find technology that may help you, a friend, or a family member. You can learn simple things like how to increase the size of the text on a website, alter the glare from your devices to make reading easier, or find links to applications that will help you increase your reading speed, or discover Closed Circuit Television that will allow you to scan your textbook and have it read aloud, displayed in large type, and highlighted.

Brian has been with Employability Partnership since 2002. He's married with four adult children. His youngest son is 21 and has disabilities that require around-the-clock care. 🇨🇦

"It's rewarding to introduce someone to a technology, watch their eyes open wide and hear them say, 'I can do that'."



Author Joseph Boyden speaking at the annual NSCDA conference on June 2nd at White Point.

Joseph Boyden Suggests We Just Ask Questions

Well-known Canadian author and speaker Joseph Boyden has some advice for people working with or assisting clients from a different culture: "Ask what they want." It sounds simple enough. Boyden says it's important that we understand the basic desires and goals of a person who might be seeing the world through a different lens. Connecting and understanding is essential and Boyden believes basic politeness might be standing in our way. "We have a fear of offending people and a fear of sounding like we don't have enough knowledge," but asking questions is how people learn and work together, he says. He's not diminishing the importance of being respectful, but says the best way to understand someone is to ask questions.

Joseph Boyden is of Irish, Scottish, and Métis descent. His work focuses on historical and modern experiences of First Nation peoples. His first novel, *Three Day Road*, was published in 2005, won numerous awards and was nominated for a Governor General's Award. His second novel, *Through Black Spruce*, won the 2008 Scotiabank Giller Prize. He was made a Member of the Order of Canada in 2015. 🇨🇦

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Do You Really Understand What Inclusion Means?

An Interview with Rich Donovan



Rich Donovan takes a moment before his session at the NSCDA's conference in June.

Members of marginalized populations often face difficulties when seeking employment, and getting past barriers such as discrimination and stereotypes is not always easy. Career development practitioners (CDPs) deal with issues surrounding marginalized groups, including those with disabilities, on a daily basis. In Nova Scotia, 18.8 percent of the population reported having at least one disability in 2012, the highest of all provinces. (Statistics Canada. *Canadian Survey on Disability 2012*).

Only 49.4 percent of people with disabilities in this province are employed, which is higher than the national average of 47.9 percent, but far lower when compared to the employment rate of 72.5 percent for Nova Scotians who don't report having disabilities. (Nova Scotia Labour Market Statistics 2014).

The good news is that the profile of those with disabilities being unemployed is shifting, according to Rich Donovan, CEO of The Return on Disability Group and a globally recognized expert on disability with respect to corporate profitability. Donovan was one of two pre-conference speakers at the NSCDA's 18th Annual Conference at White Point. He's confident that businesses are looking for ways to grow, and are

"People get so focused on hiring, that they forget businesses don't exist to hire people, they exist to delight their customers."

quickly seeing the potential of this untapped market. But it's not merely about the "inclusion" of people with disabilities in the way many people think about the word. "Inclusion doesn't mean much to me. I'm a business guy," says Donovan. From a business standpoint, it just makes sense to include a market that affects more than half the population in some way, because for every person with a disability there are family members, friends, employers, co-workers, teachers and others also being affected.

One of the problems Donovan sees is that when someone says "disability" in a business context, people automatically assume the discussion is about compliance, with companies trying to reach unrealistic quotas. This has been the case for the last two decades, he says. "People get so focused on hiring, that they forget businesses don't exist to hire people, they exist to delight their customers."

The key is to get business owners to see the value in this untapped market, not out of benevolence, but out of a commitment to their own bottom lines. 🇨🇦

Don't forget the NSCDA is on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

NSCDA 18th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Photo Gallery





A Big thank You to All Our Conference Volunteers

Committee Chair and Conference Coordinator Paulina Alfaro would like to express her appreciation on behalf of the NSCDA, to those who volunteered their time to make the 18th Annual Conference such a success.

Coralyn Fraser, CCDP, worked as our on-site co-director and has volunteered countless hours since Sept. 2015. Coralyn always made herself available to help on all levels to bring the conference together.

The Content Committee was the brains behind the conference program. Headed by Laura Reynolds, CCDP, the committee reviewed presentation submissions and chose those offering the most value to our delegates and best reflecting this year's theme "Synergy in Diversity." It was a lot of work and volunteers gave up many hours of personal time to help. Thank you! Committee members included Coralyn Fraser; Tammy Murray Reid, owner and founder of Inspire-Works Consulting in Halifax; and Ann Divine, CEO of Ashanti Leadership and Professional Development Services, Halifax.

Francesco Troili, IT Manager at the Job Resource Centre in Windsor, is truly a hidden treasure. Francesco has always been the "behind the scenes" master. Every year, he makes sure the conference website is created on time and he is always available to patiently make updates when called upon. He also makes himself available to help in many other areas of planning and hosting the conference. A BIG thanks to him — he makes things easy for us!

Marcus Jamieson from TEAM Work Cooperative was also a moving force behind the scenes, whose efforts were very much appreciated.

It is wonderful to have an in-house NSCDA team for the first time ever. We all have different responsibilities of course, but we all came together at White Point, put "the t-shirt" on and helped make a great conference happen. Thank you Cathi Stevenson, Phil Ward, Chantelle Marshall, and Paula Romanow. 🇨🇦

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Working With Clients Who Have Mental Health Issues

An Interview with Neasa Martin

Those who were fortunate enough to attend the pre-conference sessions on June 1st at White Point had the opportunity to hear two great champions of change and inclusion speak: Rich Donovan (see article on page 8) and Neasa Martin.

For the last three decades, Neasa Martin has been working as a mental health professional focusing on recovery and rehabilitation. She has contributed to and published numerous articles and reports on the issues surrounding mental health in Canada. Within the field of career development, she is well-known for the *Career Services Guide: Supporting People Affected by Mental Health Issues*, a CERIC Funded Project, published in 2015 and co-written by NSCDA Board Chair, Kathy McKee.

During a brief interview with Martin, it became apparent that her passion for advocacy surrounding mental health is unyielding, and something she describes as “deeply rooted,” after having grown up with untreated mental health issues in her own family.

“Career service workers are gatekeepers in many ways.”

“I have seen what good treatment can do in a person’s life,” she says, but maintains that merely treating the symptoms of a mental health issue is not the answer. One of the key factors in helping people overcome these challenges

is to support employment as a key component of social inclusion. Not only does employment provide financial stability, but a job provides structure, purpose and meaning, and increases a person’s self-esteem. When people aren’t supported in their employment goals, it can become a cycle: “Inadequate employment is a key risk factor for mental health problems and mental health problems contribute to unemployment.” (*Career Services Guide*, 2015).

This is where the role of career development practitioners (CDPs) can be essential. “Career service workers are gatekeepers in many ways,” explains Martin. If CDPs are going to successfully assist people who might be struggling with mental health issues, it’s necessary to “change the belief systems of the service providers.” It’s important to keep

in mind that clients with mental health issues are people and not diagnoses. There has been a tendency for CDPs to treat people like they don’t belong and acknowledge that they often try to send the clients elsewhere for help, says Martin. With the government’s move to create more inclusive employment services there should be no difference



Neasa Martin explains the importance of inclusion, during an interview at the NSCDA’s 18th Annual Conference.

between the way CDPs help people disclosing mental health issues, and those who don’t she says. “This is not a special population, this is part of the human experience. CDPs need to make sure their attitudes and beliefs are not the barrier.”

Research has shown that 58 percent of CDPs in Nova Scotia have personally struggled with mental health problems significant enough to disrupt their lives. It’s important that they take care of themselves, too, says Martin. “Career service workers, right now, during this transition, need to be able to look after their own mental health” she says, adding “there is no them and us.”

Move Forward from Ideas to Actions

An Interview with Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard



Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard.

says the role of career practitioners is “really quite essential,” but sees roadblocks when it comes to employers. She’d

This year’s conference closing address was given by Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard, a well-known social worker, educator, researcher, community activist, advocate, and mentor from East Preston, Nova Scotia.

In a brief interview, Dr. Bernard discussed the importance of recognizing the strengths and benefits of diversity and why we should be looking at it as a positive. She

like to see more collaborative work done with organizations such as the Human Rights Commission, to train employers to better understand the role of diversity in their success. “(Diversity) needs to be part of the strategic planning. We need to be fully integrated and not see diversity as an add on . . . synergy is not just for this particular conference, but a part of the integrated process.”

During her address, she noted that career development practitioners (CDPs) should move forward from ideas to actions, challenging people to “take an action that moves you outside of your comfort zone.” This is how we learn to value our differences. Dr. Thomas Bernard also pointed out that CDPs work with clients who are unnecessarily marginalized, often because people unintentionally bring their biases into play. We tend to regard those who aren’t like us as “those people over there” but “rarely do we think of those diversities enriching us.” It takes courage to change this, she says, adding “I believe we all have that courage.” 🌈

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Stop Negative Thinking With *Habit Releasers*

by Sam Thomas Davies

Negative thinking pervades nearly every aspect of our lives. Our thoughts range from all-or-nothing thinking like, "I've blown my diet completely" to over generalizations such as, "I always make a fool of myself," to dwelling on the negatives and ignoring the positives: "I got a promotion but...". The truth is there isn't one big solution to negative thinking, but there are numerous strategies we can use to stop negative thoughts and prioritize happiness. The simplest pattern-interrupts we can use to get rid of negative self-talk are "habit releasers".

What Are habit releasers? In his book, *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Finding Peace in a Frantic World*, Professor Mark Williams explains, "[habit releasers] are meant to reveal and break open some of our most unaware life patterns of thought and behaviour, patterns that unbeknownst to us, tend to imprison us in a smallness that is definitely not the full story of who we are."

In other words, habit releasers can be very effective at breaking down the habits that can trap us in negative ways of thinking. They reignite our curiosity when approaching behaviour change and help us rewrite the stories we tell ourselves. Habit releasers aren't complicated, they can be simple everyday things like:

1. Changing chairs

Which chairs do you normally sit on at home, in a coffee shop or bar or at work, such as during meetings? This week, make a deliberate choice to try another chair, or alter the position of the chair you use.

"It is extraordinary how much we are creatures of habit, and how we take comfort from such sameness", writes Williams. "There's nothing wrong with this at all, but it can feed a sense of 'taking things for granted' that allows the automatic pilot to thrive".

2. Look after a plant

In one study, Ellen Langer (famous for The Copy Machine Study: <http://jamesclear.com/copy-machine-study>) asked a

group of elderly people in a nursing home to look after a plant in their rooms.

Langer found, to her surprise, that those asked to look after a plant were much happier and healthier, and lived longer. Why not sow some seeds or borrow a plant from a friend and practice mindfulness yourself?

3. Reclaim your life

Think back to a time in your life when things seemed less stressful and recall in as much detail as possible some of the activities you used to do at that time.

Choose one of these activities and plan to do it this week. Don't wait until you feel like doing it; there's never a right time. Do it anyway and see what happens. Now is the moment of power.

4. Do a good deed for someone else

Carry out a random act of kindness. Help a work colleague tidy their desk. Assist a retired neighbour in carrying their groceries. Do something for your partner you know they hate doing themselves. Buy a homeless person a cup of coffee. Don't do it for the recognition, do it because you can. 🐦

Sam Thomas Davies scouts the leading edge of the human sciences for what's new, surprising, and important. He writes about research-based ways to improve habits, add skills and sustain excellence. Learn how to seize the potential of your life and read his free eBook, Unhooked: How to Break Bad Habits and Form Good Ones That Stick.

Until Next Year . . .



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