



Alberta/NWT Chapter President's Report August 2014

Chapter Mandate

The Alberta/NWT Chapter is a community of diverse professionals, identified as counsellors and psychotherapists, who facilitate professional development and support as well the advancement of the profession within Alberta and the Northwest Territories. The objectives of the Chapter are to promote an identity of those in the counselling field; connect with practitioners in the counselling field in Alberta and the NWT, and to develop connections with various counselling-related associations in Alberta.

Chapter Officers

President	Nicole Imgrund
President-Elect	Kathy Offet-Gartner
Secretary –Treasurer	Carol-Anne Haring
Coordinator:	
Professional Development	Jan Regehr
Coordinator:	
Advocacy and Professional Identity	Yinka Marcus
Coordinator: Communication	Nina Sangra
Coordinator: Regulation	Vacant
Regional Director: NWT	Julie Charlebois-Heide
Regional Director: Peace River Region	Vacant
Regional Director: Ft. McMurray N.E	Judi Malone
Regional Director: Edmonton	Evelyn Lupul
Regional Director: Calgary	Yinka Marcus, Interim
Regional Director: Southern Albert	Barbara Douglas
Regional Director: Red Deer	Carol-Anne Haring, Interim
Student Liaisons	Gina Ko

Membership

337 members (91 new members in the past year)

Chapter Board Activities

- We continue to face new challenges related to our rapid growth as a Chapter. We instituted a new Board meeting structure this year to improve efficiency and free Executive members to focus on more long-term goals. We established a sub-committee to assist with regional conference planning. We also established monthly meetings of the Regional Directors and Student Liaisons for support and planning related to regional development. Meeting in smaller groups helped us to delve more deeply into our mandate, but communication was a challenge when there was overlap between the positions. We have concluded that a smaller Board is needed. The bylaw revisions include eliminating the Regional Director positions, which should also increase efficiency of the Board meetings and more streamlined communication.
- The Board voted to postpone our 3rd AGM from April to September 2014. It was decided that it would be beneficial to stagger our annual AGM and conference with the national conference.
- In March, CCPA President Blythe Shepard met with a group of Chapter members in Calgary for a question and answer session. Her informative and insightful responses were greatly appreciated by members. We would love to have her join another regional gathering at some point during her term as President.
- There was ongoing study and discussion related to the boundaries of the smaller regions within the AB/NWT Region. After many attempts of the Regional Directors to connect with members based on geographical proximity, it was decided that the time and efforts of the Board might be better spent on improving communication and other initiatives within the larger region. It is hoped that eliminating the Regional Director positions, supporting members efforts to offer PD and other events in their areas and creating a Chapter Ambassador program, might better promote member involvement in the Chapter.
- The Chapter took an intentional step back this year from direct engagement with other associations regarding regulation. After a long process of discernment, we understood the first and most important steps on the long road towards regulation to be connecting and nurturing relationships between our own Chapter members. Any move towards regulation in the future will depend upon the strength and unity of our membership. We need to ensure a solid foundation of relationships, professional identity, and understanding of

our own needs and goals before extending the conversation outwards. That said, we have continued to plan for future steps towards regulation. Barbara Mcallum and Blythe Shepard have been very helpful in answering our questions and providing information. The new Board will revisit regulation and whether or not further steps should be taken this year to explore interest and opportunities for collaboration with other groups.

- This was the first year that we elected Student Liaisons to our Chapter Board. After learning there is a national student representative program which has positions at each of the institutions, there was much deliberation about the role of our own Student Liaisons. Because few of the national Student Representative positions had been filled, we first directed our efforts to offering presentations and contacting the institutions to fill these positions. We are now transitioning our Student Liaisons to focus on providing forums for the student representatives to connect with one another. The purpose is to gather their questions, concerns and observations and inform the Chapter Board of how we can best serve our student members.
- As we have grown, we have also encountered the gaps in our processes and regulations as a Chapter. We will introduce further by-law revisions in the fall to address some of these gaps.
- Much work and time was invested in planning what would have been the 2nd annual Alberta/NWT Chapter Education Day & AGM, scheduled for September 26th in Edmonton. However, very low registration at the time of the early bird deadline made the event untenable. It was cancelled by the Board with much disappointment at the lack of interest and time spent on organizing over the past year. The new Board will need to revisit whether or not there is member interest in Chapter PD events or if the Board should direct resources elsewhere.
- The Board planned two events for Alberta/NWT Chapter members at the national conference in Victoria in May. We hosted a workshop to engage members in a World Cafe discussion format, which allowed us to gather some of the thoughts and needs expressed by members, as well as to answer questions about the work of the Chapter. There was also an informal gathering of Chapter members off-site after the opening reception. Both events were very well attended and received. It was concluded that the

opportunity to host such workshops and gathering at national conferences in the future would be well worth pursuing. We have already applied for a workshop space in Niagara Falls for the 2015 conference.

- The Board produced two newsletters this year, as well as additional professional development flyers and listserv messages to our members.

Future Priorities

- **Increase membership:** There are currently over 700 CCPA members in our region, but only 362 belong to the Regional Chapter. Our goal is for this number to be the same within the next year. We have been strategizing about how to encourage all members to join the Chapter. One strategy has been to send most Chapter communication to the entire membership (not just the Chapter members). We are hoping that awareness of the breadth of activity the Chapter is doing on behalf of members and CCPA in AB/NWT will encourage membership. We are also building other incentives into our members services, such as free advertising for PD events and Classifieds in the monthly newsletter. While we understand the goal of having every member in the region belong to the Chapter is a lofty one, we see it as integral to our goals related to professional advocacy and regulation. It is essential that the Chapter can speak as a representative to the members of CCPA in the Region, not just a proportion of them.
- **Monthly Newsletter:** We are very excited to unveil a new monthly newsletter in October, which will include listings of PD and other events, rental and job advertisements, highlights of Chapter Board work and members submissions.
- **Third Party Billing:** Chapter members have consistently requested that the Board advocate for equitable access to third party billing in their practices. We are working with the national association and other Chapters (such as Regional Chapters and the Private Practice Chapter) to better understand how we can support their efforts and other strategies we can employ in our Region. We have learned that individual members may contact the national office to request a letter be sent to a client's insurance company to advocate for coverage. This has been successful with some companies and the Chapter will continue to inform members of this process and encourage them to take advantage of this grass roots approach to educating insurance

companies in our region about the benefits of including CCC's as service providers.

- This fall will bring **a period of significant transition** for our Chapter Board. Most of our members will reach the end of their term. We have carefully considered and planned for this transition by reconfiguring the Board positions and descriptions to reflect what we have learned and how we have grown and changed over the years. We hope to find members who have not only the passion, but the particular experience, skills and knowledge base to effectively and creatively fulfill the various position mandates. As we start in earnest to build relationships with other associations, advocate for the profession of counselling and psychotherapy in Alberta and the NWT and consider regulation, Chapter Board work will require significant commitment. However, our experience of the work is that it is also an engaging, meaningful opportunity to contribute to the profession and develop supportive relationships with colleagues.

We have a lot to celebrate in what we have worked to achieve together in the previous year...and we have also learned a lot for the benefit of colleagues who form the new Chapter Board. We look forward to an exciting future for the Alberta/NWT Chapter!

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Imgrund