



MANITOBA PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY SOCIÉTÉ DES PSYCHOLOGUES DU MANITOBA

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President's Report:

The phrase coined by the MPS board, “there is strength in mental health” in our recent Mind Your Mental Health (MYMH) campaign, has kept our crew a busy bunch over the past year. This is an initiative that we’ve put a lot of effort into, and has implications for numerous other initiatives the board has been working on.

The MYMH campaign in general has garnered a considerable amount of attention with minimal advertising. This has included an official endorsement of the campaign, of psychological services, and a call to action by Gold Medal Olympian Clara Hughes (see the website for the quote). The Canadian Psychological Association, impressed by this campaign, has generously supported it by lending the services of their communications person, to monitor and run both Facebook and Twitter accounts. These initiatives have taken off with social media, with our wallpapers being reposted continuously, and re-tweets by celebrities such as fashion mogul Jeanne Beker. CPA has also footed the bill and will be offered this campaign to other provinces. Locally, this initiative has prompted an invite for MPS to meet with the official critic of health living, Cliff Cullen, and an invitation to meet and offer liaisons to the True North Corporation on their mental health Project 11. Of course, not only has the campaign worked to increase awareness of mental health, and the importance for access to psychological service, but also strongly encouraged the public to let the government know that access to psychologists in the public health system is critical issue for Manitobans. A total of 688 letters were sent to the Ministers of Health and Healthy living, and citizens MP’s and MLA’s. This is a clear and strong message from the public that mental health care is important to them, and that they want and need access to psychologists to provide this care in the public health system.

As a part of the MYMH campaign, MPS has sought out support from numerous organizations. These organizations include the Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba, Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba, Manitoba Schizophrenia Society, Seneca House, and the Canadian Mental Health Association (Winnipeg division). Dr.

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Sztaba, Dr. Piotrowski, and myself, had also met with the president (Dr. Ian Goldstine) and the ED (Dr. Tamara Buchel) of the Manitoba College of Family Physicians. They have, as a result supported us in writing their own letter to the government, noting they agree with all of our campaign goals, and more specifically that psychologists are strongly needed and should be integrated into the primary care system. The letter was cc-ed to a variety of other MP's but also to Dr. Arlene Wilgosh, CEO of the WRHA.

MPS has also contacted the True North Corporation, and have a meeting scheduled to discuss their Project 11, to address mental health in children. They are hoping to benefit from consulting with psychologists who work in this area, to make their program empirically validated. MPS will work to connect them with appropriate psychologists from our community.

As you all have noticed for numerous years, although psychologists have long been sought after for their professional opinion by the media, we were never awarded the appropriate honorific title we had earned, as "Dr.". Although media across Canada has been approached about this issue, our request to correct this had often been rebuffed, stating that the Canada Stylebook (which is referred to by all published media agencies across Canada) specifically states the title "Dr." should only be used for physicians. But research by Dr. Karen Cohen (CEO of CPA) revealed that in fact this was not the case, and that clinical psychologists should in fact be referred to as "Dr." according to the very same Stylebook that media refer too. A letter sent to the Winnipeg Free Press by Dr. Cohen, Dr. Sztaba, and myself, resulted in the Free Press acknowledging this, and from now on will refer to clinical psychologists as "Dr.". Many may not know this but it was Dr. Craig Turner who started this initiative by addressing this concern with Maclean's magazine. Many thanks to Dr. Craig Turner for inspiring us at MPS.

Psychology Month initiatives, also continue to be as relevant as ever. Many warm thanks to Dr. Pam Holens (Public Education Coordinator), Dr. Somers, Dr. Mac, Dr. Piotrowski, and Mr. White for all their hard work on this initiative. There have been numerous talks about psychology around the province, some in both English and French. Dr. Somers was able to organize displays for psychology based books in Winnipeg public libraries. This working group also produced bookmarks for distribution at libraries and bookstores. Some of these bookmarks were also distributed by the Anxiety Disorders Association at a Jet's game.

Student members have also been a great resource to MPS. Our student board members have always proven to be wonderful advocates for psychology. Ms. Lauren Yallop (previous student board member) and Mr. Caelin White, have been shining examples of enthusiasm for our profession. Mr. White has been actively assisting with Psychology Month initiatives for the past two years, along with other initiatives. Many of you are familiar with this participation in the relay course, Tough Mudder, which he used as a vehicle to advocate for the MYMH campaign.

Communications director, Dr. Piotrowski has been working to develop links with media. As a result of her hard work, MPS was able to have psychologists on breakfast television each week of Psychology Month, talking about mental health concerns. Appearing on Breakfast television were Dr. Piotrowski, Dr. Lionberg, Dr. Vincent, and myself.

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Our continuing education director, Dr. Ritchie has put together some of the most interesting and well attended workshops and seminars to date. Our most recent workshop brought in ethics expert, Dr. Carole Sinclair which was very well attended. Our spring institute will address changes to the DSM-5 by a psychologist who contributed to them, Dr. Robert Krueger, and is cosponsored by Manitoba Public Insurance and the Workers Compensation Board.

I also want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the rest of our board members who have worked tirelessly at the numerous initiatives this year. Many thanks to Dr. Greenwood (former ED – providing us with ongoing sage advice and direction). Dr. Mak (Treasurer) works diligently to manage our funds, and to ensure our resources are spent wisely. Dr. Tataryn (Registrar) continuously works to manage our membership, and is always working to find easier ways for members to pay their dues. Dr. Ediger (Member at Large, former Communications Director), along with some other members, has been assisting with a recent initiative to help increase the value of psychologists. Dr. Dawda (Society Page Editor) has always done a wonderful job of editing our society page. He will be stepping down as a board member but will remain as the editor for the Society Page. Thank you Dr. Dawda for your ongoing service to MPS. Last but not least, I also have to make note of the incredible amount of work and support given to the board and *all* of the initiatives noted above, by our Executive Director, Dr. Sztaba and our support staff, Ms. Heidi Tucker. Dr. Sztaba has been active on all initiatives, including but not limited to the MYMH campaign, our governmental relations, and planning and organizing the entire AGM. The board looks forward to developing ongoing initiatives in advocacy and serving you, our professional community.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Abdulrehman, Ph.D., C. Psych.
MPS President

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