



# NLCPA

Newfoundland and Labrador Counsellors' and Psychologists' Association  
A Special Interest Council of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association



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NL Counsellors'  
and Psychologists'  
Association



## Message from the President

We are well into the year that is 2021. It certainly has presented its fair share of challenges. However, we are without a doubt moving towards better and brighter days.

With every new year we get the chance to look back in reflection and ahead in anticipation. That is no different whether it's individually or as an association. Our Association is vast with history and amazing accomplishments. I am so thrilled that we get to be a part of writing its future story.

As I reflect on our Association this year, I need to acknowledge the changes within our executive. Leaving the provincial executive this fall were Billy Lynn-Clowe, Amanda Dodd and Lesley Slade. They have been a pleasure to work alongside. They have contributed **immensely** to our Association and will be missed! With people stepping down from leadership roles, there is opportunity for new members to become involved in this capacity. I would like to welcome some new members to the executive. Janice Rowsell will be entering the role of President-Elect. Janice is the School Counsellor with CDLI. Minnie-Anne Balan is stepping into the role of Vice-President. She is the School Counsellor at St. Peter's Primary in Mount Pearl. Deanna Murphy will be our new Treasurer. Deanna is the School Counsellor at Carbonear Collegiate in Carbonear. Holly Healey will be taking on the role of Secretary. Holly is the School Counsellor at Holy Cross Elementary School in Holyrood. Deanne Murray is taking on the role of Membership Coordinator. Deanne is a School Counsellor at Villanova Junior High in Conception Bay South. Jeremy House is our new Communications Officer. He is the School Counsellor at St. Francis of Assisi in Outer Cove and Brookside Intermediate in Portugal Cove-St. Philips. I really look forward to working closely with these new executive members, along with the rest of our provincial team!

As an executive, we have been working diligently at securing meaningful professional learning for our members throughout the school year.

In the fall, we were glad to collaborate with the district to offer our members two half-day workshops with Lawrence Murphy, who is a pioneer in the field of Virtual Counselling. Our sessions, *Using Video in Counselling* and *Using Telephone and Chat in Counselling* were very well attended, and enabled all of our members to attain CECs from their respective regulatory bodies.

As the school year winds down, we are **beyond** excited to offer NLCPA members a virtual workshop from Registered Psychologist, **Ashley Mielke** of **The Grief and Trauma Healing Centre** in June.

We are able to offer the virtual workshop at **no cost to membership**, which is always nice!

*Cultivating Grief-Sensitivity in Therapy: A Heart Centred Approach*, is divided into two sessions. The first took place on Thursday, June 3 from 1-4 pm NL time. The second will take place on Thursday, June 10 from 1-4 pm NL time.

After the workshop, notes from the presentation will be provided as well as a certificate of completion. **Both days will need to be attended in order to receive the certificate.**

While we have been in contact with the Newfoundland and Labrador Psychology Board to confirm the workshop will satisfy Continuing Education Credit requirements for School Psychologists, we are still waiting to hear back from CCPA.

As always, we appreciate the support of NLESD for providing us with the time to deliver this great learning opportunity to our members.

COVID-19 had absolutely presented challenges; however, a major benefit has been the addition of many guidance units in schools across the province to help with the mental health challenges which COVID provides.

Speaking from personal experience in my building, having two School Counsellors has really enabled me to share the load and has given me the peace of mind that more students' needs are being met. Cloning myself is not an option, but having two Counsellors where there was once one allows more cups to be filled with positive interactions. I have been able to share the load when it comes to Student Assistant, AT, and AFM applications – getting through what I call “application season.” I have had the opportunity to visit more classrooms and interact with more students while still having someone in the office able to provide guidance services. Comprehensive assessments get completed faster with one Counsellor doing a WISC and the other a WIAT. There's just **no** downside to these positions from what I can see. Double the Counsellors means double the work that can be done and double the help we can provide to students.

Have a look at what some other guidance counsellors have had to say about the extra allocations:

- more time to spend with students on Rescue and Recovery
- better opportunity to build rapport
- increased opportunity to reach out to children/students that you wouldn't normally have

- students have commented that it is so nice that they don't have to go searching the school to find me now (formerly 50% Guidance/50% Teaching duties)
- not having to split attention to 2-3 different jobs in the run of a day
- provides the opportunity to dig deep and get to the root of the problem
- more guidance resources means we do not have to refer out to other agencies (which are already overwhelmed and at capacity)
- provides an opportunity to consult more regularly with other agencies who are involved with students
- allows for deeper and more well-rounded consult with career agencies
- allows for communication and coordination with post-secondary institutions
- allows for better collaboration between schools and other guidance counsellors
- allows for more coordination of SEL activities and provides time to actually carry them out

- allows for more collaboration between the teachers and the counsellor to consult and execute plans around students with significant complex needs

What impact has increased School Counsellor allocation had in your building and on you personally? We want to hear from you! This information is vital as it helps to inform our advocacy with the Association and the employer.

Finally, the NLCPA would like to send out a big congratulations to Melissa Somerton of Tricon Elementary who was the recipient of the Rick Hansen Foundation School Program 2021 Difference Maker of the Year. During lockdowns, Melissa arranged many different presentations that focused on accessibility and inclusion for her school.

Remember that your provincial executive is here for **you**. As you move through what remains of this school year, find moments of reflection and peace in the midst of our ever-increasing roles and responsibilities. Practice kindness to yourself while showing kindness to others! You cannot pour from an empty cup.

Gary Hunter  
President