



Saskatchewan Social Worker

NOVEMBER 2020 | Volume 31 Number 3

Indigenous and Black Lives Matter: Anti-Racist Considerations for Social Workers



Black Lives Matter Rally in Saskatoon, June 2020.
Rally photos reprinted from Black Lives Matter YXE, with permission.

7 Ways Not to Ruin Family Dinner When Talking About Race

By Christina Anderson (she/her, white settler) (M.S.W., R.S.W.)

As Social Workers, we have come to understand that we live in a society with a power structure, social institutions and criminal justice system that does not value certain peoples' lives in equitable ways. Right now, those of us who identify as white or from settler heritage, we have an opportunity to organize our community, family

and friends to fight for a different world where Indigenous and Black lives matter and where, through solidarity, we have the power to fundamentally transform the world.

Here are some things to remember and tips to help you avoid getting kicked out of the family will:

#1 - You're Seed Planting.

When engaging in anti-racist conversa-

tions, you may find it helpful to remember that you may never get to see the forest grow. Just as your perspective wasn't changed in one conversation, neither will theirs. As Social Workers, we're often steeped in this content and our ideologies grow alongside our practice. Also, it's not singularly your job. Ask for help. Other people have tools we don't have. Maybe they come with a different communication style, or degree of respect among the

Table of Contents

- 1 COVER STORY**
7 Ways Not to Ruin Family Dinner When Talking About Race
By Christina Anderson, MSW, RSW
- 5 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**
Adapting in an Extraordinary Year
By Erin Beckwell, MSW, RSW
- 6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE**
When an End Is a New Beginning
By Karen Wasylenska, MSW, RSW
- 6 Meet our new Office Co-ordinator**
- 7 FROM THE DESK OF THE REGISTRAR**
Registration Renewals for 2021
By Fay Schuster
- 8 CALL FOR NOMINATIONS**
- 9 FROM THE DESK OF THE DEAN OF SOCIAL WORK**
By Dr. Cathy Rocke, MSW, PhD
- 10 A Note to My Fellow White Folx Doing the Work**
By Kathleen Regier, BSW, RSW
- 11 CASW Report**
By Hazel Berg, BSW, RSW
- 12 A Family Centered Approach To Divorce?**
By Erin McLeod, RSW
- 14 Covid-19 & Sexualized Violence: How Survivors Have Been Impacted**
By Faye Davis, Executive Director & Morgan Price, Education & Outreach Coordinator
- 15 SASW Distinguished Service Award**
- 16 News Briefs**
- 16 Educational Opportunities**
- 16 Get Involved**

Saskatchewan Social Worker

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7 Ways Not to Ruin Family Dinner When Talking About Race

continued from page 1

group that might be helpful in connecting with someone. Anticipate failed conversations and conflict. These are seed planting moments. In many cases the foundation of an anti-racist narrative is already there (e.g., through the media and current events). Breaking the land isn't necessary; seed planting might be.

#2 - Locate Your Own Racism.

If you can't find it, look harder. Too often we falsely convince ourselves that because we have a certain educational background, represent a certain professional or have our own share of challenges in life, that we are immune to holding harmful beliefs about others. It is way too easy to focus on the people "out there" who are truly vile (the KKK and neo-Nazis or radical right). However, in reality, overtly racist, extremist views are few in number and have little power and influence over the mechanics of society.

If you're white, no matter how nice you are, unless you're doing serious and sustained personal anti-racism work, "you are a part of the machine," say anti-racist scholars such as Ibram Kendi, Austin Channing Brown, Luvvie Ajayi Jones, Layla F. Saad, and Ta-Nehisi Coates. Also, for those of us of settler heritage: it's not the job of BIPOC (Black and Indigenous People of Colour) friends and colleagues to educate us about racism. Figure out which way you are going to start confronting your own biases and begin. This is not to suggest that this is your fault. I prefer to look at it like we have been raised in, surrounded by, and rewarded from a racist society. Some of us even had the extra privilege of being steeped in a deeply racist school K-12 curriculum. It's heeding the call to un-learning that is now your choice.

#3 - Expect to Get It Wrong.

I used to be so nervous about saying and doing the wrong thing. Now I come to expect it. If you expect yourself to be perfect and to never get it wrong,

you're never going to start! Show up and shut up, first. Then learn how to speak up and act. The feedback I've received over the years has become such a gift for my resilience in being able to continue doing this work.

#4 - Dismantle Misunderstandings and Mistruths.

Let's start with *reverse racism*, for example. Quite simply, this is not a thing and should be filed between Santa Claus and the tooth fairy. When your family member insists that their experience being mistreated because they are white is racist, you may find it helpful to review the definitions of racism vs. prejudice. Racism is a recipe. It is prejudice, racial power, and a system that supports that prejudice. You may have faced prejudice. That's not racism, because your race is in power. Social institutions, the criminal justice system, culture norms, internalized prejudices all favour white people. White people are irrefutably in the place of power, so reverse racism cannot exist. Prepare yourself for questions like these (to which there are many).

#5 - Call Out/Call In People in Real Life.

The comfort of white folx shouldn't come before the safety of BIPOC. These days it's way too easy to hide behind a keyboard. You know what isn't easy? Explaining to your uncle that "immigrants aren't taking all the jobs" or that there is, indeed, a difference between Indigenous People preventing pipeline development and white fisherman preventing Indigenous fishing rights. But hey, if you can't speak up (and it makes you nauseous even thinking about it), that's okay. You can still do the work so that, one day soon, you'll be ready with answers or a statement that inspires



Black Lives Matter Rally in Saskatoon, June 2020.
Rally photos reprinted from Black Lives Matter YXE, with permission.

Facebook: @blacklivesmatterYXE
Instagram: @blacklivesmatterYXE

the moral imagination of others. Maybe it's not about "calling out" someone at all. If your response is one that inspires curiosity or is a gentle reframe of something they said, we could be "calling in" people to anti-racist work instead of creating an adversarial dynamic. Ideally, it's about encouraging collective responsibility by holding each other accountable.

#6 - Avoid Those Futile Debates with Your Racist Relative.

This likely does more harm than good. Ask yourself, will this person respectfully respond to my approach? Have I tried this strategy in the past? What power dynamics exist between us that might impact how this conversation is going to go? As in, are you the right person to address this? Maybe you can ask for help. Be honest about your own growth and shortcomings — nobody wants to learn from someone who thinks they are perfect. Acknowledge the growth and progress of the other

7 Ways Not to Ruin Family Dinner When Talking About Race

continued from page 3

person, too, where relevant. Listen with empathy — with the intention of understanding them — not to change their mind, judge, probe, or advise.

Respectful discussion with people who have different views from your own? Great. Calling out someone's behaviour (not who they are as a person) and calmly explain the ways systemic racism permeates every facet of reality? Absolutely. But getting lost in a back-and-forth with those only seeking to discredit the very existence of racism is likely a waste of your time. They aren't ready to do the work yet, and that's okay.

#7 - Be Mindful of Performative Allyship.

Some of you have been speaking out, ferociously, against racism in Saskatchewan for years. You have been at the

do the best you
can until you
know better.
then when you
know better,
do better.

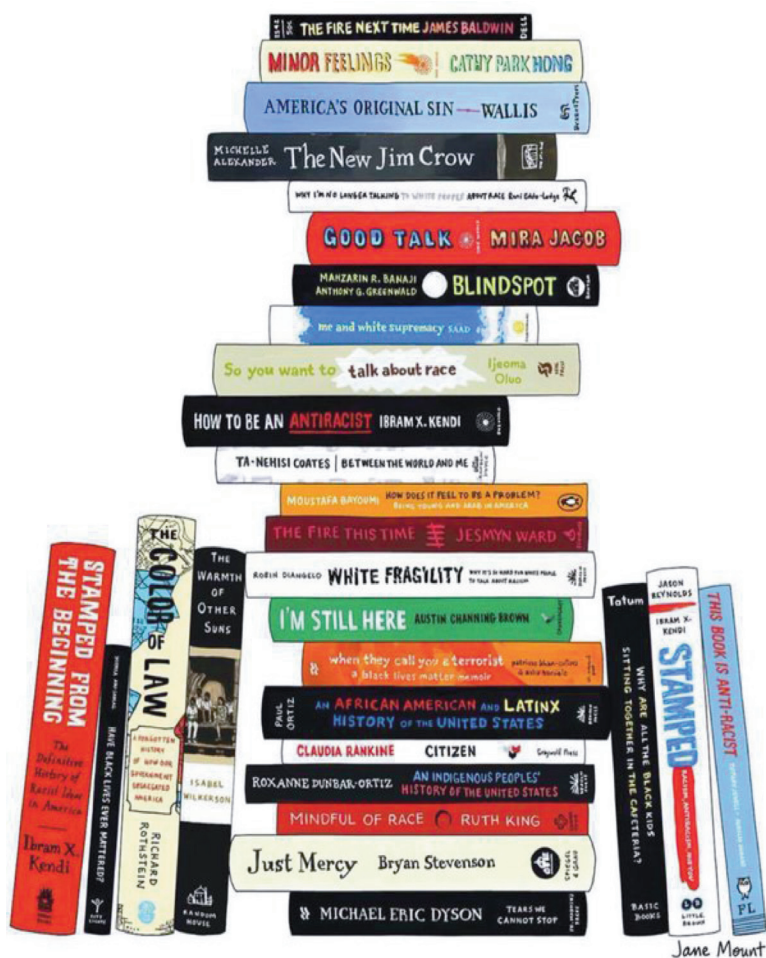
- maya angelou

epicentre of a few soured family dinners already. For other, perhaps it was the acquittal of Gerald Stanley in the death of Colten Boushie that first got your attention, or only since the death of George Floyd or Breonna Taylor. Regardless, I'm sure you've heard the term "ally" being used a lot lately. Put simply, an ally is someone from a

non-marginalized group who uses their privilege to advocate for a marginalized group. They transfer the benefits of their privilege to those who lack it. Allyship is not something you can claim but rather something that BIPOC people identify in us when we act in alignment with anti-racist values. It is not an identity but an action — meaning I could be acting as an ally one second and say something completely off base the next. Performative allyship, on the other hand, is when someone from that same non-marginalized group professes support and solidarity with a marginalized group and it usually involves the "ally" receiving some kind of reward — on social media, it's that virtual pat on the back for being a "good person" or "on the right side" of a social problem. This kind of allyship is cheap and inauthentic.

It's time to get honest and real with ourselves here, folks. If, on reflection, everything you do is public, it's likely you're a performative ally. Look at how much you really care before your post. I am not trying to say your social media posts need to stop. Don't overlook the fact that public allyship can help spur positive change. Our voices/opinions need to be heard on social media. We just can't be lulled into believing that this is enough to dismantle the conditions that made it possible for a white farmer to be fully acquitted after shooting an Indigenous man or for an innocent black man to be lynched in broad daylight.

Invest in your own learning. If a conversation fails, take time to learn more to support the possibility of a different outcome in the future. An Elder I respect very much once told me, "What we need now are strong and stable allies capable of carrying their share of the burden but prepared to do something about it." Remember Value 2: Pursuit of Social Justice in our *Code of Ethics* (CASW, 2005) and be an activist who actually acts.





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Adapting in an Extraordinary Year

By Erin Beckwell, MSW, RSW

Adapt. A word that has been a mantra, a challenge, and a call to action throughout my social work career – and likely many of yours, too. And as we head into the final weeks of 2020, I find myself reflecting on how our collective capacity to adapt has become one of the main themes of this wild, distressing, humbling year. We have had to shift and adjust so many things since March. We have many more adaptations and changes yet to come. When I find myself feeling overwhelmed about what lies ahead, I often think about the many people and communities I've worked with – and the lessons their stories of resiliency, persistence, resourcefulness, and adaptability can teach us. And I feel hopeful.

Of course, social work regulators and professional organizations like ours have had to adapt how we communicate, connect, and function. We are fortunate that our registration system was set up online and functioning well, as this eased some of the stress when postal services slowed, documents weren't being printed, and offices closed at the beginning of the pandemic. We were able to hold our virtual AGM in late May, and many SASW branches have done the same. The Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) convened their annual meetings in June, where an updated *Scope of Practice* document was approved, and Joan Davis-Whelan of Newfoundland was elected as our new President.

The much-anticipated International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) conference, which was to be held in Calgary this summer, was held online

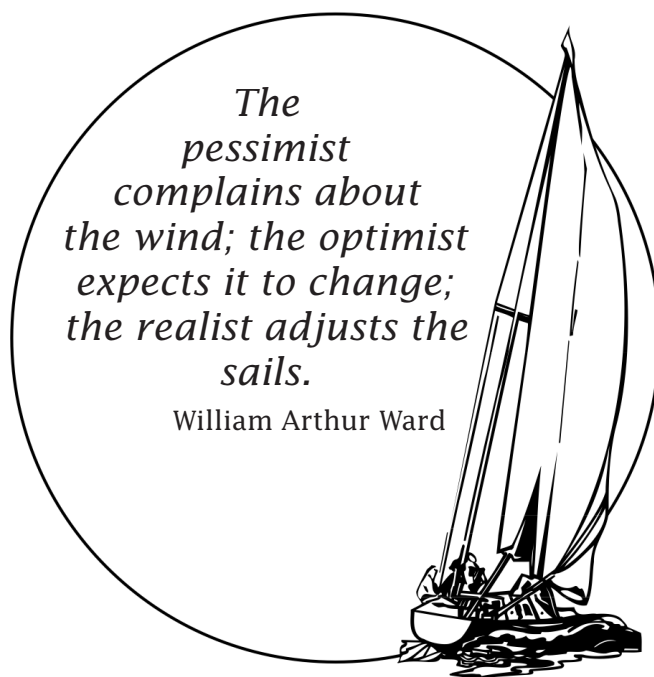
and welcomed participation from over 20,000 social workers, helpers, community leaders, and advocates from 185 countries. The *Global Agenda for Social Work*, a main outcome of the conference, was the culmination of over two years of engagement with social workers and communities around the world. The Global Agenda for 2020-2030 identifies five very timely themes for reflection and action: valuing social work as an essential service, co-building inclusive social transformation, promoting Indigenous knowledges and decolonization of the social work profession, transforming social protections systems, and promoting diversity and the power of joint social action. In his remarks at the conclusion of the conference, Secretary-General of IFSW Rory Truell said that the new Global Agenda, "...confirmed the social work role in advocating that formal *social protection systems need to change*

focus from providing services for people in crisis to becoming agencies of social transformation that prevent social crisis" (italics mine).

As we come to the end of what many will remember as an extraordinary year – a global pandemic, widespread racial injustice, environmental catastrophes, intensifying tensions and conflict between Indigenous people and colonial governments and systems, and more – social workers must re-commit to addressing the structural determinants of health and wellbeing for everything and everyone in our world. We must adapt, and support others to do so as well – not so we can navigate and endure unjust and oppressive systems, but to work together to co-design and co-build thriving communities and societies for people and the environment.

*The
pessimist
complains about
the wind; the optimist
expects it to change;
the realist adjusts the
sails.*

William Arthur Ward





EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

When an End Is a New Beginning

By Karen Wasylenska, MSW, RSW

Social work is all about change. And we have been living change in both our professional and personal lives. Our June newsletter highlighted stories of social workers managing change. As I write this, we continue to experience uncertainty and change. As social workers, we understand the change process. The pandemic has resulted in change that was not planned or contemplated. This change is different — imposed restrictions on our lives with the goal of returning to “normal.” I came across

this quote from author Jeffrey Gitomer: “Change is not a four letter word... but often your reaction to it is!”

At a recent virtual conference of regulators, there were many discussions of the challenges faced because of the pandemic — availability of licensing exams, virtual investigations of misconduct and subsequent hearings, changes to registration procedures. We were then asked to think about what good is arising from all of this. It was a good

question. We have had to challenge ourselves to do things differently with some positive results. As Fred Rogers said “Often when you’re at the end of something, you’re at the beginning of something else.”

Our work does go on. We had a successful Annual General Meeting by zoom, which provided the opportunity for members across the province to be involved. The CASW Annual Meetings were held in June by Zoom and CCSWR met in September by Zoom. The ASWB Annual Delegate Assembly in November will also be virtual. “Zoom fatigue” and “Zoomed out” are the new words. Although efficient, as social beings we miss the more personal interaction with our colleagues. We collaborate by establishing and maintaining relationships, which is missed in the virtual world.

The theme for national social work month next March is “Social Work is Essential.” This is a very fitting theme, as we have witnessed the work of our dedicated colleagues and profession. The notice for nominations to Council is in this newsletter. Four positions will be open in 2021. Serving on Council is an opportunity to shape the direction of SASW. As well, please note the nominations for Awards. Who in your Branch or Workplace or Committee has done outstanding work that should be recognized? The deadline for the CASW Distinguished Service Award is December 1, 2020.

In closing, in the words of John Lennon, “Everything will be okay in the end. If it’s not okay, it’s not the end.”

Meet our new Office Co-ordinator



Welcome to Reshma Santhosh, Office Co-ordinator, who joined the SASW staff on September 9.

A greeting from Reshma:

My name is Reshma Santhosh, hailing from the province/ state of Kerala, India, and migrated to Canada in 2018.

I did my Masters in Business Administration from the University of Bharathiyar and Computer Science Engineering from the University of Calicut. I began my career in administration and data technology after the bachelor’s degree. Additionally, I completed certification in Office Administration from Saskatchewan Polytechnic, Regina.

In my spare time, I like to try my hands-on cooking and trying out new cuisines. As towards the community, I am volunteering with the Canadian Red Cross-Personal Disaster Assistance team.



FROM THE DESK OF THE REGISTRAR

Registration Renewals for 2021

By Fay Schuster, MSW, RSW

Registration renewals for 2021 are well underway. New this year is that the renewal notice was sent to members by e-mail with links to the relevant guidelines document and Q and A documents to assist members in completing the renewal. Generally at this time of year I receive inquiries related to renewal such as:

Why do I have to have the renewal completed by December 1 when my registration is good until December 31?

The simple answer is that it takes staffing time to receive, review and process over 2000 renewals so that members have their registration for January 1st of the year. It is not possible to manage the work in a shorter time frame.

If I renew early in October, what happens to any Continuing Professional Education hours I complete in November and December of 2020?

Once a member completes the renewal, any CPE taken after that date will credit to the next renewal year when you enter your activities/hours into the online system.

I am retiring in 2021. Should I renew as practicing or non-practicing?

If you have a retirement date within the first two months of 2021 you can renew as non-practicing.

If you have other questions about renewal please check out the Renewal Q and A document

on our website under the “Members” tab at https://www.sasw.ca/site/renewal_qas

Issuing of 2021 Income Tax Receipts and License

As you know we began issuing renewal licenses via the member home page in our online system. This practice will continue for the 2021 renewal year. Once your renewal is submitted you will receive an e-mail notice from the office (usually within 3-5 business days) advising you that you can now print off your 2021 licence from your home page. You will also be able to continue to access your licence from 2020.

Student Members – Renewals and Upgrades for 2021

Student members will receive an e-mail from the office in early January regarding annual renewals and upgrades. For student completing the renewal, renewals will need to be completed by March 31, 2021. The cost remains at \$58.00.

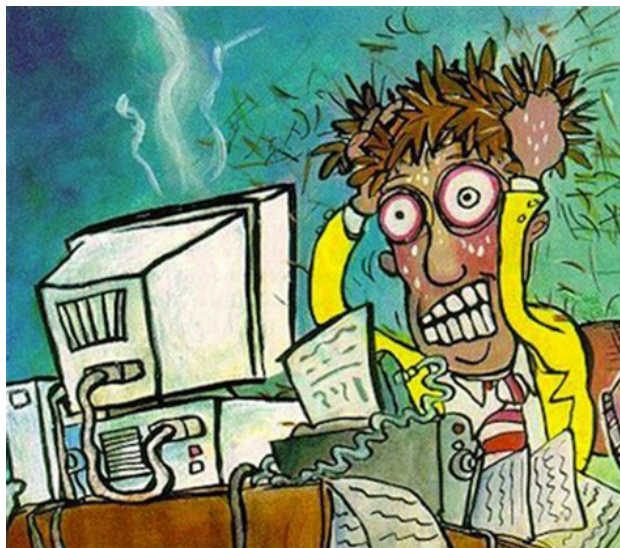
Students eligible for the upgrade from January-March, are those students who completed their studies in December 2020 with their degrees being conferred around the third week in January 2020. As this group of students are no longer students and therefore no longer able to complete a renewal, we provide the Upgrade to Registered Social worker at a cost of \$58.00. The deadline to upgrade for this group of students is March 31, 2021.

If you are a student that will complete the Upgrade application from January-March remember to have the required Character Reference form completed by your agency practicum supervisor when you complete your practicum. The form is located on our website in the “Become a Student Member” section.

Responses from the office to your phone calls and Emails

Although we are a small office of three we do strive to be responsive to our members and the public. We generally try to respond the same day or within 48 hours. If you are trying to contact the office and do not get a response within 24-48 hours please call us back or resend your e-mail. We do have occasion where our e-mails may not be working or we can't quite hear the phone message and number.

As always, I am happy to hear from and connect with members by phone (306-545-6878) or e-mail (registrar.sasw@access-comm.ca)



NOTICE TO MEMBERS - CALL FOR NOMINATIONS TO COUNCIL POSITIONS -

As per section 25 (2) of *The Social Workers Administrative By-laws*, SASW voting members are hereby given notice of your right to nominate licensed member(s) to fill any Council vacancy for the upcoming year. The positions open for nomination are Treasurer, President Elect and two members-at-large.

All nominations must be submitted on the "Call for Nominations" form. Nominations must be faxed/e-mailed to the SASW Office no later than **March 15, 2021**.

Call for Nominations for SASW Council

Position for Nomination: _____

Name: _____

SASW Registration Number: _____

Address: _____

Credentials: _____

City/Town: _____

Number of years in practice: _____

Area(s) of practice and contribution to the profession: _____

Previous/present involvement with SASW Branch/Committee: _____

Nature of contribution(s) to be made on SASW Council: _____

Signature of Nominee: _____

Nominators - Registered Social Workers (*Please Print*)

Signature of Nominators

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Deadline for submitting nominations: March 15, 2021

Send completed form to SASW Office – 2110 Lorne Street, Regina, SK, S4P 2M5

Email: sasw@accesscomm.ca Fax: 306.545-1895



From the Desk of the Dean of Social Work

By Dr. Cathy Rocke, MSW, PhD

Like many social work practitioners in the field, the pandemic has changed the way we do things here at the University of Regina, Faculty of Social Work! Beginning in the Spring term and now into the Fall and Winter terms the faculty and staff have been very focused on continuing to deliver all of our programming through remote teaching. I am happy to say that our students have adjusted very well to the transition – many enjoying the flexibility of being able to attend classes from wherever they are located! One of main concerns has been securing field placements for our students as many organizations and agencies have had to temporarily suspend student placements due to the pandemic. The Faculty was pleased that the majority of our students were able to secure field placements for the Fall term. We are now working on Winter placements and hope that we will have the same success in placing our students so that their education is not interrupted.

There have been some organizational and staff changes at the faculty. On July 1, 2020, two Associate Deans were appointed – Dr. Darlene Chalmers (Undergraduate) and Dr. Gabriela Novotna (Graduate and Research). Dr. Chalmers is located in our Saskatoon campus and assumes responsibility for the Faculty undergraduate program. One of her first priorities will be supporting the many sessional instructors that teach in our program. Dr. Novotna is located at the Regina campus and will be working to highlight the exciting research that is being completed at the Faculty. I want to thank the

previous Associate Dean, Dr. Miguel Sanchez for the service he provided to the Faculty over the past 7 years. Sadly, we had three faculty members leave the University of Regina over the summer months – Dr. Monty Montgomery and Dr. Marlene McKay located at our Saskatoon campus and Dr. Charles Gyan located at our Regina campus. The Faculty is currently undergoing a search process with hopes to be at full complement by July 2021.

Every summer the Faculty has held a retreat to revisit our mission and take stock of what we have accomplished. This summer the goal of the retreat would have been on completing the Faculty strategic plan subsequent to the release of the University of Regina Strategic Plan entitled All My Relations: Kahk-kiyaw ni wahko makanak (<https://www.uregina.ca/strategic-plan/assets/docs/pdf/uofr-2020-2025-strategic-plan.pdf>). Unfortunately, the pandemic did not allow all faculty and staff to gather and we have now plan to engage in virtual strategic planning sessions this Fall with the goal to have our plan completed by the end of the year.

Finally, as I had mentioned in my first message to the SASW membership, I had hoped to meet many of the social work practitioners through visits to various organizations beginning in Spring 2020. Unfortunately, the pandemic has upended these plans and I have only been able to meet people virtually. I will begin this process as soon as we are able. In the meantime, stay safe and healthy!



A Note to My Fellow White Folx Doing the Work

By Kathleen Regier (she/her, white settler) (B.S.W., R.S.W.)

What is the role of white folx within the anti-racist movement? In short, it's complicated.

As a white settler entering into the realm of anti-racism, I was terrified. After just over a year of deep anti-racist work, I am still painfully aware of my own tendency to fall into a "white saviour complex" and I fear repeating histories of white folx coming in to "improve" BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) lives. These fears are real — and they are important for keeping us in check — but we cannot let these fears prevent us from recognizing our own responsibility.

Although fleshing out our role as white folx in the anti-racism movement can be difficult, the unique position we hold is quite simple — we have easy access to other white folx. White-focused racial justice groups like SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice) recognize this position as an asset and choose to undermine white supremacy by calling in other white people to anti-racist work.

This is the important part to understand: When we are speaking from a place of privilege, it is not our role to express anger, to shame, or to blame those who haven't learned to see racism in the same light as we have. It is our job to have the tough conversations with those who share our privilege in an effort to understand their fears and barriers to committing themselves to the work and then walk alongside each other as we learn to do better together.

We also need to remember that we were never called to be the stars of this movement. A multiethnic group consisting of mostly white folx and focused on dismantling whiteness, SURJ has acquired both support and criticism from other racial justice groups. If you are a white person doing anti-racist work, you will likely experience pushback from BIPOC and white folx as well. This is a good thing. Listen. Learn. Acknowledge when you have taken a step in the wrong direction and don't be afraid to push back when necessary. If we move forward with passion and humility, ears open and hands ready to do the work, our mistakes have the potential to make the movement stronger.

If you are someone who identifies as white or are looking to dismantle your own personal experience of whiteness (no matter if you identify as white or not), a new chapter of SURJ is being formed in Saskatoon. This is a great opportunity to ask the tough questions alongside other white folx and work to build partnerships with BIPOC led groups to support the incredible work they are already doing. Look us up on Facebook to get connected!

PRONOUNS: Gender Specific & Gender Neutral

Knowing and referring to folx by the pronouns they determine for themselves is basic to human dignity and is a positive way to support the patients/clients you work with.

GENDER SPECIFIC



Pronoun Privilege

If you've never had to worry about which pronoun others use for you, this might not seem important.

It is a privilege to not have to worry about which pronoun someone uses based on how they perceive/assume your gender.

THEM
THEY
THEIR

GENDER NEUTRAL

ZE
ZIE [Zee]
ZIR



* Illustration is not an exhaustive list

Why does it matter?

When we use someone's pronouns incorrectly, it can lead to feelings of hurt, invalidation, and alienation. Marginalized groups, such as those who are transgender or gender nonconforming, are deserving of this courtesy and respect just as anyone else.

Sharing your pronouns is a way to acknowledge your privilege.

Know better
do better

What does "folx" refer to then?

A gender neutral noun. The ending "-x" on "folx" specifically includes LGBTQ people and those who do not identify within the gender binary



HELLO
my name is

LAUREN

PRONOUNS: She & Her

HOW CAN WE CREATE A MORE INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT?

Normalize its use, eliminate harmful assumptions.

Add your pronouns to your email signature

Enable conversations about peoples' gender pronouns. It doesn't have to be awkward! Just asking shows you care.

*content adapted from @Vcoterie (Instagram)

CASW Report

By Hazel Berg, BSW, RSW

2020 started out with virtual meetings and now due to COVID-19 we may well continue to stay this way for the remaining calendar year.

The CASW Board had planned to hold the Summer/Federation meetings in Calgary in person; however, this meeting was held virtually. We had hoped to be there for the International Federation of Social Worker's Conference but COVID-19 has changed all this. There was great anticipation to have this international conference in Canada this year. The conference did happen virtually and, as a result of no registration fees, a great many more social workers from all parts of the world were able to attend this conference in July 2020. The IFSW AGM was also held virtually and the major highlight was the International Indigenous Committee motion to request to become the International Indigenous Commission

was granted.

The CASW Board welcomes Joan Davis-Whelan, our current President, and we thank Jan Christianson-Wood, Past President, for her patience and dedication in furthering social interests in Canada and beyond.

Since COVID-19 has changed our lives in so many ways, CASW has stepped up to actively provide practice resources as we strive to work despite the current circumstances of the COVID19 pandemic. CASW advocated to get PPE for social workers early into the pandemic onset. CASW advocated for social workers to remain permanently as Mental Health Practitioners within the Public Service Health Care Plan. CASW continues to advocate for the Government of Canada to introduce a Universal Income Guarantee. CASW endorsed an open letter: COVID19 Triage Protocols and the Rights of People with Disabilities. CASW endorsed

a Campaign 2000 Letter demanding marginalized children have first call on federal resources in the pandemic response and recovery. CASW published "Ending Mandatory Minimums for Drug Offences" paper. CASW joins the Safe Kids Initiative (Safe Kids). Other work is continuing regarding the Scope of Practice, the Code of Ethics, Climate Change and Social Work, dialogue with Ontario Social Workers and a possible reunification to the CASW Board, plus the participation on a number of groups with the end to move ahead in areas that impact on social workers and the public.

Note the new CASW website with resources available on the more interactive format. There are resources by way of webinars, as well as through other social media such as the Peer to Peer CASW Facebook group page launched in March 2020.



Association of Social Work Boards

ASWB Seeking Item Writers

ASWB is seeking qualified social workers to write questions for the licensing exams used in the United States and Canada. Deadline for applications is December 31, 2020.

Practicing social workers—item writers—write all the questions on the ASWB social work licensing exams. These writers are selected for their social work expertise and balanced to reflect diversity in practice area, geography, and demographics. Item writers work on a contract basis and are paid \$1,500 for 30 questions approved for review by the ASWB Examination Committee. ASWB needs social workers from all categories of licensure with a variety of backgrounds in education and experience.

Please use the following link to apply:

<https://www.aswb.org/news/examination-writers-sought/>

A Family Centered Approach To Divorce?

By Erin McLeod, RSW

Divorce is becoming a societal norm with approximately half of marriages/common law relationships ending in divorce. It's no secret that often divorce is contentious and a difficult experience for family members. Social workers often see the negative effects of family breakdown in practice with clients.

The laws that govern divorce are changing. Bill C-78 received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019, and was set to come-into-force on July 1, 2020; however, it has been delayed to March 1, 2021 due to COVID-19. This law places more focus on the best interests of children and to mitigate the adversarial nature of divorce by encouraging the use of alternative family dispute resolution processes.

Collaborative Divorce (CD) is a new interdisciplinary approach to divorce with the goal of mitigating negative effects and is designed to assist adults and children reorganize their lives in a more constructive way for the future. The distinguishing factor of CD is that it utilizes an integrated team approach that uses the law as a guide in the creation of legal agreements for divorce. It does so in a friendly, client-centered manner and focuses on the importance of future family finances and relationships. The integrated team consists of lawyers, financial professionals, and mental health professionals that are trained in CD, and are there to work for the good of the overall family rather than the benefit of any one party to the divorce. The needs of all parties involved are articulated and considered, legal solutions are discussed and can be tried by clients before committing to a written agreement, clients are provided with additional support from mental health professionals, and complicated financial issues can be addressed.

My MSW thesis research looked at CD as a new approach to divorce and specifically at the role of the professional in the process. My study aimed to explore CD by obtaining information and understanding of CD as it is experienced by collaborative professionals, including lawyers, financial specialists, and mental health professionals who have participated in CD cases. This study was unique because it includes the perspectives of this multi-disciplinary group of professionals.

Using a qualitative research approach, I interviewed nine participants — three lawyers, three financial specialists, and three mental health professionals (*i.e.*, social workers). All of the participants had training and experience in collaborative divorce and working as part of the interdisciplinary team. Six overarching themes and associated subthemes arose from the data and painted a picture of what the experience of working as collaborative professional on a

CD case would be like.

The themes that best addressed *what* the participants (*i.e.*, collaborative professionals) experienced were: process is the foundation of CD, collaborative professional's community, right person for the right job, and common challenges. These themes described what it is like to participate in CD as a professional. The process is holistic, ethical, flexible, and client-led. The participants described connecting to a community of other professionals as a fulfilling experience. The participants felt they could be effective in the process, offering guidance and education to equip families with long terms skills. They also acknowledged that it is important to screen the right clients for the process as it is not a process that will work for every divorcing couple. The common challenges included challenges with lawyers, team-splitting, client issues, and timing.

Call for participants

Looking for mental health professionals over the age of 18 to participate in a study on mental health applications. You will be asked to complete a survey which will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. In this study, we are interested in looking at mental health professionals' perceptions of mental health apps. Through your participation we hope to gain a better understanding of how mental health professionals are using apps with their clients.

All information will be kept strictly confidential. There will be no consequences if you decide to withdraw from the study at any point.

If you wish to participate in this study, please click here:
https://uleth.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6zesbrbxh2N16dL

Should any questions arise, please contact Toni Labadie at
labadie@uleth.ca

A Family Centered Approach To Divorce?

The themes that best describe how the participants experienced the phenomenon were: highest version of ourselves, and better than the traditional approach. These themes gave context and deeper meaning to the participants' experience of the CD process. Participants were motivated to find a less damaging and less conflictual approach to divorce based on their own deep-rooted value systems and their personal experience with divorce. The participants validated the emotional aspects of the divorce process by considering them a priority to be addressed rather than an inconvenient symptom of divorce. They found it meaningful to be working for the greater good. They found purpose in working as a team of colleagues for the betterment of the families rather than any one client, as well as contributing on a larger scale to changing family law dynamics in society. The professionals

also described valuing relationships and meaningful experiences with clients that were not limited to the length of the divorce process; professionals believed they could enable clients with long term skills and change the future of divorcing families for the better.

In summary, what arose was a description of CD as a process of legal divorce that focused on the whole family and the broader, longer term well-being of all members. It is a process that aligned with the participants' values and one in which they found meaningful connections with both colleagues and clients. CD is not a flawless process and there are common challenges to be mindful of; however, overall the participants described a process and experience of integrity in divorce.

The growing need for consensual

dispute resolution options under law will require professionals be trained in such options. My study shed light on what it could be like to be a CD professional. This is an opportunity to develop collaborative communities, and for professionals to engage in training and skill development and prepare to approach divorce in this new way. CD could be a direct practice way for social workers to address the negative effects of family breakdown and CD fits well within the values of the profession of social work. As well, the opportunity for future research of CD is plentiful. The current literature is limited and in particular, there is little research regarding the full interdisciplinary team approach. There is still a lot to be learned about CD, however we do know that our approach to divorce needs to stay current and evolve as the laws do and as the families require.

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Providing Support Remotely—Strategies for Helping From a Distance
December 8 & February 9: 9 am-12 pm CT

Trauma-Informed Care—Building a Culture of Strength
December 9: 9 am-4 pm CT

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy—Tools for Thinking Differently
December 15: 9 am-4 pm CT

Narrative Therapy—Tools for Exploring Stories
December 16: 9 am-4 pm CT

The Ethics of Helping—Boundaries and Relationships
January 14: 9 am-4 pm CT

Borderline Personality Disorder—Understanding and Supporting
January 19: 9 am-4 pm CT

Eating Disorders—From Image to Illness
January 27: 9 am-4 pm CT

Critical Incident Group Debriefing
January 28: 9 am-4 pm CT

Anxiety in Children & Youth—Practical Intervention Strategies
January 30: 9 am-4 pm CT

Brief Focused Counselling Skills—Strategies from Leading Frameworks
February 2-3: 9 am-4 pm CT

Vicarious Trauma—Strategies for Resilience
February 4: 9 am-4 pm CT

Addictions & Mental Illness—Working with Co-occurring Disorders
February 10: 9 am-4 pm CT

CTRI Workshops are approved by
ASWB
(Association of Social Work Boards)

Covid-19 & Sexualized Violence: How Survivors Have Been Impacted

By Faye Davis, Executive Director & Morgan Price, Education & Outreach Coordinator

The most common question we get asked these days is, “What impact is Covid-19 having on survivors of sexualized violence?”

This is a tough question to answer, as the impacts will continue to affect survivors long after the pandemic is over. While each survivor’s experience is unique, survivors of sexualized violence are more at risk to experience the following impacts:

Increased Stress Responses

Sexualized violence survivors are trauma survivors. With the added stress of the pandemic, stress responses in their bodies may rise to levels that survivors have difficulty coping with. Many of us are keenly aware that the impact of trauma creates difficulty regulating the nervous systems when experiencing stress. In addition, access to their counsellor, doctors, mental health workers, and other supports may have been temporarily halted or delivered through alternative methods.

Retraumatization and Triggers

Survivors have noted similarities between the circumstances of the pandemic and their experiences of sexualized violence. Isolation, helplessness, fear, feeling trapped, and a lack of



control and choice are common experiences of many people living through Covid-19. This can remind survivors of those same experiences connected to their sexual trauma, and creates opportunities for the pandemic to trigger old memories, emotions, impacts, and ways of coping.

Reversion to Old Coping Techniques

Survivors, especially those who were abused as children, have often developed and used many coping mechanisms to manage the impacts of their trauma over their lifetimes. Positive examples include filling their lives with work to feel in control, expanding their social networks to stay connected, or joining a yoga community to stay grounded.

When these outlets weren’t available during the initial shutdown and present risk (even today) when accessing them, the feelings they were coping with by

using these outlets may have risen to the surface. Other coping mechanisms, like using food, alcohol, online gambling, substance use, or self harm had the opportunity to thrive during quarantine. How many of you are familiar with the societal acceptance of “coping however possible” during the pandemic? Some of these negative coping mechanisms could have been very tempting during this time of heightened stress.

Isolation of Children

Unfortunately, the majority of child sexual abuse happens by someone who has consistent access to that child, not by random strangers. So although we would think that children would be safer during lockdown, this isn’t true for children being sexually victimized by someone in the home. These children will often only report the abuse to a trusted adult outside of the household, like teachers, daycare providers, or extended family members. Without the ability to be around each other during the height of the pandemic, vulnerable children did not have this safety network available to them, and were therefore at a greater risk of sexual abuse.

Sexual assault is not motivated by a desire for sex, but by a desire to control and dominate others through violence. As pandemic stressors may create greater feelings of powerlessness and lack of control, perpetrators may

Submissions Welcome!!

Is there a social issue, population, or theoretical modality you’re passionate about? Consider sharing your experience, knowledge, and insights with other SASW members.

E-mail your article to
sasw@accesscomm.ca.

Covid-19 & Sexualized Violence: How Survivors Have Been Impacted

increase attempts to control others through sexualized violence.

Individuals who are being sexually abused by their intimate partners are at increased risk. Many were forced to quarantine with their abusive partners, who may be no longer working, working from home, or angry about the pandemic in general. This isolation increases the abusive partner's desire to control and makes it more difficult for the survivor to access help.

Survivors who are experiencing poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, or addictions are also at a greater risk for revictimization; perpetrators may use coerced sex as an "exchange" for

food, drugs, alcohol, a place to stay, or other resources.

Some good news...

Perpetrators of sexualized violence are likely to find their victims in places where they are trusted or have authority over others (this makes their victims vulnerable). They hunt in workplaces, sports clubs, churches, schools, and any other public gathering space. With the initial Covid-19 closures, these hunting grounds were unavailable to perpetrators. As most people have limited their social circles to a small group of people and more interaction is taking place virtually, perpetrators continue to have decreased access to non-family members and close friend groups.

SSAIC Covid-19 Service Restrictions

While SSAIC has changed the way we deliver services, we are still available and working to support survivors. Our office intake line (306-244-2294) is available from 9 am-noon and 1 pm-5 pm, Monday to Friday, with counsellors available to take calls from survivors or anyone seeking information. Our 24-hour crisis line (306-244-2224) is always available 365 days a year. We are offering face-to-face counselling on a limited basis; all previous clients have the option of selecting face-to-face or telephone counselling. Our counsellors are continuing to offer telephone counselling, information, and support.

SASW Distinguished Service Award

Sandy Spencer Johnson was the recipient of the 2020 SASW Distinguished Service Award. The award was presented to her by her supervisor, Marlene Salmers, on June 16, 2020. Marlene was the Distinguished Service Award recipient in 2014. This was a special event – from one to another!

Prior to entering the social work program, Sandy was an innovative and compassionate community leader. She began working in Mental Health Services, SHA, Weyburn in 2010, where she has developed many innovations both as a worker and a community activist.

In the words of the nominators: "Sandy is a credit to the social work profession as a skilled clinician, compassionate and open advocate, and community leader."

Congratulations, Sandy!



Newsletter Contributions

Contributions to the Saskatchewan Social Worker are always welcome. Please send your articles and ideas to sasw@accesscomm.ca. Deadline for the February 2021 issue is December 31, 2020.

News Briefs

Practice Ethics Consultation

Facing an ethical dilemma? The Practice Ethics Committee is available to respond to ethical dilemmas, including those that arise due to the pandemic. To contact the committee, log into your Member's Home Page on our website, complete the form that is there, and submit. It will be forwarded to the Committee for review and response.

Questions About Scope of Practice?

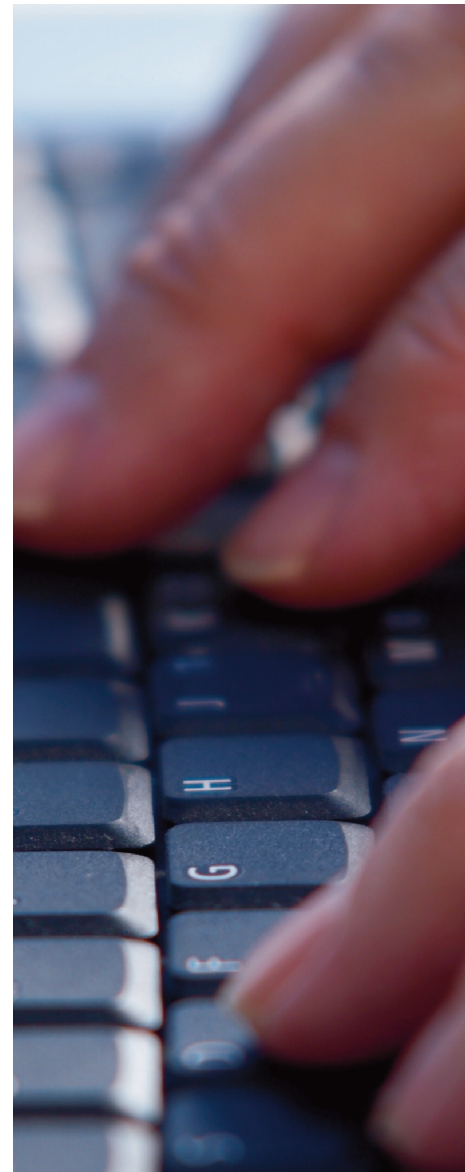
In June 2020, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) adopted a new statement on the Scope of Practice in Social Work. You can find the Scope of Practice Statement on the CASW website.

Keeping Up with Continuing Professional Education

Looking for CPE? There are many CASW webinars available. Check out the CASW website under Continuing Education. Some are related to COVID-19 and provision of services.

Volunteering for SASW Committees

Thank you to everyone who indicated an interest in volunteering for SASW committee work when you completed your renewal. Committee positions are filled on an "as needed" basis by the SASW Volunteer Development Committee. When there are vacancies on a committee, an email will go out to those who identified interest in that committee. You will be asked to confirm your interest, the amount of time you can commit to the committee, and provide a short statement of your interest and experience. New committee members will then be selected. Please contact the office at sasw.accesscomm.ca if you have any questions about the committees or the process of recruitment.



Educational Opportunities

Please check the SASW Website and Facebook page for educational opportunities during pandemic restrictions.

Get Involved

#WeAreAllTreatyPeople
#amplifymelanatedvoices

@RPIRG Regina Public Interest Group
@SURJYXE Stand Up for Racial Justice YXE chapter
@arnetworksask Saskatoon Anti-Racism Network

