

MARCH 2019

FSC NATIONAL NEWS

Newsletter for members of Family Service Canada



Message from the Board

We have begun the work to update our website. Our hope is to have a website that provides the membership with the kind of information that leverages our collective knowledge and experience. As part of the upgrade, we will be creating a portal that will provide access to information such as research, innovative concepts and expertise and successful proposals.

The Board is happy to announce we have solidified a date for our community of learning this year. This from the COL committee.

Save the date:

The 2019 Circle of Learning Committee is excited to share that our planning is well underway! Please mark your calendars for October 9 & 10, 2019 when we will be travelling to the East Coast of Canada! This year's event will be held in Sydney, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. The famous Celtic Colours Music Festival begins October 11, 2019 for those of you who may decide to make the trip east both work and fun! Please watch for more details in the coming months!

As part of the COL we will have Dr. Nicole Sherren from the Alberta Wellness Initiative join us to present.

Brain Story Certification

The Alberta Family Wellness Initiative (AFWI) has developed an online course to make Brain Story science available to professionals and the public. Brain Story Certification is designed for those seeking a deeper understanding of brain development and its consequences for lifelong health. The course is also designed for professionals seeking certification in a wide range of fields.

<https://www.albertafamilywellness.org/training>

The course is free and very in-depth and accessible for anyone who wants to learn more about the science of brain development. Training includes:

- Videos of more than 30 leading experts in neurobiology and mental health
- Certification in Brain Story science
- 19 modules self-paced

CEO Spotlight: Judy Scott

My name is Judy Scott and I have the pleasure of being the Executive Director for Family Services of Central Alberta (FSCA) located in Red Deer. For over 40 years I have worked with families and children, 20 of those years with the agency. In 2015, I stepped into the Executive Director role.

As Executive Director I provide leadership to over 50 staff and work with the Board of Directors to ensure that FSCA is providing early intervention prevention programs for individuals and families in our community. As an agency, we provide supports in Red Deer and many Central Alberta communities. Working with a variety of partners in many sectors, it is one of the ways we learn together, think together, and develop a common understanding of the work that needs to be done to support children, youth, adults, and seniors in our community.

The Red Deer story is one of growth and change. Over the last couple of years, Red Deer has been rebuilding from the recession along with seeing an increase in its immigrant refugee community and an increased awareness around mental health issues. Mental health, relationships, and poverty continue to be the reoccurring themes having an impact on the work that we do in all of our programs and services. There isn't a day that goes by that I am not struck by the courage and resilience of the families we have the honour to walk alongside, the passion and intelligence of our staff, and the support and guidance of the board of our directors.



Healthy Relationships: Therapeutic Group

Healthy Relationships is a program developed by The Family Centre in Edmonton. It is a therapy group for women experiencing challenges in relationships. Whether they be with friends, family members, co-workers or romantic partners, relationships are an important part of leading a healthy and fulfilling life. The therapeutic group helps to enhance a woman's well-being by showing them how to develop healthier relationship skills based on their own personal values and what they want their life to be.

Through Healthy Relationships, women can grow their confidence and learn ways to recognize the signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships and the role that power plays in them, effectively communicate and set appropriate boundaries, and understand how their relationship with themselves impacts all of their relationships.

Healthy Relationships consists of the following four modules, which can be taken in any order. Each module is covered over four weeks, making this a 16-week program.

1. Self-awareness and self-management
2. Conflict management and communication skills
3. Core beliefs, values, and life balance
4. Power in relationships and impacts of stereotypes

Healthy Relationships is based on the Good Lives Model (GLM) developed by Dr. Tony Ward, professor of clinical psychology at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Dr Ward and his colleagues developed the GLM for the rehabilitation of sex offenders in prison settings. Dr. Ann Marie Dewhurst and Dr. Karen Neilson of Edmonton applied the GLM to changing lives of people impacted by domestic violence. Instead of blaming and shaming individuals for their past errors, the GLM seeks to help people think about the future they would like and then helps to provide them with the orientation and tools they need to achieve it.

The GLM is a strength-based rehabilitation framework that is responsive to offenders' particular interests, abilities, and aspirations. It also directs practitioners to explicitly construct intervention plans that help offenders acquire the capabilities to achieve things and outcomes that are personally meaningful to them.

It assumes that all individuals have similar aspirations and needs and that one of the primary responsibilities of parents, teachers, and the broader community is to help each of us acquire the tools required to make our own way in the world. Criminal behaviour results when individuals lack the internal and external resources necessary to satisfy their values using pro-social means. In other words, criminal behaviour represents a maladaptive attempt to meet life values. Rehabilitation endeavours should therefore equip offenders with the knowledge, skills, opportunities, and resources necessary to satisfy their life values in ways that don't harm others. Inherent in its focus on an offender's life values, the GLM places a strong emphasis on offender agency. That is, offenders, like the rest of us, actively seek to satisfy their life values through whatever means available to them. For more information on GLM, please visit: <https://www.goodlivesmodel.com/information.shtml#General>

Susanne's Story

Struggling with life, and not understanding why, Susanne reached out to The Family Centre for help. After learning that she had experienced seven types of adverse childhood experiences, Susanne was directed to the Healthy Relationships therapeutic group for women.

It wasn't easy for Susanne when she started the therapeutic group. "The course was all about me and the choices I had to make. It was challenging for me to go there every week because I didn't love myself enough to see or understand that I deserved to be there."

After attending a few times, she saw this start to change. "The group experience was what made me want to go. Knowing there were other people there that I could at least talk to was the tie that kept me going."

"In the course itself, every week we would do something different. There were different modules and different blocks, and with that, I was learning that if I was angry, lonely, tired, hungry—those are all things that can make me trigger without even an abusive memory," Susanne says.

Since the Healthy Relationships course, Susanne learned that motherhood was constantly triggering her. "When I found that out, it was like two doors were wide open for me, and I was able to get out of the rut I was in." She was given a book at the course called Trigger Points, which contained stories of other people who were abused as a child, and then had the opportunity to have a child. "Then all of a sudden we're just constantly reminded of our abusive childhood. And when I learned that—that's exactly what changed my life forever. I could fully embrace loving my child and loving myself and my family."

Susanne recognizes that it was difficult at first to attend the course, but that it was ultimately life-changing. "You're going to have to find a way to keep going because you will eventually find the love for yourself to see why you need to be there. That's what happened to me. It took me going and learning from it. Because of the experiences I had, healing my brain was giving me the opportunity to be more open. Now I'm much more intuitive and in touch with myself."

