

# ALBERTA SCHOOL *Counsellor*

Spring 2019



## FOCUSING FOR TEENS: A focusing-oriented therapist's perspective

**THE WHO,  
WHAT, AND WHY**  
of equine and animal  
assisted therapy

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# Focusing for teens:

## A focusing-oriented therapist's perspective

By Mary Anne Schleinich, BScOT, MPS, CCC, FOT



Mary Anne Schleinich, MPS, is a counselling body psychotherapist in private practice in Calgary and online. She is certified with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association, and with The International Focusing Institute as a Focusing Oriented Therapist. She teaches Focusing and has worked for 20 years with those who have suffered from pain, anxiety, and trauma. Mary Anne can be reached at 403-288-5712 or by email at [mschleinich@gmail.com](mailto:mschleinich@gmail.com).

When was the last time you noticed feeling really good inside your body – not just okay, but A-Okay? Did you notice how long you maintained feeling?

I invite you to take a minute and consider the last time you vaguely sensed something was definitely not all right. Did you notice wanting the feeling to go away, perhaps also wanting to sense it more, to understand it?

These are two examples of the “felt sense,” a term coined by Eugene Gendlin. They refer to the body’s sense of something that is unclear and beyond any thoughts or emotions. It is something we sense before words come.

Gendlin laid the foundation for more than 50 years of research, and more than the same number of studies<sup>1</sup> showing that the

body knows with precision, which direction will bring more life – more freedom, more wholeness, more authenticity and more empowerment. Gendlin described and named this process, Focusing. More recently, Peter Levine’s work in trauma, based first on learning Gendlin’s work<sup>2</sup>, and Dan Siegel’s research in neurology<sup>3</sup> confirm the effect of Focusing to calm and self-regulate. Its work in schools is well established<sup>4</sup>.

According to Gendlin, Focusing begins when we notice a felt sense showing up inside, in a bodily way, as an at-once awareness of the whole of something. Once the felt sense is received with a certain attention, a subtle bodily shift follows. By staying with the shift, the experience of change deepens and grows, along with confidence in one’s process. Consider this example:

“Jesse is an articulate 16-year-old. He is very angry because his teacher yelled at him

and insulted him. He tells this story to his mentor.” Jesse:

*“I was really scared. I could feel it through my whole body, like a kind of paralysis on the outside. Or like a skinned rabbit. While inside me it was boiling. I decided not to go to the next day because I won’t allow myself to be treated like this. That decision felt like a piece of steel plate inside. My mother was furious that I refused to go. I went to my room and stayed still with the feeling for a while. Then I started to draw and color. A lot of red came like a volcano erupting and bursting open. It was more anger than fear. I went through three or four sheets of paper. Slowly I felt my fear disappear and my anger lessen. The next day I did go to class. I felt a little tense, but also calm and sure of myself. The teacher didn’t say anything and acted quite normally. I am going to pay a little more attention.”<sup>5</sup>*

Jesse shows the heart of the Focusing process, which is to notice and nurture the felt sense. It involves practicing the ability to pay attention to it, to patiently be with it and to follow what comes. These abilities undergird all forms of somatic psychotherapy and support every type of counselling, including CBT. In fact, Focusing develops the ability to pay attention. Focusing with children and teens has been developing for 35 years and its advantages are enormous. They include body awareness, inner motivation, empathy, and dealing with problems instead of denying them or becoming overwhelmed.

Focusing builds the ability to identify boundaries. It enables staying with inner boundaries, and helps honesty. Focusing is the kind of listening that adolescents crave because it connects to what is real and what is uniquely individual. It contrasts the pre-packaged knowledge units dispensed by adults. When teens are trying to make sense of new feelings and new ways of experiencing their rapidly changing world, it becomes even more important to be seen and heard – to acknowledge not just behaviours, but also the realities living inside.



By practicing inward attention during both speaking and listening, Focusing builds respect. It pays particular attention to the creation of safe spaces, especially in peer partnerships where Focusing is practiced.

In the last issue of Alberta School Counsellor, Nancy Willard called for an approach to bullying that goes beyond trauma-informed practices. Focusing brings the shift that Nancy Willard described in the work she calls Embrace Civility<sup>6</sup>. Specifically, Focusing increases peer involvement with depth of engagement and improved social skills. Focusing by-passes blame and moves beyond content that is focused on rules and consequences. While rules and consequences matter, it is important that they connect to the deeper processes and motivations that drive the behaviour. Focusing does this effectively by cultivating an environment of inclusion, wherein adolescents grow in the ability to identify their needs and solutions in relation to the whole situation.

Focusing is a natural process. It is easily learned by children and takes a little longer for teens, who may first need their curiosity piqued. Why don’t we see more of it in our schools? Perhaps we underestimate the effects of culture to override or disengage inner sources of knowing through overuse of control, its fear of the unknown, and the impulse to solicit outside authority.

Contrary to the idea that Focusing is time-consuming, it consists of micro-processes

that are used in a range of encounters that save time. To an observer’s eye, the process can appear inexplicably simple such that its potency is missed.

Focusing is most successful for kids, however, when parents or teachers practice it with them. It is a daring enterprise because it has the power to move us beyond baseline defenses – to bring real change. Lastly, Focusing is experiential and cannot be learned without practice. The good news for teachers who have learned Focusing is the benefit of deepened peer relationships and supports<sup>7</sup>.

Retired elementary teacher, Lucy Bowers, reminds us, “When you interact with children, the child in you is in contact with that too, it is part of the interaction. The hurt places in you can either help or hinder this contact”<sup>8</sup>. We all have these places, but the beauty is that Focusing allows our awareness to come into contact with what stands between us and listening to another. Even more powerfully, it puts us in contact with what stands in the way of listening to ourselves, the parts we deny, including our best. When we attend and nurture these places, either in private or in a Focusing partnership, we become ready to facilitate similar processes in another.

Adolescent attention for learning faces stiff competition. New attractions, peer opinions, and turmoil or losses at home are all challenging in the struggle for independence. The presence of an inner voice criticizing one’s unease with the array of confusing and impossible expectations will certainly welcome digital distractions that pull away from the inner world. This is no less true for adults who have had more time to develop harshness toward themselves in dealing with the increasing demands of added years.

School counsellor Elizabeth Townsend writes, “Focusing has cultivated gentleness towards myself . . . [and] plays out in allowing others to simply be, rather than viewing their actions through critical lenses that measure their behavior according to my expectations”<sup>9</sup>. She emphasizes that this



attitude builds trust in self and reciprocal trust within relationships, all of which help ground teens as they embark a search for vocation.

Teachers and support staff need this too. In response to CBC's heart-breaking documentary about violence against teachers from elementary school children (CBC's The Sunday Edition, Feb 17, 2019), it is far too easy to blame teachers, parents or government, and it is woefully inadequate to completely rely on rules for handling a crisis. Mandating externally imposed guidelines isn't working. Inclusion of spaces that enable a deeper, more body based and heart-based responsiveness has the power to make situations and consequences easier to bear, and lead to something new.

Focusing brings a much-needed level of wisdom by resourcing and supporting one person, one classroom, and one school at a time. If you are interested to begin bringing this resource into your work place, I would be happy to link you with a well-developed body of Focusing resources for children and teens. The most immediate outcome might be meeting other counsellors and teachers online across Canada to create safe spaces for the next steps.

The International Focusing Institute is also a great resource. An inspiring venture would

be to attend the international five-day intensive training in Children Focusing, in the Netherlands in July 2019, which is open to all interested adults<sup>10</sup>.

Personally, I had the good fortune of discovering Focusing 15 years ago, when I worked in palliative care. I recognized that this was how I listened to patients who suffered in ways that defied words. Listening to my sense of their sense, and tracking their bodily resonance was my sure compass for how to work together and where to find relief. The journey of deeper listening led to a Masters of Psychotherapy and Spirituality from St. Stephen's College in Edmonton and to a private practice in body psychotherapy in Calgary. I have been practicing Focusing ever since. I call it the pearl of great price.

#### **Additional digital resources:**

<https://www.biospiritual.org>  
<http://www.Focusing.org>

#### **Derek McDonnell in action:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnJ03vcK5LI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJDN7k8szK0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m18Dfb2-Flg>

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# BUILDING A Future in the trades

Submitted by Women Building Futures



## Have your students considered building their future in the trades?

Like many industries, the construction and maintenance industries are anticipating a loss of close to 250,000 skilled workers, 21 per cent of its current labour force, by the year 2026<sup>1</sup>. Attracting a new workforce will challenge employers to revisit their recruitment and retention strategies to not only bring in new talent but adjust workplace environments to keep them. This means there is ample opportunity for entry level positions and endless opportunity for growth in a fulfilling career path.

Women Building Futures (WBF) is a non-profit organization offering unique, pre-apprenticeship training for the skilled trades and driving industries. WBF partners with industry and communities to champion women's participation and employment in careers where they have been historically under-represented.

The WBF flagship program, Journeywoman Start introduces students to 6 different trades and provides introductory skills training for welding, carpentry, sheet metal,

electrical, plumbing and pipe-fitting/steam fitting. This 17-week program introduces a handful of technical skills, best work practices, fitness training and life skills required to succeed in these careers.

At the end of Journeywoman Start, students are given the opportunity to interview with a number of WBF employer partners. Interview day is facilitated by WBF's alumni advisor, who ensures students are prepared with their professional resume and interview skills to navigate the world of work.

If you have students who are interested in building a career in the trades, here are a few guiding questions you can ask to help them through the decision-making process:

- Do they enjoy being physically active and working with their hands?
- What skills do they have from previous work experience that would transfer well to a career in the trades?

# WBF

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- Do they know anyone currently working in the trades they can learn from or hear what a day in the life is like?
- Have they researched the different trades available and the training requirements?

Interested in learning more about how your students can get started in their training for a career in the trades? Visit [womenbuildingfutures.com](http://womenbuildingfutures.com) for more information today.

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# Conflict resolution 101:

## When conflict meets power, how to resolve conflict when there is a power imbalance

By Vicki-Anne Rodrigue, M.Ed, CCC

**R**ecently, a high school student contacted me and made the following request: “I need help with my essay. I work my butt off and I am barely able to pull off a decent grade. I think my teacher hates me. Can you please help me?”

As a former part-time postsecondary professor, I always ensured that my students knew that they could come to me for guidance and address their concerns in a safe and respectful fashion, and set the tone for this from day one. However, the postsecondary landscape usually offers greater flexibility for both students and professors, rather than that of an elementary or high school environment. This in conjunction with children and adolescents’ cognitive development still progressing, means that students have not reached the same level of emotional maturity as post-secondary students, which would allow for a constructive dialogue surrounding a particular situation.

In addition to this, opposed to the postsecondary environment, the elementary or high school climate clearly delineates students’ and teachers’ roles and responsibilities. The power (or authority) usually lies with the teacher, supported by the school’s hierarchy, such as the vice-principal and principal. What is more, there are usually no classes devoted to teaching students about the essentials in conflict management, on how to have a constructive conversation, on mastering “I” messages and interest statements. As a result, elementary and high school students, are not always equipped to have a

constructive conversation with an authority figure. Furthermore, as there is usually no internal resource dedicated to ensuring that students’ rights are protected within the school setting, students usually need to accept the explanation that their teachers provide without necessarily understanding the rationale behind it.

In the above situation, the student in question was obviously upset by her grade. I therefore assisted her in a subsequent essay, indicating to her that I would review grammar and sentence structure, but not the content. The essay was fairly well written and while I would have given it a B+ or an A-, the end result of the second essay came as a complete shock. As the student and I reviewed her graded assignment, an interesting phenomenon emerged: words and verb tenses that were identified as incorrect were, in all actuality, correct. I encouraged the student to go to her teacher and ask for a more detailed explanation, to which she responded, “I have, even my parents have attempted to discuss my grade with her and she has told them, ‘That’s the way it is. I do not know what it is. Despite her best efforts, she cannot get higher than a C+ average’”.

This situation was disconcerting because it appeared that the teacher was not open to offering a complete explanation as to why the student had received such a low grade. It would seem that she did not want her authority to be called into question, while in all actuality, she had a responsibility to explain to her student why she had been penalized. This situation depicted a classic conflict between two individuals,



*Vicki-Anne Rodrigue, M.Ed., CCC, is a Certified Canadian Counsellor with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association. She has taught at the postsecondary level and has worked in the fields of crisis counselling, values and ethics, conflict resolution, and harassment prevention and resolution. Vicki-Anne would like to thank her mother, Mary Belle Brunelle Rodrigue, a retired and skilled elementary school teacher for her help in reviewing the current article; Marie-Claude Leroux, a counsellor with the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association and expert in bullying; and Parise Forget, a student who had the courage to share her story.*

where the relationship also includes a power differential. In such a situation, it is imperative for the person who does not hold the power to be able to address their concerns in a respectful fashion. This entails making their perceptions, expectations, assumptions, concerns, and beliefs known to the other by using communication techniques, such as “I” messages and interest statements.



“I” messages or “I” statements are assertions that begin with the word (or pronoun) “I”. It owns one’s feelings rather than implying that another person has caused them. “I” messages are particularly effective in the realm of conflict resolution as they identify feelings and allow the individual to speak and/or respond to a situation that will de-escalate the conflict situation, whereas “you” messages tend to cause defensiveness. Interest statements aim at identifying the elements that both parties have in common and how they can work towards achieving a common goal. Position statements, on the other hand, present opinions and arguments and lead to the escalation of conflict. In the example provided in this article and the teacher’s response to the student’s concerns (i.e. “That’s the way it is”) is a clear example of a position statement. The Giving and Receiving Feedback model is especially effective in addressing conflict as it highlights the use of both “I” messages and interest statements. This model looks at the process that one must adopt when giving and receiving feedback on a given situation. For example, the situation depicted in the

opening paragraph, could hypothetically, be summarized using this model as:

In this example the student makes a very proactive use of “I” statements. This should invite the teacher to explain further, why the student received a lower grade and provide her with the opportunity to learn from her errors. If this method does not yield to a successful exchange of ideas, the student has another recourse, which is addressing her concerns once more with her teacher, but this time requesting that a neutral, third party be present during the conversation. A neutral third party can be useful because they do not carry the same emotional baggage as both parties, especially if bitterness has already set in. A third party can ask questions in an attempt to glean information from both parties. Asking open-ended questions can assist both parties in further explaining their thought processes and help them in gaining additional insight in their own behaviours and those of the other’s. Because the third party is usually someone that both parties trust, they will add a sense of calm to the situation. If the situation still does not

improve, escalation can always be another potential avenue to explore.

Schools that have programs that train students and teachers on how to have constructive conversations are allowing everyone within the school environment to become skilled communicators. Effective communication skills help mitigate against any typical “play ground” behaviour that we often see in school settings, such as gossiping, bullying, social exclusion and other types of passive-aggressive behaviours. These same communication skills can help mitigate against the catastrophizing and internalizing behaviours that some students may engage in as well. Knowing what to say and how to say it well can go a long way in helping to reduce stress and tension which arises when an unpleasant situation occurs.

Finally, it is important to remind those who are in a position of authority that they are privileged, they are there to lead, and should do so by example. This means that any power or authority that is exercised should be done so with gentleness, integrity, honesty, openness, and fairness. If a person in a position of power or authority finds themselves in a situation where they have a bias against another person, it would be a best practice to ask a colleague to review their student’s essay in order to ensure that impartiality is maintained. A good teacher will always be cognizant of their “blind spots” and will take every precaution necessary to ensure that their students are graded with fairness and will set them up for success in all things.

Look for part two of our ongoing Conflict Resolution 101 series in the upcoming fall edition of the Alberta School Counsellor. ■



## The Giving and Receiving Feedback Model in use:

**Step 1 – Behaviours or Competencies:** The student must express a clear expectation or request regarding the gap observed.

**Step 2 – Example or Context:** The student must specify the situation where the gap was observed.

**Step 3 – Impact:** The student must describe the impact that the gap is having on her, the entire class and the school (if applicable).

**Step 4 – Request or Expectation:** The student must clearly state the behaviour she wishes her teacher to modify or to change.

# Vermilion Outreach School introduces the Circle of Intervention:

Helping students succeed by creating an environment of hope, building independence, mastery, belonging and generosity

By Derek Collins, Principal Vermilion Outreach School,  
Buffalo Trail Public Regional School Division #28

## Vermilion OUTREACH SCHOOL

School counsellors are often involved in intervention programs at their schools and institutions. They may be involved in helping to identify students who are in need of intervention, or working with those who require academic or behavioural support. A very common Response to Intervention (RTI) model, which is described by both Shores<sup>1</sup> and Hierk, and Weber<sup>2</sup>, consists of three tiers of intervention, fit within a pyramid orientation.

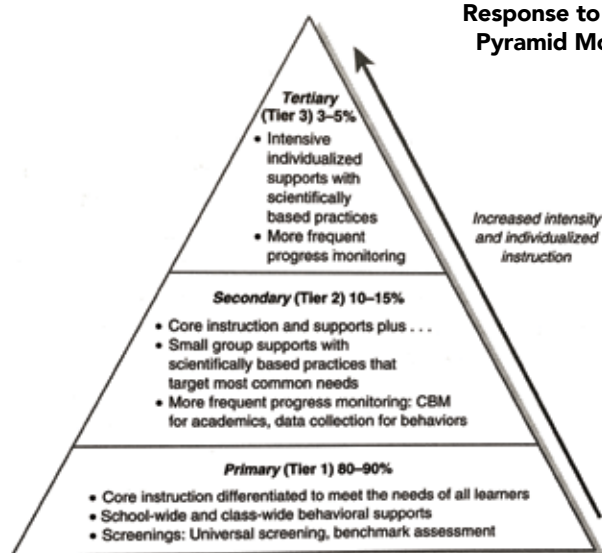
The shape of the pyramid illustrates that as a scenario moves upwards toward the top of the diagram, fewer students are involved in the scenario, and thus fewer people require intervention resources. Tier I interventions are aimed at helping every student and can include classroom instruction strategies that address diverse learning needs, or career information presentations. Tier II interventions are aimed for around 10 to 15 per cent of the student population, and could include small group instruction, note-taking skills, or targeted academic needs assessment. It is estimated that about 5 per cent of the students who move further up the pyramid require targeted interventions including one-on-one support. As data on a student's behaviour or academic progress is monitored, school counsellors can plan and clearly communicate with other

stakeholders regarding what a student will receive in terms of support, as well as methods to track their success and growth. The pyramid shape provides a pathway up and down through the interventions.

Vermilion Outreach School (VOS) is an alternative high school, providing an opportunity for students who have not experienced success in a traditional school setting. Courses are delivered in a manner that students progress through them independently setting individual goals. Schedules are flexible and attendance requirements are dependent on a student's situation. Youth register at an outreach school for a variety of reasons, behavioural and academic needs included.

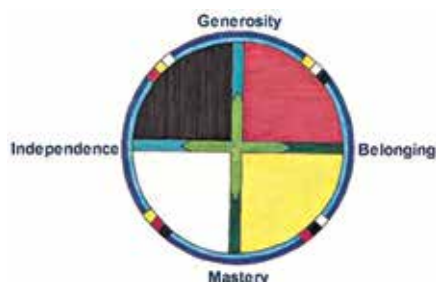
For this reason, the staff of Vermilion Outreach looked to implement an RTI model. During this process, they found that

Response to Intervention  
Pyramid Model diagram



the pyramid of intervention was a difficult fit. When the RTI was initially implemented they found they were referring most of the students to school counselling support. Almost all of the students were being placed in Tier II and more than 5 per cent were considered Tier III. As the staff discussed the program they also felt the RTI was difficult to implement because they felt there was context missing in the descriptions of the traditional three tiers. Different students had different needs and placing them in a specified tier did not clarify what need or skill a student needed to develop.

The staff then considered the Circle of Courage model<sup>3</sup>. Living a centered life in the Circle of Courage model means to develop Mastery, Independence, Generosity and Belonging. In the past there has been some work done using the Circle



**Circle of Courage Response to Intervention Model diagrams**

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of Courage model, and its four quadrants as a framework for organizing school policies and activities and it is off of this work that the school staff commenced their use of this model. Staff found that the Circle of Courage model was also easier to communicate with students and parents in comparison to programs such as Developmental Habits with its forty attributes.

Re-envisioning interventions with the Circle of Courage led to a set of concentric circles. The outer circle is analogous to Tier I of the RTI model. Moving towards the center of the circle, the next layer in corresponds with Tier II. Finally, the inner most circle corresponds to Tier III interventions on the RTI model. The staff of VOS are still implementing this new approach and have been working to clarify strategies and intervention methodologies and the initial response from other stakeholders has been positive. Parents and outside agencies that work with the students appreciate the clarity of this approach. As one parent noted, "This model sees my child as a whole person".

For more information about our teaching practices or to contact Vermilion Outreach School:

Vermilion Outreach School  
Address: 4925 50 Avenue, Vermilion, AB  
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# Healthy Minds Healthy Children outreach services:

## Services for professionals and parents alike

Submitted by the Healthy Minds Healthy Children team

Healthy Minds Healthy Children (HMHC) is an Alberta Health Services (AHS) program which provides mental health consultation and education for targeted audiences. Find additional information and resources at [wp.hmhc.ca](http://wp.hmhc.ca) and contacting [ces@ahs.ca](mailto:ces@ahs.ca).



### Looking for information created for mental health professionals?

#### Online Continuing Professional

**Development (CPD):** CPD offers web-based, online courses intended for primary care practitioners in Alberta working with children and adolescents in the area of addictions and mental health. These courses are accredited through the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, and have been reviewed by the University of Calgary Office of Continuing Medical Education and Professional Development. These courses are also accredited for Alberta Social Workers and through the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association. Expert presenters come from a variety of professions including family medicine, nursing, pediatrics, psychiatry, psychology, and social work.



### Looking for information created for school personnel?

**Mental Health Online Resources for Educators (MORE):** MORE offers free web-based, online professional development intended for teachers and school staff in Alberta, working with students in kindergarten to grade 12. The modules provide information and strategies on how to support students, and promote positive mental health within the school environment. MORE's aim is to create healthy school environments by promoting positive mental health while reducing stigma. Subject matter experts come from a range of professions, including family medicine, nursing, pediatrics, psychiatry, psychology, social work and education. Many presenters have been teachers or have had experience working with students in schools.



### Looking for information created for parents?

Community Education Service (CES): Community Education Service (CES), is a program within Alberta Health Services, and is entering its 17th year of providing Albertans access to free, topical, evidence-based information sessions and resource materials to address child, youth and family health, and mental health needs. Topics cover everything from infant sign language and healthy sleep habits to allergies, diabetes, domestic violence, eating disorders and brain development with the highest demand for information on anxiety and depression.

Since its inception, CES has provided approximately 2,200 talks to more than 85,000 parents, caregivers, educators and health professionals across central and southern Alberta.



### Looking for clinical consultations?

**Clinical Consultant Team:** Clinical consultants are available to support central and southern Alberta professionals working with children and adolescents who are experiencing mental health, substance use and/or behavioural concerns. Consultants can provide guidance with identification, assessment, treatment planning, referral and/or resources to aid these professionals in their work with youth and their families.

In partnership with many community agencies and organizations such as the University of Calgary, the Calgary Police Service, CLP, school boards, local psychologists, Juno House, AHS affiliates and more recently the Palix Foundation, this "small but mighty team" runs the show with a cast of front-line experts who volunteer their time to the cause of education and health promotion in children and families. Sessions are delivered in many formats: in-person, via audiotape, telehealth, webinar, and recording of past sessions. ■



# Be a part of the digital age with an Information Technology Systems (ITS) Diploma

Submitted by Bow Valley College



\$81,750 CDN, depending on experience and position.

We've developed key partnerships with industry leaders to help connect our graduates with employers who are looking for qualified workers. Bow Valley College currently holds a 92 per cent learner satisfaction rate, and 85 per cent of our graduates find jobs in their chosen field. The College also offers career placement and training services to help get you on the road to an exciting future.

If you're fielding educational inquiries from tech savvy students who are into digital gizmos, gaming systems, apps, and hacks, the right fit for their ambitions is easy with the Bow Valley College Information Technology Systems (ITS) Diploma. It is one of our newest, and most in-demand programs offered at the School of Creative Technologies.

Within two short years, learners will be equipped to manage desktop and server repair, storage, retrieval, virtualization, transmission, and protection of data for small to large platform systems, projects, and companies. The ITS program also prepares them to deliver quality equipment and technical support to employees, executives, and clients.

The learning experience at Bow Valley College is hands-on, practical, and focused. A combination of face-to-face classroom learning and labs, blended with online courses, give you the flexibility and support you need.

According to Amos Ngai, associate dean, School of Creative Technologies, "students will get access to the latest high-tech hardware, software and our instructors have worked and mentored in the industry for decades. This gives learners a taste of what to expect in the real world."

Plus, they'll take part in valuable soft skills training, which gives them a distinct advantage when launching projects and presentations, managing deadlines, people and change, and competing for coveted positions.

With the Bow Valley College ITS diploma, your students will be eligible to work in a variety of positions, such as technician, help desk and support analyst, system administrator, project and resource management...to name a few. According to Randstad Canada, average IT salaries for 2019 range from just under \$40,000 and up to \$115,000, with an average of

If it's time to jumpstart a student's Information Technology Systems career, invite them to contact the Bow Valley College Prospective Student Centre:

Phone number: 1-403-410-1402

Toll free: 1-866-428-2669

Email: [study@bowvalleycollege.ca](mailto:study@bowvalleycollege.ca)

Find general information at:  
[www.bowvalleycollege.ca](http://www.bowvalleycollege.ca) ■



# The who, what, and why of Equine and Animal Assisted Therapy

By Sue McIntosh, MA, CCC, Healing Hooves Equine Facilitated Wellness



**Therapy animals, Millie (Cat) and Mocha (horse), work with patients to improve healing. Involving animals in your approach allows you to work experientially, and provide an emotionally safe environment.**

**About the author:** Sue McIntosh is the founder of Healing Hooves, located north-west of Calgary, offering counselling, resources and professional training in EFW and AAT. A key aspect of Sue's approach is to work through interactions and relationships with animals, and through sharing those animals' stories. Healing Hooves is currently donating several therapeutic stories featuring their animals to non-profit organisations who work with children and families.

## What is Equine and Animal Assisted Therapy? Who are they helpful for, and why? How can I draw upon this to help my students?

**E**quine and animal assisted therapy are becoming increasingly popular, with an explosion of programs, approaches, and training options.

This makes it easier to find information and services, but can also make the process of finding the right service for you overwhelming and confusing.

We are asked a lot of questions at Healing Hooves – by parents, teachers, and counsellors – and wherever possible we keep it simple. While the specific questions vary, people are essentially asking what every elementary teacher knows truly matters: Who, What, Why, Where, When, and How?

## WHY is incorporating animals into programing helpful for students?

Adding animals to any program adds cost and complication, but the benefits can be astounding. Teens who cannot or will not engage in traditional approaches show up and flourish when animals are involved. Children who seem unreachable develop empathy and compassion and the animals present ways to explore, both experientially and through 'one step removed' methodology. With animals, the children can use stories to explain their pain and needs when they are not ready to touch on their feelings directly.

But why does this happen? Research shows that simply the presence of an animal can improve our wellbeing. In one study, children asked to read aloud in public experienced significantly less anxiety with a dog in the room. Another

study demonstrated how watching fish in a dentist's office aquarium is as effective a relaxation method as hypnotherapy. Add contact with the animal (with the deciding factor being positive connection or attachment), and the benefits grow exponentially. Having an animal in your life reduces trips to the doctor, lowers blood pressure, and decreases your chance of dying from a heart attack. Children who have positive contact with animals have higher self-esteem, more positive social interactions, and develop more nurturing and empathetic behavior. This bond is particularly powerful when we are feeling vulnerable or facing challenge, loss, or change; times when we may seek counselling. The reasons underlying these benefits lie in the conditions Carl Rogers and Person-Centered Counselling describe as necessary and sufficient for therapeutic growth to arise: Genuineness – Empathy - Unconditional Positive Regard<sup>1</sup>.



While I aspire to provide these qualities myself, both as a former school counsellor and now in private practice, I invariably fall short. And then there are the students who are simply too wounded and defended to believe and accept my offering. But they may trust that 'invitation to exist in my presence, just the way you are', from the animals. This creates a counselling context and safety. Building upon this foundation, the animals provide a multitude of additional therapeutic opportunities: to discuss things indirectly through the animals' stories, to explore things experientially, and to come into the 'here and now', where animals spend their lives, and where healing and growth can arise.

## WHAT are Equine and Animal Assisted Therapy?

Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) draws upon interactions and relationships with animals to support approaches for human growth, healing and learning. Equine therapy is a subset of AAT but can also refer to physical therapy for the horse or human. The term Equine Facilitated Wellness (EFW) is used when the goals for the person are emotional, cognitive, social or psychological, and an equine is included in the helping team. Both AAT and EFW can be further divided into approaches with or without a counselling focus. Terms here include Equine Facilitated Mental Health (EFMH), Equine Facilitated Learning (EFL) and Animal Assisted Activities (AAA). EFL and AAA are frequently facilitated by non-counsellors, while EFMH and AAT are usually led by a certified mental health professional.

## WHO is Involved?

AAT and EFW will involve animals, facilitators, and students. Students who can benefit from equine and animal assisted therapy include those who have experienced trauma and loss, those struggling with relationships, attention problems and addictions, and those diagnosed with PTSD, depression and anxiety. The animals involved also vary, but some considerations include the training



**Animal therapy session at Healing Hooves Equine Facilitated Wellness**

received and the animals' personality, including the desire to connect with people and ability to remain calm. Most programs now value and work with their animal partners as 'sentient beings' respecting their ability and right to experience and express emotions, opinions, and needs. Some approaches should be facilitated by a certified mental health professional, but not all. The Canadian certifying body, Equine Facilitated Wellness Canada (EFW-Can), establishes certification requirements for EFW professionals in three different areas: mental heal, learning, and equine.

## HOW is this relevant for my students?

Schools and students can start to benefit from animal assisted approaches in many ways. Existing programs frequently work with students individually or in groups, ideally as a partnership between a school counsellor who knows the students and their needs, and a certified AAT or EFW practitioner. Another option, if school policy and insurance allows for it and the counsellor has received the appropriate training, would be for a school counsellor to include an animal within their team. For simpler options, talking about a student's own animal(s), or sharing therapeutic stories featuring animals (find more details at [www.healinghooves.ca/one-horse-step-removed-the-value-of-sharing-stories](http://www.healinghooves.ca/one-horse-step-removed-the-value-of-sharing-stories)), can draw on many of the benefits, without any additional cost or risk.

## WHEN can I draw upon this approach for my students?

While AAT can help many, it is not end all

be all solution. Students should be screened for the physical and emotional safety of all involved, with considerations including allergies, medical conditions, and any history of animal abuse or arson.

Some AAT school programs focus on needs common to many students including self esteem, communication skills, and empathy. Provided the team has the right training, programs can be developed for students based on their specific areas of difficulty, including eating disorders, addictions, or recovery from trauma or loss. Many of our school referrals are for students who have lost their trust in counsellors and are unable to engage in traditional programs for all sorts of reasons. Adding an animal to the team can sometimes provide a way through with these harder to reach students.

## WHERE can I access services and learn more about Animal Assisted Therapy?

For EFW training and practitioners visit: [www.equinefacilitatedwellness.org](http://www.equinefacilitatedwellness.org)

For free resources visit: [www.healinghooves.ca/blog](http://www.healinghooves.ca/blog)

For more information contact the author: [sue@healinghooves.ca](mailto:sue@healinghooves.ca)

## Work cited

1. McLeod, Saul. "Person Centered Therapy" (2015). <https://www.simplypsychology.org/Client-Centred-Therapy.html>

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# High school student well on her way to a career in water

Submitted by Northern Lakes College



In the male-dominated world of water and wastewater operations, McKenna Patterson is making her mark. Though still in twelfth grade at Glenmary School in Peace River, McKenna has made major headway toward her future career. She completed the Northern Lakes College Water and Wastewater Operator Preparation Level 1 program through Dual Credit programming while in the eleventh grade.

Many take for granted that clean water flows from the taps in our homes. McKenna knows what goes into making this happen. “Water, as a resource, is not appreciated enough. Often, people don’t know how it is getting to their house,” she notes. “The work that goes into making sure drinking water is safe for the public is unbelievable. I did not expect there would be so much protocol to be sure water is safe to drink.”

McKenna worked at the Grimshaw Water Treatment Plant during the summer of 2018. She learned how the entire system works, from water to wastewater treatment. McKenna worked with regional water manager Derrel Johnson in water and wastewater treatment and in conducting water infrastructure upgrades. Johnson comments, “I would hire her today if I could. McKenna will make an excellent operator. I will be happy to have her back for Work Experience.” Reflecting on her experience at the water plant, McKenna’s confidence shines through. “I realized that you can do whatever you want. Don’t let gender stop you.”

Dual Credit programming is a benefit for determined and focused students like McKenna. “It is amazing that I could take the Water and Wastewater program while still in high school. The opportunity helped me to decide that I do want to pursue a career involving water and the environment. That led to getting a foot in the door with the town of Grimshaw to come back to work in the future.”

She will be returning to work at the plant in February 2019 to do Work Experience for high school credit and gain further practical hours. Once she has all of her hours and graduates from twelfth



grade, she will write her level 1 provincial exam, becoming a certified operator. She intends to complete the NLC Water Treatment and Water Distribution Operator Level 2 program in the future. This will allow her to one day manage a water plant.

“McKenna is a very mature young lady. She approached me about participating in the Water and Wastewater program on her own. Though the school finds placements for students, she even found her own placement for her summer internship. She did an excellent job, all while maintaining good grades in her other high school classes. The future is bright for McKenna,” comments Scott Randall, off-campus coordinator for the Holy Family Catholic Regional Division.

To learn more about the various Dual Credit programming opportunities available, contact Northern Lakes College. NLC LIVE



Online™ delivery, means most Northern Lakes College courses and programs are available anywhere.

For further information on Dual Credit opportunities visit:  
<https://www.northernlakescollege.ca/prospective-students/dual-credit>

For further information on Water and Wastewater Operator Training 1 visit: <https://www.northernlakescollege.ca/programs-courses/continuing-education/program/253> ■

## Water and Wastewater Operator Level 1 for high school students

Communities are continuously searching for qualified individuals to fill the complex roles of water and wastewater treatment plant operators, water distribution system operators and wastewater collection system operators.

### Dual Credit Opportunities Available

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addictions Counselling</li> <li>Business Administration</li> <li>Early Learning and Child Care</li> <li>Educational Assistant Certificate</li> <li>Health Care Aide</li> <li>Introduction to Surveying</li> <li>Office Administration</li> <li>Oilfield Operator Training</li> <li>Pre-Employment Carpenter</li> <li>Pre-Employment Electrician</li> <li>Pre-Employment Heavy Equipment Technician</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-Employment Industrial Mechanic</li> <li>Pre-Employment Welder</li> <li>Power Engineering 4th Class</li> <li>Power Engineering 5th Class</li> <li>Primary Care Paramedic</li> <li>Social Work</li> <li>University Studies</li> <li>Water and Wastewater Operator Level 1</li> </ul> <p style="color: #00728f; font-weight: bold; text-align: center;"><u><b>\$500 Bursary Available to Dual Credit Students</b></u></p>
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*A Northern Lakes College program through Dual Credit provides many benefits including:*

- Saving on the cost of tuition
- Prepares high school students for a post-secondary environment
- Lowers future post-secondary workload
- Build confidence to continue on a post-secondary path
- Provides an opportunity for hands-on experience

*NLC's programs are available online for high schools with Dual Credit agreements.*

START HERE. GO ANYWHERE.

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▶ APPLY NOW!



# Campbell College's diploma program equals employment success!

By Vanessa Bayeng



I heard about Campbell College from my Church mates who had graduated from the Administrative Professional program and now have great professional administrative jobs. They kept telling me to at least visit the college for information. I was hesitant at first. My dream job was to become a nurse; life though, has a way of changing one's path. I was late for my submission for nursing, and would have to wait a year to

re-apply. I listed five other career choices – administration was my last choice. But, I took a chance, attended an information session, and enrolled. Little did I know this choice would change my life forever.

My first day felt strange. I was 17, and my classmates were older. Once I started the Professional Development workshops, my feelings quickly changed. I learned how to interact with different personalities and

cultures. I had never heard of emotional intelligence, but I learned the value of this too. I am an introvert by nature, but I was soon speaking in front of the class and sharing my thoughts, becoming more mature, responsible, detail-oriented, and organized. The training was excellent, and the instructors worked hard to ensure that we became the best we could be, and they were always there to help. One of my instructors told us "skills can be taught,



but attitude can't". This really impressed me – I had no idea at the time how it would impact my future.

When choosing my practicum, my coordinator suggested a choice not on my list – the Government of Alberta, Children's Services. At first, the duties seemed overwhelming, but I had faith that the opportunity was given to me because I could learn a lot, and I was right. My practicum mentors were so helpful, and they gave me advice about life and my future job search, that contributed to my success. Trust Campbell College to recommend the placement that will help you grow and boost your confidence. I really learned a lot, and I was treated like an actual staff member.

After graduating, I applied everywhere, and to employment agencies for more experience. Two weeks later, Randstad hired me and sent me to my first position, back with the Government, this time to the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee. This three week assignment turned into three months. Following, was a month's assignment with the Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution Service, where I learned how to prepare legal applications, process court orders, and enter/close tenant and landlord applications. Randstad is an excellent agency to work for. Every time I ended my work assignment, they gave me another. At Metis Settlements Land Registry, I helped the senior land examiner format and create letters to send to members, and learned new software applications.

I kept applying for every administrative posting with the Government, and thought it would be a miracle to get an interview, then, I started being invited to interviews. My last interview was for a Judicial Clerk position at the Law Courts. I didn't have a legal degree or background, I was 18, but I went and presented my professional best. In response to one of the questions, I told my future manager, "I am confident that I can do the job, because 'skills are learned but attitude isn't', and I have the right attitude!" I am proud to say that I got the judicial clerk full-time, permanent position at the Edmonton Law Courts, Court of Queen's



Bench, Government of Alberta.

I would like to thank Campbell College for their amazing administrative training and on-going support, my family for always having my back, my supervisors for believing in me, the work experience through Randstad, and importantly, my faith. I now know everything is possible! ■

## Start your new CAREER in only 8 Months

**Administrative jobs are always in demand in government, health, and all industries regardless of the economic climate**

**Campbell College specializes in a post-secondary, 8-month Administrative Professional Diploma Program.**



**6-month classroom training  
2-month work experience**

**Obtain the skills, certification, references, and work practicum from a college with over 32 years of experience and 88% success rate.**

### Upcoming Program Dates

**April 8, 2019  
June 3, 2019  
September 3, 2019  
November 4, 2019**

**Call NOW to BOOK your  
INFORMATION SESSION**



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# Shaping the future – Career development for the 21st century

By Paula Wischoff Yerama, CCDP, Executive Director, Career Development Association of Alberta



Is there a role for career development and career development service providers in “shaping the future”?

And if so, what will their role be and what “future” will they be trying to shape? The response to these pivotal questions will likely depend on the environment in which career development services are being provided, and the role a career development service provider is playing.

One of the many ways that the Career Development Association of Alberta (CDAA) strives to “shape the future” is through its annual Alberta Career Development Conference (ACDC). Future skills initiatives, decent work agendas, and conversations about the changing nature of work, are guiding many career development programs, services, and interventions. This year’s sixth annual conference is focused

on Career Development for the 21st Century and is an excellent opportunity to connect with colleagues, thought leaders, employers, service providers, researchers, and educators, to stay current, get connected, and be committed. ACDC 2019 will be held from April 30 to May 1, 2019 at the Delta by Marriott Edmonton South Conference Centre, Edmonton, Alberta and will bring together 300 delegates, presenters, and exhibitors from across Alberta, and points beyond. This year’s conference will feature:

- Keynote presentations from Dr. Roberta Neault (Career Development for the 21st Century – It Takes a Village!) and Gail Kastning (Fitting into an Agile Workforce – How to PIVOT, RESPOND and STRATEGIZE in a Contingency Workforce).
- Two delegate wide career development focused consultation sessions.
- 28 concurrent sessions in the following areas: career counselling/coaching techniques; trends, tools, and technology; career development research and theories; workforce planning and development; personal development and wellness; leadership, supervision, and mentorship; and best practices for diverse client groups.
- 20 exhibitor booths showcasing tools, resources, programs, and services to support you and your clients.
- Networking Reception; Delegate Wide Career Development Challenge – an evening of fun for all; and the Career Development Association of Alberta





Annual General Meeting and Career Development Association of Alberta Awards of Excellence Ceremony.

You can register today at  
<https://www.careerdevelopment.ab.ca/>

In addition to hosting Alberta's only career development conference, the CDAA is proud to be a national stakeholder on a very exciting project, Supporting Canadians to Navigate Learning and Work. This project is being implemented by the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) in partnership with the Canadian Council for Career Development (3CD) and with funding through the Government of Canada's Sectoral Initiative Program (SIP) from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).

The project will focus on:

- Working closely with career development stakeholders across Canada to update and expand the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners so that they reflect the current and emergent practice in the career development field and include the full range of professionals doing career development work across diverse settings;
- Actively supporting the adoption and implementation of the new Standards by career development professionals (CDPs),

their employers, training providers and professional associations; and

- Working with all provincial associations to explore possibilities for stronger cohesion and professional mobility through a pan-Canadian approach to certification.

The current Canadian Standards and Guidelines are in need of a significant update in order to: reflect the evolving nature of our work, be inclusive of the diversity of career development practitioners, underpin targeted training/professional development, promote clarity

of role and scope of practice, and promote awareness and professional recognition.

This is your opportunity to shape the future of the career development profession in Canada. You can visit the CDP competence tab (<https://career-dev-guidelines.org/career-competence/>) on the current Standards and Guidelines website for more information and take the survey to indicate how you would like to be involved!

Are you ready to be the change and shape the future? ■

**The Career Development Association of Alberta is proud to present**

the 6th annual

# Alberta Career Development Conference

**2019: Shaping the Future – Career Development for the 21st Century**

**Keynote Presentations | Delegate-wide Consultations | Concurrent Sessions  
Exhibitor Fair | Networking Reception | Career Development Challenge  
CDAA Annual General Meeting**

**Tuesday, April 30 & Wednesday May 1, 2019**  
Delta by Marriott Edmonton South Conference Centre  
Information and registration: [careerdevelopment.ab.ca](https://careerdevelopment.ab.ca)



# The SAIT degree advantage

Submitted by the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology

**S**AIT's Bachelor of Business Administration program provides a unique blend of industry-aligned coursework and theoretical components that will position students well in the Canadian job market.

The Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) program was first introduced by SAIT in 2011, with a major in accounting. By 2016, the school had expanded the BBA program to offer five additional major options; financial services, human resource management, marketing, management and supply chain management.

The BBA program was established to give students an education that was career-focused, practical and in-demand by employers. This was achieved by providing students a strong blend of theoretical components interwoven with professional training and real-world knowledge about business principles. This process equates to well-rounded graduates that are knowledgeable in both business and future career expectations.

The School of Business has always taken great pride in the business partnerships it has developed with industry organizations over the years. Thanks to these partnerships, the School of Business was able to integrate a number of specialized courses into the BBA program to align with

**Stephen Bergstrom, an accounting instructor at SAIT's School of Business, with students.**



industry credentials and certifications. These courses were intentionally embedded into the program to advance student skill-sets to provide students with a competitive advantage in the job market and give students the opportunity to complete these industry-required courses while earning their Bachelor of Business Administration degree.

When asked about the School of Business' approach to education, accounting instructor, Stephen Bergstrom explained, "The main difference with SAIT's School of Business is the hands-on, applied educational philosophy. We're not just teaching students the theory. We're not just going through page after page in a textbook and expecting students to memorize what's in the book. We're doing hands-on, applied education at SAIT."

Bergstrom continues, "In our audit courses, students actually do a full simulation of an external audit. So they don't just learn the theory, they actually see what happens over the course of a full audit. In our tax courses, they actually use tax software so when students graduate, they don't just know the theory, they know the practical application of it, and can be productive from their first day on the job."

The SAIT School of Business believes that this is the strongest educational model available to students.

Traditional business degrees often revolve around large amounts of theoretical components, supplemented by a textbook and instructor. These educational models can make it difficult to translate the education learned into tangible job skills. SAIT's approach provides students with applied education that will help them stand-out in their industry. This added dimension of learning provides students with the experiential learning component and an underutilized educational dynamic that is shown to be very beneficial when learning new skills.

The benefits of the experiential learning component are evident in the words of Kaitlyn Muntean, a second year Supply Chain Management student, "I love the business program here at SAIT. The learning you get here is so hands-on, I feel like I could use it every day at my job. That's something that's very important to me and something I anticipate would be very important to the industry."

To learn more about SAIT, the Bachelor of Business Administration program, and the application process, please visit: [www.sait.ca/business](http://www.sait.ca/business). ■





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