



# psychologica *Pulse*

**The official E-Zine of the Ontario Association of Consultants,  
Counsellors, Psychometrists and Psychotherapists**

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**H**ello Fellow OACCPP Members,

By now you will have received Psychologica and the material for our Fall conference. We are all looking forward to the lineup of presenters, and I hope to meet as many of you as possible at the AGM and conference. This issue of Psychologica Pulse is a little different this time. Naseema Siddiqui, our President, has an update on the latest on the Transitional College and the Board's ongoing work. Please read her message carefully – she is asking for your input as how to launch OACCPP's services for 2010. Instead of the Websites and Bookbytes Section, I have included some notes from a meeting I attended where Joyce Rowlands presented to members of the Association of Psychotherapy Training Institutes of Ontario. As well, I have summarized interviews with two members of regulatory colleges regarding the pro's and con's of regulation. We hope you enjoy this issue of the Pulse.

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## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Dear Members,

My last message in the Pulse should have ended with “to be continued”, as the saga of the appointments to the Transitional Council marches on. We have information that the list of the appointees has the stamp of approval from the Cabinet and the former Minister of Health, David Caplan. However, with the resignation of the Minister Caplan, it is difficult to assess how long before an announcement is made. It could be business as usual, or, the new Minister might decide to hold off for a while. Therefore we will do what Viktor Frankl suggested, namely: “when we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves”. In that respect, we ourselves become the change agents.

With respect to change, our Association is growing -- and not just in membership. We are growing in our efforts to enhance our profile with the Ministry of Health, and other government ministries for recognition of our membership. To achieve this meaningfully and effectively, the Board is developing a strategic plan so our directions are clear and meet the needs of our members, but we need to hear from you.

While we are waiting for the appointment of the Transitional Council we have our work cut out for us for the next 2 to 3 years. As they say “*inaction saps the vigour of the mind*”. Therefore, in addition to our Board developing a strategic plan, I am asking OACCPP members for your feedback as to what changes you would like to see with respect to the services you are receiving. It is essential that the Board receives feedback from the membership at large, otherwise we are basically developing a strategic plan based on what board members *speculate* the needs of the membership to be. **Please send your suggestions to [president@oaccpp.ca](mailto:president@oaccpp.ca) or [membership@oaccpp.ca](mailto:membership@oaccpp.ca)** . Focus not only on regulatory issues, but benefits to those of you who may not be proceeding towards registration in the new college. What about enhanced auxiliary services, such as insurance packages? Professional Development and Mentorship needs – is there more we could be doing there? Are there ways we could help you promote or diversify your practices? Are The Pulse and Psychologica working for you? Are there other ways in which we can communicate with our membership, like having regional forums or focus groups from time to time? We are growing, as I said. We have more revenue coming in. We can enhance and diversify our services, but *only* with your input.

In future issues of The Pulse you will get reports directly from the committee chairs. You have seen the conference brochure and your responses indicate that you like what you see. That’s great news for us!

Have a wonderful Fall, and I am looking forward to meeting you at the Conference.

Naseema Siddiqui, M.A (C) OACCPP  
President

## **Regulation: Opinions from the New Registrar of the TC, and Perspectives on Regulation from Two Members of a Regulated College.**

At the meeting of the Association of Psychotherapy Training Institutes of Ontario (May 31, of this year) Joyce Rowlands, Registrar of the Transitional College told us that the work of the Transitional Council will be configured by four principles: open mindedness, inclusiveness, flexibility and compromise. There will be members from the regulated as well as the non regulated professions, but at the time of publishing the Pulse, the names of those members had not been made public. As you now know, the new legislation replaces the title "psychotherapist" with "registered psychotherapist" and those present at Ms. Rowland's presentation asked what the implications were for "Registered Mental Health Therapist". She explained that the latter title was created to ensure that professionals who identify themselves as other than psychotherapists, but still "do" psychotherapy as part of their practice, would be able to become regulated. She added that "counselling" was not defined in the new legislation because the government anticipates that all counsellors whose practices include some psychotherapeutic interventions would presumably apply to the new college.

Ms. Rowlands discussed the financing of the Transitional Council, as well. She explained that the government will pay for the activities and overhead expenses of the TC for three years, and this payment is considered a loan. After that, the College has to survive on membership fees to remain financially viable. The three year payment essentially becomes a debt of the new college, and it must be retired within a 25 year period. So, given what Ms. Rowlands explained, it is clearly in the interests of the new College to be as inclusive as possible, but it will still be up to a membership committee struck by the Transitional Committee to determine the entry level criteria.

### **Interviews**

I thought it would be interesting to interview a regulated health professional to see what perspectives on the professional benefits of regulation came up. I have several friends in the profession of Psychology, one of whom agreed to an informal interview. My friend said that, first and foremost, regulation is designed to protect the public, and I think all of us agree that this is a principle everyone upholds. Beyond that, she had some interesting observations on how regulation affects the regulated health professional. My friend said she would probably not have registered if she didn't need to have access to the controlled act of Psychology (which restricts the communication of diagnoses), in order to make a living. Regulation is costly; it costs about \$800 per year to pay membership fees to the College of Psychologists, another \$400 to \$500 to join OPA or CPA for reduced liability insurance premiums, and it also costs a considerable amount to keep up professional development/continuing education requirements. All in all, it costs my friend about \$2000 per year to remain registered. (The initial cost of applying to any

regulatory college is also substantial). She added that competencies tend to be restricting, and litigation is escalating. Many regulated health professionals, she felt, were aware of being constantly monitored and there are continual, visible (i.e. published) reprimands designed to protect the public. She said most of her colleagues always feel under scrutiny.

My friend also wondered how new members of the College of Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists will deal with the diagnosis/treatment question. Clearly anyone can 'formulate' a diagnosis (including my own grandchildren who regularly refer to each other as "crazy"), but how will this new group of professionals, she wonders, guarantee that their treatment plan is supported by a formal diagnosis (which is pretty much required for any third party insurance reimbursements, should that become available to clients of members of the new college)? Will members of the new college have to refer out?

I asked a registered social worker, how she handles this dilemma. As you know, social workers are allowed to perform interventions belonging to the domain of psychotherapy, but are not allowed to communicate a diagnosis. She told me that many social workers who have an independent practice handle the diagnosis/treatment dilemma by referring out, often to the client's family doctor. She always asks her clients to speak to their family doctor if, for example, they seek her services largely because of what they believe to be depression or anxiety. (This would be different from a client seeking her services for help in dealing with power struggles at work, for example). If the family doctor feels a further diagnosis is required, then he or she may refer the client out to another regulated health professional, such as a psychiatrist or psychologist. This social worker then keeps in close contact with the client's family doctor (or another regulated health professional) over the period of time she is delivering psychotherapeutic 'treatment'. In her community, she finds family doctors are quite helpful and cooperative.

These are interesting perspectives indeed, and we need to be thinking 'outside the box'. Marina Riker-Kucic's article published in the September edition of the Pulse, for example, does just that. It would be a good idea to read it again and with the information presented in this edition, jot down a list of questions you would like raised at the AGM and Conference, where the topic of regulation will be forefront. If you can't attend, just e-mail your questions to me at [dmpirie@cogeco.ca](mailto:dmpirie@cogeco.ca) and I will make sure they are raised on your behalf. You could also e-mail them directly to Naseema, at [president@oaccpp.ca](mailto:president@oaccpp.ca) as she will be sitting on a panel discussing regulation.

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## Looking for Writers!

If you're a mental health professional who would like to share, challenge, educate or inspire your colleagues, please consider writing a paper for publication in Psychologica. Your clinical vision, experience and concerns will reach a broad community of mental health professionals throughout Ontario and beyond. And don't forget, publication counts towards re-certification for our certified members.



We would like our journal to conform to APA guidelines for professional writing, but you're not expected to deliver a print-ready first draft. We'll be glad to assist you with fine-tuning and formatting! We are looking for feature articles, 3000 to 5000 words and book reviews of 300 to 500 words.

Take the plunge, make yourself heard. We'd like to know what you're thinking. The first step is to contact us with a proposal. We'll supply you with the necessary guidelines.

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