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# CCSJ NEWSLETTER

School and Applied Child Psychology,
Committee for Critical Social Justice

## THIS ISSUE:



## The CCSJ Committee

**By Aisha Ghani, M.A.**

**The Critical Social Justice Committee (CCSJ) in the School and Applied Child Psychology (SACP) program was developed three years ago. This committee has come together through shared values that center on Indigenous and other non-Western ways of knowing, the voices and experiences of underrepresented communities, anti-racism, anti-sexism, anti-homophobia, anti-transphobia, anti-ableism, anti-ageism, anti-oppression, diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, human rights, and intersectionality. Our vision is to see a SACP program that is collectively working towards a more equitable and just climate, which will in turn help inform culturally responsive, socially just, and decolonized school psychology teaching, clinical training, research, service, and community engagement.**

**Current Members include Dr. Anusha Kassan, Dr. Melanie Nelson, Aisha Ghani, Linnea Kalchos. We welcome our new members, Hira Peracha, Debopriya Sen, and Kate Rho.**

*Please see the end of this newsletter to learn how you can join our committee!*

## Land Acknowledgement

Our work takes place at the UBC Vancouver Campus, which is located on the traditional, unceded, and stolen territory of the xwməθkwəy̓ əm (Musqueam), Coast Salish, Stó:lō (Stolo), səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Watuth), and Sḵwx̱ wú7mesh (Squamish) people.

# The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

**By Dr. Melanie Nelson**

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is recognized annually on September 30 and is also known as Orange Shirt Day. This day came about through commemoration and reunion events for survivors of the St. Joseph Misson Residential School held in Williams Lake, BC in May 2013. Phyllis Webstad shared the story of her first day of school, when she was six years old and her grandmother bought her shiny orange shirt for the first day of school. When she got there, she was stripped and she never saw her shirt again.

***"The color orange has always reminded me of that and how my feelings didn't matter, how no one cared and how I felt like I was worth nothing. All of us children were crying and no one cared," (Phyllis' Story).***

The date was chosen to align with the removal of children from home to start school and the timing allows for schools and other institutions to be intentional about practicing decolonizing (i.e., questioning dominant knowledge), anti-racist, and reconciliatory approaches. The day offers Canadians an opportunity to engage in meaningful discussion about the truth of what happened to Indigenous people and possible approaches to Reconciliation and to recognize and honor the experience of Indian Residential School Survivors and their families. It is not a celebration.


**References:**

Orange Shirt Society: https://orangeshirtday.org/phyllis-story/#story
Orange Shirt Society: https://orangeshirtday.org/orange-shirt-day/
Legacy of Hope: https://legacyofhope.ca/
Legacy of Hope: https://legacyofhope.ca/wherearethechildren/
Living Sky School Division: https://treaty6education.lskysd.ca/sites/treaty6education.lskysd.ca/files/Aboriginal%20Elders%20and%20Community%20Workers%20in%20Schools.pdf
University of Northern British Columbia: https://www2.unbc.ca/indigenous-resource-dati/protocol-inviting-elders-and-knowledge-holders-campus
Vancouver Island University: https://indigenous.viu.ca/office-indigenous-education-and-engagement/elders-viu

## What can you do?

*Get down to some learning and you will figure out what you need. Only you in your context with your family history and upbringing, set of experiences, training, personality, intersection of identities etc. can know what you should be doing. Some beginning learning resources:*

**Where are the Children?**

- Timeline of Indian Residential School system
- Residential School Oral Histories & Survivor Stories (learn about culture and experiences)

**Legacy of Hope**

- National charitable organization whose mandate is to create awareness of Indian Residential Schools and intergenerational impacts such as the Sixties Scoop
- Download a free copy of "How to be an Ally – A Toolkit for Aspiring Indigenous Allies (*note: formally identify as an ally only after being named by someone in community*)

**Hosting Elders**

- Aboriginal Elders and Community Workers in Schools: A Guide for School Divisions and their Partners (living Sky School Division from Saskatchewan)
- Protocol for Inviting Elders and Knowledge Holders to Campus (University of Northern British Columbia)
- Elders at VIU (Vancouver Island University)

## CCSJ Survey: Summary of Qualitative Data

**By Dr. Melanie Nelson**

**Results from the 2022-2023 CCSJ Survey were presented at the SACP orientation. We have summarized the qualitative data here for consideration. Students want to see a shift from social justice being "rare" or an "after-thought" to being incorporated throughout all courses, interpersonal interactions, and community placements. It is recommended that student opinion continue to be communicated through CCSJ surveys, SACP program meetings, and open conversations. Students want to see continued recruitment of diverse students and faculty and suggest recruiting based on social justice views. Finally, students suggested examining barriers to access of the SACP program for students entering the program, including funding.**

# Summary of Yearly Workshop on Ableism

**By Dr. Anusha Kassan**

In May of 2023, Dr. Carly Christensen, who is an Assistant Professor of Teaching in the Special Education program in ECPS at UBC, offered an inspiring workshop to the SACP community. This workshop centered on the ways in which graduate programs could be more inclusive to its students, faculty members, and administrative personnel. During the workshop, Dr. Christensen addressed several critical points about ableism in higher education, including the ways in which neuro-diverse students and those with disabilities are often misunderstood and mistreated as well as how the curriculum is often designed by and for able bodied individuals, to name but a few examples. This workshop seemed to be well-received by SACP students and faculty, and a lot of positive feedback was shared with Dr. Christensen at the end of the afternoon.

Dr. Christensen has extensive secondary school teaching experience within unique educational settings in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. These settings include urban secondary schools, a rural middle school, a special education school, an all-girls secondary school, an Indigenous alternative education program, and a Frist Nations secondary school. Currently, she is a sessional instructor teaching courses about special education and Indigenous education at the University of Manitoba, University of Ottawa, and the University of Toronto. Simultaneously, Dr. Christensen works as a special education teacher co-developing culturally-based special education programming within an Anishinaabe-controlled secondary school in northern Ontario.

If you would like to learn more about Dr. Christensen's work, you can contact her via her email address at: **carly.christensen@ubc.ca**

The workshop that Dr. Christensen delivered represents the second initiative hosted by the CCSJ in SACP since its inception in 2021. Specifically, the committee has put forth a workshop on Difficult Conversations (facilitated by Dr. Thomas Schanding) in May of 2022 and most recently the workshop on Inclusive Education (facilitated by Dr. Christensen). We plan to continue such efforts, and we would love to hear from you on potential topics and/or facilitators of interest.

**So, please feel free to reach out to our committee with your ideas!**

# 5 Ways to Support Diverse Learners and Colleagues

**By Linnea Kalchos, M.A.**

*As we continue to consider making our program and department more aware of the needs of diverse learners, here are five ways to support diverse learners in your classes, and your graduate student colleagues:*

1. **Innovate your teaching.** Faculty who received training related to disability, inclusive instructional practices, or assistive technology were more likely to use these instructional practices (Lombardi et al., 2013). Seeking out training at the faculty level supports student learning and promotes diverse teaching and learning strategies for learners with disabilities.

2. **Accommodation is a right.** Make sure that your students and peers with disabilities have access to the university's disability services, as these supports are crucial for success (Banks & Hughes, 2013; Miller & Downey., 2020; Mullins & Preyde, 2013; Shraga-Roitman et al., 2023). Ensuring that all students are aware of these services, and implementing student's accommodations in your classes makes learning more accessible.

3. **Don't forget about "invisible disabilities".** Individuals with invisible disabilities (learning or mental health disabilities) often experience greater attitudinal barriers from faculty and peers (Sniatecki et al., 2015). Recognizing the importance of accepting each student's individual needs as deserving of support makes a difference.

4. **Show me the money.** Doctoral students with disabilities who had access to financial support said that this helped facilitate their learning (Peterson & Saia., 2022). Supporting students in accessing funding, scholarships, and awards can make a big difference during the course of their studies.

5. **Remember diversity.** Students with disabilities have other identities and social locations that facilitate or impede their access to support. Intersectional barriers and oppressive narratives about students' race, gender, and socio-economic status shape the stigma they experience as a person with disability (Banks & Hughes, 2013). Queer students with disability also reported exhaustion due to managing how their stigmatized identities are perceived by others (Miller et al., 2019). Overall, its important to keep in mind that students with disabilities are often experiences multiple barriers at a time.

*"Students with disabilities have other identities and social locations that facilitate or impede their access to support."*

# Attending to the Needs And Experiences of Diverse Learners

**By Linnea Kalchos, M.A.**

This past year, the CCSJ committee was the proud recipient of a Faculty of Education Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Decolonization (EDID) Funding Grant. Thanks to the hard work of our research assistants, Kate Rho and Ishika Bhambhani we put together a comprehensive literature review of both literature and policy related to diverse learners in academia. We are now in the next phase of this project, developing a multi-model resource that will allow faculty, staff, and students to increase their awareness, knowledge, skills, relationships, and advocacy centered on the needs and experiences of diverse learners. This resource will be available for SACP faculty, staff, and students. Our goal is to encourage greater individual and collective awareness about the needs of diverse learners, and the policies that are in place to support them. The CCSJ committee is looking forward to sharing our work with you, and we hope that this resource will increase knowledge related to the needs and experiences of graduate students with diverse learning styles. We also hope that this work will prompt the development of new skills among SACP faculty and staff; for example, changes to course syllabus and content, along with classroom interventions. School psychology is continuing to improve its services for diverse children and families, and we believe this positive change begins in our own graduate training programs.

# Interested in joining the CCSJ committee?

**By Aisha Ghani, M.A.**

We welcome any SACP students passionate about social justice work to consider joining us this school year as we continue to work toward equitable and just initiatives, and creating related learning experinces in the SACP program.

To apply, please reach out to Dr. Anusha Kassan (anusha.kassan@ubc.ca) and Dr. Melanie Nelson (melanie.nelson@ubc.ca) with a brief summary of why you would like to join us. We look forward to hearing from you!