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## WORLDVIEW SKILLS FOR TRANSFORMING INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

*This article adapts a session that was delivered at this year's CSSEA AGM and Conference and is authored by the session presenter, Jessie Sutherland*

We all know that decolonization, indigenization and building respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and communities is a critical issue. When we really think about it, we can see that at the heart of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships, you will find the imposition of one worldview over another.

In essence, Indigenous people, worldviews and wisdom were (and at times continue to be) “pushed out.” Creating the conditions for genuine collaboration involves learning about worldviews—what they are, why they matter and the skills we need to engage respectfully with clients, partners and community members. When we overlook worldviews, we are more likely to inadvertently continue the legacy of imposing our worldview on others. When we learn and practice worldview skills, we build the foundation for increased respect, understanding and trust.

So, what is a worldview and why does it matter? My favourite definition of “worldviews” is by Thomas Berry. He writes that worldviews are “how a culture sees its relationship to the rest of the universe, its creation at the beginning of time, and its beliefs about how best to organize human affairs accordingly.” Worldviews provide our most fundamental need for meaning and our need for making sense of the world around us. Oscar Nudler, a worldview conflict theorist, argues that “depriving people of their worlds and colonizing their minds for the sake of the expansion of one particular world... represents an extreme form of oppression, probably harder to face than pure economic exploitation.”

In my experience, the most effective way to engage people and their worldviews is through an exploration of what home means and how we can build a culture of belonging together. Our concepts of home and belonging provide a direct compass to our values and our worldviews. To facilitate a process like this, as leaders, we need to first become fluent in what I consider to be the crucial worldview skills of our times.

3 essential worldview skills:

1. Engaging worldviews in a way that builds trust and quality engagement
2. Building unity across worldview differences or polarization
3. Regenerating worldviews that have been eroded through our colonial legacy and habits

While this journey may seem daunting at first, it quickly becomes an exhilarating opportunity to transform ourselves, our relationships and our communities. In the process, we begin to discover and unleash all the talents and wisdom needed to address our community's priority challenges and ultimately build a more just, interdependent and sustainable world.

To learn more about ways you can strengthen and build quality relationships with diverse clients, partners and community members using a belonging lens as well as building your worldview skills fluency and competency, go to [www.ReconciliationTools.ca](http://www.ReconciliationTools.ca)

## STAY IN TOUCH

We welcome all suggestions and comments. Feel free to send your feedback to Doris Sun, Director of Communications, at: [dsun@cssea.bc.ca](mailto:dsun@cssea.bc.ca).

# YOUR 2021-22 BOARD AND PANEL REPRESENTATIVES

## Board Members

**Chair - Rod Santiago**, Executive Director, Archway Community Services

**Vice Chair - Ryan Cucheron**, Executive Director, Venture Training

**Treasurer - Dawn Hein**, Executive Director, Mission Association for Community Living

**Rob Byers**, EFO and Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Children and Family Development

**Adam Calvert**, Executive Director, La Societé de les Enfants Michif

**Ross Chilton**, Chief Executive Director, Community Living BC

**Shari Mahar**, Executive Director, Community Integration Services Society

**Adam McKinnon**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

**Robert Pauliszyn**, A/Assistant Deputy Minister, PSEC Secretariat

**Tim Veresh**, Executive Director, PLEA Community Services Society of British Columbia

## Indigenous Services Panel

**Chair, Melanie Hudson**, Chief Executive Officer, Island Métis Family & Community Services Society

**Vice-Chair, Adam Calvert**, Executive Director, La Societé de les Enfants Michif

**Kathleen Bennett**, Executive Director, Northwest Inter-Nation Family and Community Services Society

**Jennifer Dysart**, Executive Director, Haida Child and Family Services Society

**Colleen Lucier**, Executive Director, Lii Michif Otipemisiwsak Family & Community Services

**Bernadette Spence**, Chief Executive Officer, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society

## Community Living Services

**Chair, Tammy Khanna**, Executive Director, Independent Living Housing Society of Greater Victoria

**Vice-Chair, Dawn Hein**, Chief Executive Officer, Mission Association for Community Living

**Fernando Coelho**, Chief Executive Officer, posAbilities Association of British Columbia

**Ryan Cucheron**, Executive Director, Venture Training

**Dana Gorbahn**, Chief Executive Officer, Gorbahn Professional Alternative Resources Inc.

**Shari Mahar**, Executive Director, Community Integration Services Society

**Tanya Sather**, Executive Director, Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion

**Anita Sihota**, Executive Director, Delta Community Living Society

## General Services

**Chair, Judy Valsonis**, Executive Director, Touchstone Family Association

**Vice-Chair, Jaye Russell**, Executive Director, Sea to Sky Community Services Society

**Tyrell Arnold**, Executive Director, Connexus Community Resources

**Kelly Kelland**, Executive Director, Interior Community Services

**Ann Kutcher**, Executive Director, Westcoast Family Centres Society

**Sanjeev Nand**, Executive Director, Langley Community Services Society

**Rod Santiago**, Executive Director, Archway Community Services Society

**Tim Veresh**, Executive Director, PLEA Community Services Society of British Columbia

# ASK AN HRLR CONSULTANT: TAMINA MAWJI

*How do I know if an employee's feelings of stress and anxiety amount to a disability under human rights legislation triggering the employer's duty to accommodate?*



Over the past year and a half, the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic has brought with it new sources of physical, social and financial stress and uncertainty to our lives. A certain amount of stress is a normal physiological response to the situational pressures brought on by the pandemic. In this context, it may be a particularly appropriate time to review when feelings of stress and anxiety rise to a degree that it may qualify as a disability under the *Human Rights Code* ("Code").

It is well established that "stress" and "anxiety" are not a disability on their own but could be a symptom of a disability such as anxiety disorder or depression. Decisions from the BC Human Rights Tribunal (the "Tribunal") have made it clear that workplace stress, such as from an investigation of alleged misconduct, or a meeting over performance issues, or arising from interpersonal tensions with a supervisor, do not, on their own, constitute a disability under the Code. Tribunal decisions illustrate that an employee must experience more than the normal stress and anxiety associated with daily life or difficult workplace conditions to attract the protection of human rights legislation. The Tribunal makes it clear that an employee's assertion that they are experiencing "stress" or "anxiety", on its own, is not sufficient to establish a

disability under the Code. Rather, it is the employee's responsibility to disclose sufficient information to establish a medical condition that is beyond the typical stress and anxiety, which is part and parcel of our normal daily lives. This outcome is necessary to trigger the employer's duty to accommodate. In cases where an employee makes vague references to stress and anxiety symptoms, or does not connect their feelings of stress and anxiety to a disability, or seek an accommodation due to a disability, complaints have been dismissed by the Tribunal.

Although an employee's expressions of stress and anxiety may not automatically trigger an employer's duty to accommodate, in some situations an obligation for the employer to inquire further may arise. This has occurred when an employee's conduct has been so outrageous, out of character, or unexpected, that it should have alerted the employer to a possible presence of a mental disability.

Determining when the duty to accommodate arises for a disability, particularly when mental health is involved can be more complex. In these circumstances, many employers respond with compassion and demonstrate empathy to ensure employees feel genuinely cared for and supported during difficult and overwhelming times. This support and opportunity to discuss workplace issues may provide employees with improved resilience, may lead into conversations about mental health revealing a better understanding of the situation and may involve the disclosure of medical information enabling a further evaluation for a clear picture to emerge.

## Membership Comings and Goings

CSSEA is pleased to welcome the following agencies into its membership:

- IDM Youth Services
- Sooke Family Resources

We are currently working with PSEC Secretariat to add these agencies:

- First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo
- Island Crisis Care Society

And we say farewell to these members:

- McIntyre Care Home
- Kjosa Community Living Society

Also of note, Cranbrook Society for Community Living and Creston and District Society for Community Living have merged to become NEXUS Support Society while John Howard Society Pacific Region has changed its name to Connective Support Society.

# THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING THIS YEAR'S VIRTUAL AGM AND CONFERENCE!

We appreciate you attending and bringing your virtual energy to this year's conference. Thank you to everyone who filled out the post-conference evaluation and a big congratulations to Vicky Reddish from Campbell River & District Association For Community Living for winning the \$50 Starbucks prize for providing feedback. We hope to be able to host you in person next year, in Vancouver, on October 25-27. Save the dates!



## ONLINE LEARNING HUB NOW LIVE!



Members can now register for CSSEA's newest online learning offering, which will provide cost-effective labour relations and leadership training.

The new training hub includes online courses, monthly live webinars and managed discussion forums that have been designed to complement the workloads of individuals employed in the sector. Courses range from one to three hours and consist of five to 15 minute video lessons.

Registrations are now being accepted for the first cohort, beginning in January 2022.

Learn more about course offerings, pricing and registration at:

<http://cssea.myleadershiphub.com>

# CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENTS!



From left to right: Legend Recipient Ellen Tarshis, Executive Director at Community Living Victoria; Leader Recipient Bonnie Moriarty, Director of Homelessness Initiatives at Elizabeth Fry Society Of Greater Vancouver; Hero Recipient Florance Kao, Program Coordinator, Self Employment and Entrepreneur Program at DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society; and Rising Star Alexandra Bissley, Quality Assurance and Communications Manager at Inclusion Powell River Society.

Oh behalf of the entire social services sector, we congratulate and thank our four recipients for their tireless work in supporting vulnerable British Columbians. Your commitment, passion and hard work are an inspiration to us all!

We encourage members to consider submitting nominations for the 2022 Community Social Services Awards of Excellence when we open up nominations in the Spring. To learn more about the awards and to view video vignettes of each recipient, go to <https://awards.cssea.bc.ca>. And as always, we thank TELUS for making this entire event possible. TELUS' support throughout the six years of this important initiative have allowed us to shine a deserving spotlight on some extraordinary individuals!



From all of us at CSSEA,  
we wish you a happy  
holiday season, and the  
best in 2022!