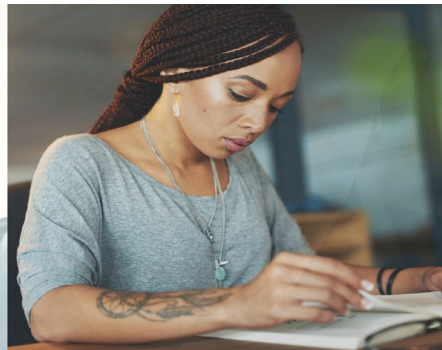




# Saskatchewan Social Worker

FEBRUARY 2021 | Volume 32 Number 1



## The self-care edition

Featuring Articles by SASW Members



*make yourself  
a priority*

never give from the depths  
of your well, but from your  
overflow."  
- rumi

"Yoga: Learning to  
meet your mood where  
it is. Not where you  
want it to be."  
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your stuck"  
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"Enter creativity &  
the things you love  
to do"  
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"What isolation  
taught me about  
self-care"  
page 7



Tip: Don't forget to drink water  
& get some sun.  
You're basically a houseplant but with  
complicated emotions.



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# Persevering Through Your Stuck

By Sharon Kambale (she/her), BSW, MSW, RSW

Hello, my name name is Sharon Kambale. I am a Registered Social Worker with the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers. As a mother of two beautiful daughters, my passion is in supporting women and children. I have always held the desire to make change within the lives of those around me, however, it wasn't until this past year that I began to experience career development and growth. Like so many of us, the year 2020 was a year that challenged our faith, courage, and perseverance.

As the founder of Lady Via Foundation, 2020 has been focused on program development for both our programs, Madame Jane Academy (preschool) and Afro-Mentorship Initiative (a culturally responsive program for black children, youth, and young adults).

## Afro-Mentorship Initiative:

In a culturally responsive environment, our mentees learn discipline, effective communication, independence, integrity, and commitment. By the support of our mentors, our mentees gain a wealth of skills and experience. Through hands-on learning our mentorship program offers therapeutic and academic enrichment. Whether through art, drama, music, or dance mentees interact with both nature and science. We also offer a healthy and safe transition at the opening and closing of our program. Queen B (for girls) and Kings Club (for boys) use weekly affirmations and closes each session by providing our participants a sense of gratitude.

## Our mission:

Our mission is to help trusted community of Black (new Canadians, multi-generational) on their journey so that they can rise to the next level as they continue to make a powerful impact to our greater communities. Our mentorship initiative offers counselling (stress management, parental attachment,

family structure, positive leadership), mental health workshops, cultural activities, parental support and resources, community engagement and and culturally focused education and awareness, black-led and diverse demographics (i.e., schools, churches, business and not-for-profit collaborations and life long partnerships). Our sustainable competitive advantage is that we are an inclusive platform that offers service within a holistic framework. We acknowledge that the strengthening of our black community is needed here in Canada while embracing the skills, knowledge, and support of other diverse individuals and groups.

## Perseverance in 2020:

Though our goal for 2020 was to facilitate in-person events, due to COVID-19 we needed to pivot. Pivoting from our goal of serving in-person we took a leap and created and facilitated online. This equipped us with the ability to reach a higher number of mentees and mentors

in efforts of achieving our annual goal. Being seen for the work that we did, our program received a grant and monetary donations that supported us in the work that we continue to do today. Here I reflect that, despite what life brings your way you owe it to yourself to continue to pursue the goals and aspirations that you have set in front of you.

## Persevering Through Your Stuck:

### 1. Awareness and Understanding

Through my personal and professional journey, I have come to realize that not a lot of people are aware of the emotional baggage that they are needing to heal from. We carry so many layers of pain that we've struggled through that are often left covered up.

To really dig deep and uncover the roots that have weighed us down takes both time and effort. Know how exactly do I move forward from these experi-

[continued on next page](#)



# Self-care Doesn't Have to be Expensive: The Importance of DOING what you PREACH

By Dolapo Onidare (She/Her), RSW can make time for self-care!

I don't think we can be tired of hearing "self-care," can we? For me, not really, because every time I read a book on self-care, it is always bringing different meanings to me. Self-care is what we do to care for our body, mind, and spirit. The importance of self-care has been over-emphasized in education, research, and practice with more focus on the "helping profession." Self-care is the responsibility of everyone, employers, employees, contractors, etc. When people hear "self-care," they think there is a need to break the bank or their wallets in order to achieve it. NOPE. If you're like me, I most often utilize what I already have that is in my control, whatever I can access for FREE, or something affordable. For example, sleep. Most weekends, if I am not on call, my alarm is off and phone on silence, and I allow myself to wake up anytime. I know this is very difficult for those with children or those with increased responsibilities, but this is where the creativity kicks in. If we are able to create time to do our groceries, laundries, and cooking, I am sure we

In Emily Nagoski's book, *Burnout: The secret of unlocking the stress cycle*, the author indicated that for women, self-care can be difficult, and we are at increased risk of "burnout" due to patriarchal ideologies and gender roles that still exist in our world. Most moms may say, *I'll do the safe-care thing as soon as I'm done laundry!* Then, the children decide it is the best time to do hide-and-seek with mom, then homework help, then supper time is here, and then prep for the following day... the whole cycle of "being busy" and not doing something for ourselves repeats itself over and over, we are stressed, we are also "helpers" at work, then we breakdown.

Self-care is not done often enough due to various factors. A lot of people have numerous excuses not to care for themselves. A common one is "there is no time," but honestly, if the 24-hour day changes to 48-hours a day, most people will still say the same. Another excuse is "my job is hard," and in reality, there is no job that isn't hard



and challenging. Even isolating at home doing nothing is not easy, neither is working from home. Homemakers who stays home to care for their families and homes sometimes find it exhausting. Self-care is important more than before since our whole world has been turned upside down by the deadly pandemic, causing increased fatigue, anxiety, burnout, and disconnection from our support systems. Self-care  
[continued on next page](#)

## Persevering Through Your Stuck

ences so that I can truly feel and live in the way that I am meant to.

As we continue to increase our connection with our inner child, we're able to gain clarity around our current circumstances. Maybe it's a feel of not being worthy, or feeling unloved and placed to the side. Maybe it was being a late bloomer and feeling like an outcast.

It is through self-reflection that we gain clarity around our own perspectives. And knowing that our thoughts determine our actions which determine our outcome.

### 2. Compassion and Forgiveness

Being compassionate with yourself is so important. On the journey to healing you may make two steps forward, and five steps back, and you may sometimes feel as though you are not making any movement at all.

As you begin to heal through forgiveness, you realize that even those who have hurt you struggled with their own hurt. You realize that it is by forgiving them that you gain freedom to live a life free from the past.

### 3. Growth Through Vulnerability

As you travel through your journey begin to ask yourself - What has this experience or these experiences taught you? How are you stronger because of your challenges and pain?

Each and every step forward will feel a sense of overwhelm, anxiety, and perhaps fear. You're living at a level that you have never experienced before. A level outside your comfort zone.

And remember - you are setting an example for the next generation.



## Self-care Doesn't Have to be Expensive, continued

is different during pandemic and a lot of people struggled with how to be creative and care for themselves “safely.” This write-up is inspired by my experience working in the department of Mental Health and Addictions, specifically with children and youths in Northern Saskatchewan. For some people, it may be hard to practice self-care because of high turn-over rate, lack of or few resources. There may be many clients with fewer workers and resources. Human resources may be overwhelmed. Even though it is hard, it is doable with teamwork and safe working environment. Below are key reminders to self-care.

- **Identify your purpose, values, and goals.** What are your values? Is health part of it? When you add your body, mind, and soul to your values, it is difficult for them to be left out.
- **Use the help.** This is very important and under-utilized in our personal, parental, and professional life. When your co-worker, parents, and children offer you help, accept it with gladness so that you can use the spare time to do what you enjoy doing.
- **Know when your body needs rest.** Sometimes I feel like I need to take a coffee break off the desk

if I can't focus. Use those break periods, they were provided for a reason.

- **Know your DANGER Zone.** How does your body and mind feel when you are exhausted? Do you feel tense?
- **Try to leave work at work.** This is easier said than done sometimes. In this context, don't check your work e-mail at home on your weekend off.
- **Improving workplace culture.** Improving workplace culture is the responsibility of everyone, employees and employers. In *A Little Book About Workplace Culture* (Grieser et al, 2020), the authors indicated that “when employees like the places they work, it's not only good for their mental health and well-being, it's also good for their organizations – both financially and otherwise” (p.8). Our role as social workers is essential to individual, families, and the community at large. Let us be mindful that we have social issues of our own. We have issues that we are battling with such as grief and loss, mental illness, divorce, job loss, etc. Adding a toxic workplace to the list is extremely stressful. Safer workplace culture has been attributed to employee's happiness, productivity,



First time hiking with co-workers. Photo Credit: Nicole Bortsi

and workplace engagement.

- **Wear your MASK first.** I am sure we are tired of masking around since the beginning of 2020. The mask I am talking about here is the breathing mask in the airplane. Do you remember being in the plane and the flight attendant tells you and demonstrates how you can wear your mask for emergency purposes? The last part of the demonstration states “wear your mask first before you help others.” In essence, take care of your body, mind, and soul, so that you are able to help others as best as you can!
- **Don't forget to BREATHE:** Have your client story ever triggered your own experience? Life, work, and family can be overwhelming, don't forget to breathe. If you are overwhelmed and you feel better crying, cry.
- **Preach It.** I often asked my clients, ‘how did you cope with your stress in the past?’. I have always emphasised the important of self-care and I also ensure that I am doing it.



Dr. La Shawn Paul, DSW, LCSW-R  
@TheSWDiva

Repeat after me: Mental health is public health.

Mental health is public health.

10:33 AM · 2020-12-14 · [Twitter Web App](#)

228 Retweets 10 Quote Tweets 966 Likes

# COVID + CREATIVITY

## (Hands up if you are feeling #thecovidfatigue)

By Kayla Huszar, BSW, RSW

As we wade the waters of this Covid crisis you might have been reminded of life's impermanence. You might have realized that there is little to nothing that we can do to stop the uncertainty of living our every day lives. But that shouldn't change the way you show up in the world. You bring amazing things to your community, profession, and family.

As a social worker you might be trying anything and everything to fill your cup (even just one single drop) so that you can go on serving the people who need you. You might be feeling that compassion fatigue setting in (maybe it set in around October?). Hoarding chocolate in the kitchen, binge watching Netflix, doomscrolling, maybe even a little bit more alcohol than your normal. And when we're in survival mode sometimes the chocolate helps, sometimes the numbing out to screens helps, but when it doesn't help anymore, what keeps you moving through your days?

Enter creativity and the things you love to do. People have found meaning for centuries in creativity. They find it with writing, painting, baking, sewing, and so much more. Creative expression is

one of the ways people find a way to string one day to the next.

People have painted their way out of depression. They have written songs and poems to heal their pain and trauma. They have quilted themselves out of grief.

Here are three ways that you can use creativity today to boost your mood and decrease anxiety and depression:

### Julia Cameron's Morning Pages

The morning pages are featured in Julia's book *The Artists Way*. All you need is a journal and a pen. You write three pages everyday. You write everything that comes into your conscious, everything, good, bad, ugly, all of it. It's a practice, like meditation. It will feel uncomfortable and vulnerable and not worth it in those early days – but with perseverance you will start to see shift in your life and in your mood.

### Self-Led Art Therapy

Start with a blank page and some pastels (or pens, markers, paint, whatever you have handy). Put a circle in the middle of your page and start making colored marks. Don't think about it, just let the colors lead. When you feel your page is finished, ask yourself



with this image is telling you. Is there a story here?

### Intentional Playlists

All it takes is 20 minutes of intentional music listening to boost moods and decrease feelings of anxiety and depression. Listen to your favorites for 20 minutes and notice how you feel. Can you feel your heart rate slow, can you feel your breathing getting deeper. For a fun twist, throw in a dance party or a sing along.

Creativity will regulate you, if you let it. Practicing self compassion, being patient with yourself and believing people are doing the best they can with what they have, is how we get through this together, apart. Keep on supporting, guiding and leading people towards wellness.

**About Kayla Huszar:** *I am a red-headed, barefoot, boy mom, running a private practice in Regina, SK, with a focus on maternal mental health and expressive art therapy.*

**"Keep going.  
That's all you have to do ever.  
You really don't have to be amazing or  
fierce or beautiful or successful or good.  
Just keep going, please.  
Slowly is fine.  
Crawling is fine.  
No feeling is final.  
Except hope."**

**– Glennon Doyle**  
*(author of "Untamed")*

# Yoga for Self-care

By Susan Burgess, RSW

Yoga has a bad rap. It's usually associated with contortions, unpronounceable names, requiring flexibility and long periods for practice. In my experience, yoga can be portable and practical. The practices can be presented in a culturally sensitive and respectful way. My intention here is not to teach you yoga poses – there are great references for that and videos galore, but to convince you that yoga might have a place in your self-care arsenal.

For instance who doesn't need a pick-me-up during a long meeting? Or an anxiety reducer when yet another referral crosses the desk? Using the breath to calm or energize is a good place to start. There are easy to learn breathing techniques for both of these situations.

One of the lessons I've learned from yoga is to meet the mood where it is, not where you want it to be. Then you may gain some traction to budge the lethargy or calm the anxiety. This applies to encounters with clients as well.

There are yoga poses and breathing techniques to raise and lower energy and both are quickly effective. For example when a client is anxious or distressed, have them lie on a blanket or mat on the floor and put their legs up against the wall at a right angle. And don't sit there watching – likely you will need some calming as well. It's amazing to see how this simple change can lower the distress and allow a session to continue productively.

Yoga philosophy teaches that we already have the abilities to deal with what life

throws at us, but they've been made less accessible by our habits of thinking and action. This sounds familiar – a strength-based approach where we work to change automatic patterns of thoughts and action.

If your interest is higher and your resistance lower, here are some great resources to start including yoga in your life and work:

*Yoga with Adrienne* – low key and beginner friendly sequences on Youtube for many common issues.

Weintraub, Amy, *Yoga Skills for Therapists – Mood Management Techniques to Teach and Practice*, Norton, 2012. [yogafordepression.com](http://yogafordepression.com)

Rose Kress, *Awakening Your Inner Radiance with Liferforce Yoga*, Amazon, 2020.

# What Isolation Taught Me About Self-Care

by Christina Anderson (she/her), MSW, RSW

Skin-care routines, yoga poses, green smoothies, fizzy bath bombs... you've probably tried one of these of these self-care trends (to name only few) throughout one of our ongoing pandemics (that being the novel coronavirus and the global fight for racial and health equity). It's not that we're not trying. In fact, Social Workers are one of the only professions that incorporate "self-care" right into our core curriculum and talk about it, openly, throughout our career.

Given the nature of our work, it's expected that we acquire the tools we individually require to avoid the dreaded episode of burnout. But if you're anything like me you're tired of hearing about anything "self-care" related not to mention phrases like the "new normal" or "unprecedented times."

Personally, I don't think I know a social

worker who hasn't been vicariously traumatized by their work. And, interestingly enough, we are now practicing in a time where collective trauma is being experienced on a global scale. But as social workers, "we should be good, right?" Time to pull out our trusty self-care toolbox and encourage others to do the same. But what if all the self-care trends and tricks of the trade aren't good enough? What does that say about us then?

I recently had the misfortune/gift to be put under a Public Health Mandatory Isolation Order with my family for 24 days. Because we decided to isolate together, we spent every waking moment with one another and, I'll be the first to admit, it was not an entirely graceful experience. Everything I know about emotional regulation, healthy decisions, and even maintaining a simple routine was challenged. The running commentary in my head was "you help folx build a foundation of self-care, mindfulness and to challenge

their cognitive distortions for a living... you should be better at this."

But what if when I don't live up to what I preach I actually extend some kindness to myself (whilst locking oneself in the bathroom to avoid other people in my home)? After all, maybe this is a completely normal reaction during a time of collective trauma? Try as I might, during this time I couldn't seem to ignore what was going on for me (not to mention many times over the past year). But you know what did make things better without fail? An extra-large pepperoni pizza; which I'll explain later...

## Contextualizing Self-Care

Self-care is the foundation of our ability to bring our best selves to our practice (not to mention the probability that we will retire with our mental health in tact). The concept began as a way to physically take care of yourself but it has evolved into caring for your emotional

[continued on next page](#)



## What Isolation Taught Me About Self-Care, continued

well-being, and even more so, the overall healing for women, people of colour, and other marginalized communities.

The public health crisis we are facing now has exposed massive cracks in our societies. One of these has yet again proven to be how children, women, trans and non-binary people are most at risk during times of social stress. It is especially necessary for these groups to take care of themselves. Professionally: social workers, emergency and health care workers, etc are so susceptible to impairment from burnout that there is, arguably, an ethical imperative that we practice self-care (Van Dernoort Lipsky, 2009).

If you're like me and feeling anxious, that's understandable – you are definitely not alone. There's a lot to be anxious about right now. There's an overall loss of normalcy, and for many of us, we've lost a sense of connection, routine, and certainty about the future – not to mention the lingering sense that more loss is still to come. That sense of fearful anticipation is called “anticipatory grief” and it's a tough one to wade in.

### Some Things That Came Up During Isolation: BOUNDARIES

This one (for me anyways) has pre-pandemic roots. Does anyone else find that our careers and, subsequently our passions or experiences, naturally sets us up to be the helpers for so many people in our lives? Sometimes I know that I just have to disappoint others. For friends/family I've heard myself saying: “Can we keep the conversation light

today?... I'm actually struggling myself at the moment and not up for getting into all this right now... I'm happy to (play a game/send a care package/check in by text later) instead if that would be helpful?”

### VALIDATE AND AFFIRM THOSE LOUSY FEELINGS

The desire to avoid potential discomfort of vulnerable conversations definitely overrides the desire to be seen and understood sometimes. What if the next time we ran into that friend or pick up the telephone, we were like, “you know what, I've been having a really hard time.” The response to “how are you?” always seem to be, “fine.” In addition to trying to thwart coronavirus-talk, I'm trying to take more risks of communicating intimately instead of superficial communication.

But, let's be honest, what has really helped me the most this past year is talking to my therapist. I suspect many of you will agree! Sometimes the best form of self-care comes in the form of those uncomfortable conversations with people you trust or professionals that call you out on your stuff.

### PRIORITIZE HEALTHY CHOICES (but be realistic)

Yes - let's be thoughtful and intentional about how we're treating our bodies. Making time to take a walk, stretch our muscles, or going to bed a little earlier than usual can reduce stress and help you feel more relaxed and resilient. But if you want to spend an entire day bingeing television because your body and brain needs to numb out, I say go for it! In our house, the look on my children's faces when the weekly delivery of pepperoni pizza is delivered is worth every penny! It's time together as a family for a meal that we enjoy. It instantly transforms our evening and is becoming a silly pandemic tradition

that brings us together.

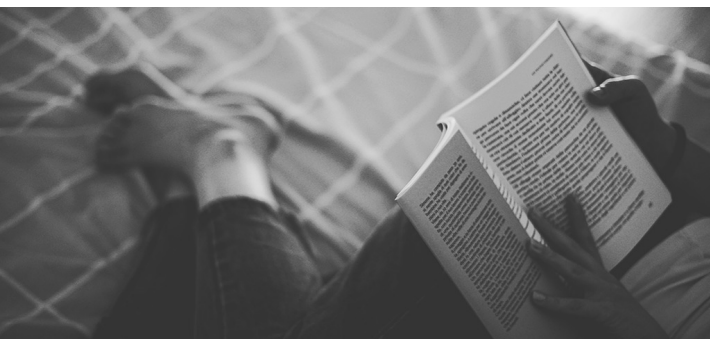
### GET YOUR CREATIVE ON

You know those friends/colleagues out there that seem to be just slaying with their side hustle/hobbies/artistry? Some folks have used this pandemic to start new hobbies or businesses, take baking to mastery level, and/or have children that seem to be constantly crafting. Meanwhile some of us are just doing everything we can just to make it to work on time (and that includes the home office, half dressed in pyjamas ready for that virtual meeting).

It's important to me, too, to lean into my creative side but I have to remind myself that maybe self-care, today, is simply taking a shower. I found that I actually had to schedule this time right into my day or everything else gets prioritized.

These are just a few of my experiences and opinions as a parent and as an artist. Everyone's priorities, stressors and joys will be different. Maybe the people you love and care for are parents, spouse, or pets. Perhaps this resonates for you, too, in some way? I have a friend whose version of being creative is connecting with nature through sport (rock climbing). I may not care to join him, but I respect and see what he gets out of that experience.

Regardless of what your form of recharging and caring for yourself involves, as long as it positively impacts you and the way you interact with others, more power to you! As a parent and Social Worker, I try to practice forgiveness and self-compassion when self-care slips to the bottom of the list in order to meet the needs of others. When this happens, I know I have to be extra intentional about creating space to recharge and decompress. For me, this hopefully involves picking up my camera or scheduling some alone time. But, if I were being really honest, there's usually pepperoni pizza involved.





## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# The Light at the End of the Tunnel

By Erin Beckwell, MSW, RSW

Well, we made it through 2020! As I write this, we're halfway through January, and the pandemic is still front of mind for most of us. We've been able to celebrate as vaccine distribution has begun, yet we know we still have a way to go before we're looking at COVID in our rearview mirrors. As a former colleague recently commented (and I paraphrase), "There's a light at the end of the tunnel, and we're still very much in the tunnel."

In the social work world, this time of year means gearing up for national social work month in March. This year's theme is "**Social Work is Essential**," which is very timely as many members have had to navigate a complex interplay of roles, identities, expectations, and functions in the context of the pandemic, and the broader conversation about who comes to mind when we refer to groups of workers as "essential" and what this means in our world today.

Globally, the International Federation of Social Workers is preparing for World Social Work Day (WSWD) on March 16. The theme of WSWD 2021 is "**Ubuntu: I am because we are**," and will focus on global solidarity and collective impact, the importance of relationship, and the interconnectedness of all people, animals, environments, and systems. Social workers around the world are encouraged to reflect on, and engage in action around, our commitments to creating a more just society for all, a healthier, more sustainable planet, and decoloniz-

ing social work and the systems with which we work, interact, and advocate. Closer to home, we are encouraging social workers to bring a local perspective to these national and international themes during Saskatchewan Social Work Week, which takes place March 15-19.

At SASW, we are focused on the year ahead, which will include continuing conversations about balancing our dual roles of regulating and promoting the profession of social work. This has become a topic of great interest across the country, as provinces and territories navigate a changing landscape when it comes to regulating professions such as ours. It will be interesting to see how this evolves in the year to come, and what we can learn from our colleagues as they encounter changes in legislation and policy which directly impact the focus and function of social work regulators and professional associations. We are

also excited to continue growing our membership and engaging with student members throughout 2021.

I am optimistic that we will also be able to return to in-person connection – for some things, at least – and that will mean I can finally get out and meet some of you! This pandemic has brought us many opportunities to reflect on what's essential, what's possible, and what priorities we need to shift, individually and collectively. As I'm sure many of you have, I've been repeatedly reminded that connection, support, and community are essential – and that we need to be intentional about creating and holding space for these in our lives. We don't have to do this alone. We need other people.

Here's to the possibilities of the year ahead. My hope for each of you is that 2021 brings with it a return to, and expansion of, your sense of connection and community.



CASW / ACTS  
@CASW\_ACTS



Social workers are essential, pass it on  
Social workers are essential, pass it on  
Social workers are essential, pass it on  
Social workers are essential, pass it on



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

## Social Work Is Essential

By Karen Wasylenka, MSW, RSW

Remember when we used to celebrate social work week by having lunches; bringing cake into the coffee room; having an education opportunity where we gathered to eat, visit, and learn something? Social Work week and month were celebrated in many different ways; but all had something in common in addition to acknowledging our profession – the celebration of relationships with our colleagues. Sadly, beginning last year and most likely this year, those in person events for social work week simply won't occur. In fact, we may not even be in our offices, let alone gather in the coffee room.

Relationships are an essential part of social work – with our clients, our colleagues, our communities, and our profession. How have you managed to maintain those relationships over the past year? Has video conferencing worked? It has kept us connected but

its not the same. We want to get on and get off zoom.

We will celebrate social work week in Saskatchewan March 15-19. The national theme this year is "Social Work is Essential". As we reflect on all that has happened this past year, the social and economic inequities that have become even more apparent, and the profound changes in all our lives, the theme is fitting.

The past year has shown that social workers bring necessary and valuable skills in working with police attending to crisis calls that involve mental health, domestic violence, and other issues. Social workers have been critical in the delivery of health care services during the pandemic when resources were stretched thin and individuals and families are facing many challenges, including managing stress and sub-

stance use. Social workers have been called upon to respond in many new ways and we know the work is only beginning as we move into the future and grapple with the many impacts of the pandemic.

I hope that in whatever way you can, during social work month/week you have the opportunity to reflect on our profession and the important work social workers do. This has been a challenging and difficult year. I would like to thank each one of you for the work you do everyday to help individuals, families, and communities and to make our world a better place!

*There is no greater joy nor greater reward than to make a fundamental difference in someone's life.*

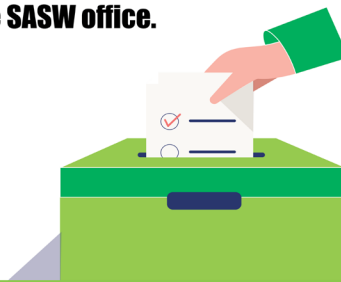
- Mary Rose McGeady

### Nominations for Council are due March 15!

**Positions open : Member at Large (2), Treasurer, and President Elect.**

**Please consider the opportunity to share in the leadership of SASW.**

**Nomination forms are on the SASW website or contact the SASW office.**



[WWW.SASW.CA](http://www.sasw.ca)





# FROM THE (KITCHEN) DESK OF THE REGISTRAR Questions in 2021

By Fay Schuster, MSW, RSW

So 2020 has passed and a new year begins. I extend a happy New Year to all our members and their families and my appreciation for the work you are doing during these challenging times. I am pleased to say during these past few months, even in the face of COVID 19, the SASW office has adapted and has been fully functional and able to respond to members and new applicants without disruption.

Below are a few questions you may have on your mind for the coming year.

### How many hours of CPE do I need to complete in 2021 for my 2022 renewal?

Members who renewed as full time or

part time practicing will be required to complete 40 hours of CPE in 2021. Members who renewed as non-practicing are exempt from reporting CPE. New members and reinstating members (membership has lapsed over one year) in 2021 are also exempt for the year they become a member.

The CPE policy, policy definitions and Q and A document are all available on our website under the "Members" tab.

### I didn't receive my 2021 Income Tax Receipt and Licence.

Members who completed the renewal should have their 2021 Income Tax Receipt and Licence posted to their home page in our online system. If it is

not there please contact the office by phone at 306-545-1922 or by e-mail at [registration.sasw@accesscomm.ca](mailto:registration.sasw@accesscomm.ca).

### Reminder about 2021 Student Renewals and Student Upgrade to RSW

Student members are required to renew their membership annually. Student annual renewals are due by March 31, 2021.

Student members who had an active student membership in 2020 and completed their degree in December 2020 are eligible for the Upgrade to RSW until March 31, 2021. If you fall into this group, you do not need to wait for convocation to complete the Upgrade. We require the conferred transcript from the University to complete your application. The University generally confers the degrees the third week in the month following the end of the semester.

As always, please feel free to connect with the office or me directly (306-545-6878 or [registrar.sasw@accesscomm.ca](mailto:registrar.sasw@accesscomm.ca)) if you have any questions or concerns.

## Update from SASW Council

After careful consideration and deliberation, Council has decided to list the office at 2110 Lorne Street for sale. The current office space is an old home with minor conversion to office space. As our organization grows and our work changes, the current space no longer meets the needs of the organization. Additional considerations included the cost of major repairs and upkeep. SASW purchased the property, which became Edna Osborne House, in 1997.



## Newsletter Contributions

Contributions to the *Saskatchewan Social Worker* are always welcome. Please send your articles and ideas to [sasw@accesscomm.ca](mailto:sasw@accesscomm.ca). Deadline for the June 2021 issue is April 30, 2021.



# From the Desk of the Dean of Social Work


By Dr. Cathy Rocke, MSW, PhD

As we begin 2021, I would never have imagined when I became the Dean just over a year ago that I would end up spending most of my year on Zoom! The pandemic has changed all of our lives in so many ways, however we still have to keep moving forward. I am very proud that our faculty and staff has been able to continue the delivery our programming to our students so that their educational dreams were not delayed. I am very pleased to announce that SASW President Elect, Erin Beckwell has joined the Faculty as the Field Education Coordinator. Her deep knowledge of the social work field in the province of Saskatchewan will be a great asset to the faculty. We also welcomed Hannah Nguyen as our Research Administrator.


In 2020, several faculty members have been involved in cutting edge research projects. Some examples include Dr. Lise Milne’s research project entitled Creating a Digital Connections Hub to Support Children in Care in Saskatchewan During COVID-19 and

Beyond. The hub can be found on the University of Regina Child Trauma Research Centre website (<https://www.childtraumaresearch.ca>). Many excellent resources for child welfare practitioners can be found on this hub. A recent University of Regina webpage article entitled The need to say it nicer: The language we choose when we talk about substance use matters highlights the research completed by Dr. Kara Fletcher. She writes that “negative language about individuals who use substances contributes to how society views these individuals.” Important practice knowledge for social workers who work with individuals struggling with addiction.

Drs. Bonnie Jeffrey and Nuelle Novik helped celebrate the 20 year anniversary of SPHERU (Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit) (<https://spheru.ca>) which has produced world renowned research over the years. Recently, a SPHERU research project funded through Mental Health Research Canada found although many

***Students!***  
***Apply for the Student Award by March 31.***  
***More information is on the SASW website***  
***or contact the SASW office.***



[WWW.SASW.CA](http://WWW.SASW.CA)



## From the Desk of the Dean of Social Work

people in Saskatchewan are struggling with their mental health since the start of the pandemic fewer are seeking help. These important findings were highlighted by Dr. Novik in a recent Saskatoon Star Phoenix article. Finally, Dr. Raven Sinclair is the Principal Investigator on a crime prevention project with Dr. Brigitte Krieg that seeks to listen to the voices of northern Youth to identify gaps in services and supports required for them to succeed. This project has caught the attention of the Minister of Public Safety, the Honorable Bill Blair who is looking for the research findings to inform future policy and program development for vulnerable and Indigenous youth. These projects are only some of the fantastic research being completed by faculty members at this time. Descriptions of the many other research projects being completed will be available on our newly revamped website to be launched shortly.

We also had several students graduate with their MSW in 2020. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the RSWs members who achieved their goal.

### Spring 2020

**Arjun Adhikari** – Field Practicum: *Reflection on my Practicum and Learning at a Child and Family Services: Building Knowledge about Provincial Child Protection.*

**Markus Marquardt Beveridge** – Thesis: *Prevention is Difficult But Possible: A Multiple Case Study Examining the Integration of Prevention Activities in School Social Work Practice in an Urban Centre in Saskatchewan.*

**Cheryl Lana Dehmke** – Field Practicum: *Chronic Disease and Mental Health in a Primary Health Care Setting.*

**Amanda Lynn Hahn** – Thesis: *Transitioning from Curative Care to End-of-Life Care in the Acute Care Hospital: A Hermeneutical Phenomenological Study*

**Chrystina Marie Hunter** – Research Practicum: *Vulnerability Detection for Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls.*

**Denise Renee Norris** – Field Practicum: *Therapy at Professional Counselling Associates: A Field Practicum Report.*

**Cara Lee Taylor** – Research Practicum: *Psychological Health and Safety in Mental Health Care: A Pilot Project*

**Bronwyn Jeanne Wyatt** – Research Practicum: *Growing Forward: Best-Practice(s) in Client-Centred Service(s) for those Experiencing and Using Intimate Partner Violence.*

**Donna Lisa Marie Balkwill** – Research Practicum: *Dads Need Help Too:*

*Understanding the Unique Needs of Young Fathers.*

**Carissa Lynn Ball** – Field Practicum: *Counselling at the Regina Sexual Assault Centre.*

**Marcie Marie Dupuis** – Field Practicum: *A Systems Approach to Trauma Informed Care.*

**Erin Delle McLeod** – Thesis: *An Exploratory Study of the Collaborative Divorce Process from the Perspective of Collaborative Professionals.*

As you can see despite the pandemic faculty and students have continued to move forward and enhance the field of social work practice and research in the province of Saskatchewan. Take care and stay safe everyone!

# LET US WELCOME YOU HOME



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[www.espritlifestyle.com](http://www.espritlifestyle.com)



# Retelling Stories of Resilience as a Counterplot to Homelessness: A Narrative Approach in the Context of Intensive Team-Based Housing Support Services

By Jordan Mills, RSW

I was first introduced to narrative therapy many years ago in my undergraduate degree. Since then, I have wanted to utilize my graduate studies as an opportunity to further conceptualize and practise narrative therapy. I also wanted to use this experience to build on and contribute to my current work in the area of community mental health, housing, and homelessness. In considering all of this, I decided to focus my practicum on developing and implementing a narrative therapy approach to working with people in recovery from homelessness. I sought out two professional associates trained in narrative therapy who were willing to take me on as a student and provide the supervision needed. In order to achieve my learning objectives, it was agreed that I would join one of my professional associates in co-facilitating a group for men who have been violent to their intimate partners and undertake a nine-day counselling-based experience at a fly-in community in Northern Saskatchewan. These additional practice components provided the perfect accompaniment to the initial community narrative practice proposal by expanding and diversifying my platforms of practice.

Participants living in rental housing and supported harm reduction housing were offered the opportunity to partake in my practicum project and four people accepted the offer. Additional participants with lived experience of homelessness as well as professionals working in the field were also recruited. Candidates were enthusiastic about the opportunity to share their personal stories of hard-earned knowledge and

resilience. They were also hopeful that, in sharing responses to hardship, they might alleviate the anguish of others. It was my hope that this practice project would cast a metaphorical line beyond “housing procurement and stability” and into the deeper waters of meaning-making, citizenship, and identity reclamation. I believe this is important because without a sense of purpose and a sense of self, people will remain homeless in spirit. They will have four walls and a roof over their head, but they will remain dislodged from the things that truly sustain them.

In the absence of readily available mainstream counselling, I was curious about the ways in which direct service providers on Housing First teams could facilitate therapeutic conversations. I was also interested in how Housing First providers might tailor therapeutic approaches to optimize and work in tandem with the biopsychosocial supports already being offered by the team, thereby enhancing the depth of Housing First services. I chose narrative therapy because of its non-pathologizing stance and commitment to social justice.

## Overview of the Practice Project

The following steps were taken to complete my practice project:

- Seek out people who were homeless and are now housed who are struggling with similar predicaments in life to one another;
- Invite them to participate in sharing their knowledge, skills, and abilities in getting through difficult times;
- Create questions rooted in narrative therapy that would help them to richly describe that which sus-

tains them in life;

- Collect these stories and collaborate with the participant author to make edits for readability;
- Seek out others who are in the process of overcoming similar life challenges to listen to these stories as an outsider audience. Consider inviting professionals in the field to join as outsider witnesses (when appropriate);
- Guided by narrative lines of inquiry, ask the outsider audience to respond to the stories. Ask the outsider audience to pay particular attention to any personal resonance they had with the story (e.g., “What struck a chord with you personally?”);
- Collect the de-identified responses from the outsider audience (no identifying names in any of the writing) and bring them back to be read aloud to the author of the original shared account (provide hard copies); and
- Discuss what significance hearing these audience responses to their stories has had and what new possibilities it creates for them moving forward.

Participants overcoming homelessness richly described their knowledge, skills, and abilities in getting through difficult times. This was effective in helping people to reacquaint themselves with a sense of purpose in life. The linking of people’s voices through the sharing of de-identified narrative documents resulted in the creation of an audience. These audiences gave greater authentication and acknowledgement to people’s hopes and dreams for the future. The linking of lives through

*continued on next page*

# In Between: A Case Study of Frontline Workers and Response to Suicide

By Virginia Beebe, RSW

In the fall of 2020, during a worldwide pandemic, I completed a MSW thesis which focused on understanding the experience of frontline workers who endured a suicide crisis. A qualitative case study was utilized to provide frontline expertise in responding to youth suicide crisis. A review of literature revealed a significant gap in connecting systemic oppression and colonization to high rates of youth suicide. Risk factors contributing to high suicide rates such as depression, comorbidities, alcohol, and drug misuse are all factors that are prevalent in communities that are impacted by colonization, racism, and systemic oppression. Research in prevention found three key components that attribute to reduction of suicide rates: outreach and early intervention, connection to community and family, and supports for frontline professionals. The lack of literature available for Indigenous communities that suffer suicide crises presents the need for an examination of anti-oppressive approach in suicide prevention.

Case study participants were chosen through purposive sampling to ensure those who were in frontline positions in 2008-2009 were contacted. Thematic analysis revealed three key themes from participants: **Experience**, **Impact**, and **Recommendations**. In the theme **Experience**, participants focused on the immediate and intermediate phase of the response to the youth suicide crisis. In the immediate phase, participants stated they felt supported in their strategies to meet the needs of their community. In the intermediate phase, participants stated that the support they initially received was removed without consultation. The actions of leadership left participants feeling isolated, angry, and hopeless. The second theme, **Impact**,

illustrates the psychological effect the crisis had on frontline workers. The key message from participants was a feeling of emotional numbness and depersonalization. Participants were further emotionally impacted when supports were withdrawn by leadership leading to participants feeling even more isolated from each other and the province; indicative of an experience of oppression. In the theme **Recommendations**, participants highlight the importance of hiring professionals who are invested in the communities they work for; leadership and organizations that are in communities to commit to being culturally attuned; and consult with community stakeholders, such as youth and frontline workers, in developing a clearly articulated plan.

Following recommendations from this study, further research in the area of youth suicide prevention is encouraged. One way to ensure meaningful research is to develop partnerships between community service providers, such as health, justice, or education, and universities such as the First Nations University of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina and other universities that are immersed in Indigenous and land-based pedagogy. Include youth and

frontline workers in the development of research methods and methodologies, to gain a better understanding of how to create a project that is sustainable in their community. Invested participation can be accomplished by creating a competitive application process for doctoral students, youth, and community members where participants gain an applicable skill or a recognized achievement. Furthermore, ground the project in culture that is specific to the community the research is conducted in. Finally, come away from the project with a clearly articulated plan that is sustainable.

All the recommendations offered by the participants in this study are extremely important and relevant. Examining the chronological experiences, the impact, the reflections, and recommendation from impacted communities, reveals that community wisdom can guide us in social work to develop responses to suicide and suicide crises in more effective, comprehensive, and culturally relevant ways.

*When I am not writing a thesis I am consulting and providing therapeutic support in my private practice in North Battleford, Virginia Beebe Counselling.*

## Retelling Stories of Resilience as a Counterplot to Homelessness

shared purposes contributes to a collective voice that can amplify social issues and reverberate outward on a larger scale in the pursuit of social justice. Participants described the opportunity to contribute to the lives of others in this way as a powerful counterplot to despair.

*Jordan Mills is a Registered Social Worker who lives in Saskatoon with his*

*wife Anne-Marie, his two boys Jonah and Charlie, and his dog Taco. He is the Director of Clinical Services at Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service. He has been a social worker for 13 years. His practicum spanned spring/summer 2020. Jordan enjoys cycling and running and spending time with his family at their favorite spots in northern Saskatchewan.*

# Thinking Outside the Medicine Cabinet: New Resources Help Social Workers Support People Living with Chronic Pain

By Krista Kaminski, MPH, BSc, and Erin Beckwell, MSW, RSW

For most people, pain is temporary, and it serves as a warning something is wrong, that something has caused or may cause damage to some part of our body. This is acute pain, which usually resolves as we heal. Chronic pain – defined as ongoing pain, accompanied by emotional distress and/or functional disability that lasts longer than three months (primary chronic pain) or persistent pain that emerges as a symptom of another underlying

health condition (secondary chronic pain) – can impact people of any age or background. In Canada, one in four people over the age of 15 (more than 7.6 million Canadians) are impacted by chronic pain.<sup>1,2</sup> People who live with pain often struggle to access formal and informal supports and have their experiences of pain minimized or misunderstood by health professionals, in part due to its invisibility and complex nature.

In their October 2020 report, the Canadian Pain Task Force highlighted that

– while pain can impact any of us – as with many health issues, “... chronic pain is not distributed equally among Canadians. Biological, psychological, social, cultural, and other factors influence the occurrence and severity of pain, and barriers to care are higher in populations affected by social inequities and discrimination”.<sup>1</sup>

As we are often directly connected with individuals and communities who are impacted by structural oppression and the associated inadequacy of resources, services, and supports, social





## Thinking Outside the Medicine Cabinet, continued

workers are often ideally positioned to support people living with pain. We may be the first team member to recognize that someone is struggling with chronic pain when other concerns such as resource deprivation, mental health, and substance use are the reasons for referral. Social workers are able to assess barriers such as trauma, feelings of cultural unsafety, literacy, and isolation – which can impact one's ability to meaningfully engage with their health care provider to identify appropriate and effective pain management strategies. We can support people living with pain through a trauma-informed approach, providing accessible and appropriate pain education, coping skill development, counseling, advocacy regarding the impact of pain on the patient or family, and identification of resources to improve quality of life and effectiveness of pain management plans.

The Saskatchewan Health Authority and the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH) is pleased to announce the release of a series of patient and clinician resources on the effectiveness of non-drug methods for the treatment of chronic,

non-cancer pain in adults. These include a chronic pain prescription pad, evidence summaries for clinicians with practical advice for recommending different non-drug methods, patient evidence summaries written at a grade 7 reading level, as well as a poster. A number of individuals with chronic pain used their valuable lived experience to review the patient resources, contributing to their quality and practicality. CADTH completed a series of evidence reviews to review and summarize the research on the effectiveness of non-drug methods for the treatment of chronic, non-cancer pain which then served as the content to develop this evidence-based resource package which is now available at [www.cadth.ca/chronicpain](http://www.cadth.ca/chronicpain)

Social workers in any practice setting can share these resources with people they support and refer them to the website when chronic pain is identified as a care need.

The need for these resources was identified in a 2018 CADTH Environmental Scan that highlighted issues with access to non-drug methods for chronic pain, as well as the very limited information available to support clinicians and patients in making evidence-informed decisions about how to choose an appropriate method for addressing chronic pain.

If you have any questions about these resources, contact [SKSupport@CADTH.ca](mailto:SKSupport@CADTH.ca)

### *Submissions Welcome!!*

Is there a social issue, population, or theoretical modality you're passionate about? Consider sharing your experience, knowledge, and insights with other SASW members.

E-mail your article to [sasw@accesscomm.ca](mailto:sasw@accesscomm.ca).

**Social workers have gone above and beyond this year. The SASW Distinguished Service Award is given to a member with a history of dedication to the profession and who has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to excellence in social work practice.**

Nominate a colleague who you think should be recognized. More information is on the SASW Website or contact the SASW office.

**Nominations for this years award close March 31**



[WWW.SASW.CA](http://WWW.SASW.CA)



# The Digital Connections Hub: Translating Knowledge to Support Prairie Child-Serving Organizations in Managing the Impacts of COVID-19 on the Mental Health of Children, Families, and Workers.

Dr. Lise Milne, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Social Work and Dr. Nathalie Reid, Director of the University of Regina Child Trauma Research Centre (CTRC) are leading a knowledge mobilization initiative related to the impact of COVID-19 on children and families in vulnerable contexts in the Canadian Prairies. A rapid knowledge synthesis conducted in summer 2020 has led to the recent launch of the Digital Connections Hub website ([childtraumaresearch.ca](http://childtraumaresearch.ca)) to support children, youth, families, and service-providers during COVID-19 and beyond.

## The Team

In conjunction with Drs. Milne and Reid, the Digital Connections Hub was developed and is supported by a Uni-

versity of Regina team consisting of Susana Prado (MSW), CTRC program manager, Chantelle Priel (BSW), research assistant, and graduate students Rayna Fisher (MSW program), and Rashique Ramiz (MAdmin program). The team has been working diligently over the past 10 months – from idea inception to project realization – with a current focus on website sustainability.

## What is the Digital Connections Hub?

The Digital Connections Hub serves as a single point of access that enables Prairie-based organizations, service providers, teachers, frontline workers, governments, caregivers, and the general public to find, download, print, and share knowledge and best

practices relevant to their contexts. The site comprises current, evidence-based child well-being research and practical resources related to COVID-19 and other potential future crises on the physical, mental, and emotional health needs of children. The site also provides concrete tools for caregivers and service providers.

## What are the Resources Available on the Digital Connections Hub?

A rapid scan of research and resources included over 400 sources revealing five main themes:

- Mental health of children, youth, caregivers, and service providers (e.g., pandemic grief, trauma-layering, general and back-to-school

Research. Dissemination. Advocacy. Community.



[LEARN MORE ABOUT US](#)

[FIND COVID-19 RESOURCES HERE](#)

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DIGITAL CONNECTIONS HUB



[COVID-19 RESOURCES](#)



[EXTERNAL LINKS](#)

## The Digital Connections Hub, cont.

anxiety, isolation, lack of access to services, importance of self-care for children, caregivers and practitioners).

- Substance use among youth and caregivers (e.g., increased use, monitoring youth substance use, upsurge in overdoses – especially in the Prairies, harm reduction strategies).
- Child protection (e.g., the “shadow pandemic” of increases in abuse and neglect, issues for children in care and transitioning out of care, online child sexual exploitation, the need for child protection services interim care protocols, gender-based violence, risks for other marginalized populations).
- Effective communication (e.g., the need for concrete dialogue strategies for children about COVID-19, the importance of staying connected, virtual communications, tele-health, differential access to technology, especially in remote and rural regions).
- Education and schools (e.g., learning loss, increased risk of abuse and neglect due to school closures, virtual learning, school re-opening risks and potentials).

The resources were reviewed, evaluated, and synthesized into knowledge products on 50 theme-related topics, including as two to three-page information Briefs and one-page information Posters (with French translations). The Digital Connections Hub also includes News Highlights, “Perspectives from the Field” from service providers and youth, and external links to publicly available resources such as podcasts, webinars, infographics, reports, articles, Indigenous resources, and French resources.

### How can the Digital Connections Hub Support Practice?

Working in child-serving organization during COVID-19 has brought about many challenges, including higher caseloads, increased vulnerabilities, and more complex interactions. Navi-

gating this unknown territory has led to workers across sectors reporting an increased level of stress, frustration, and even fear. In response, the Digital Connections Hub offers resources specific to supporting practitioners in adapting to pandemic-related service delivery changes, as well as supporting their own mental health and healthy routines, and those of children, youth, and families.

### How is the Digital Connections Hub Making an Impact?

Since December 2020, the site has been visited over 500 times, with 2,200 page views. A site survey as well as a more in-depth stakeholder user survey have revealed very positive feedback. We are continuing to elicit feedback from our users to ensure the relevance and sustainability of the site.

**QUOTE:** Alexandra Paiva, Children’s Therapy Worker, Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba:

*“The Digital Connections Hub doesn’t just provide information or technical literature reviews. It’s actually providing recommendations and practical tools. As a frontline worker, that’s what you’re always dependent on.”*

**QUOTE:** Natalie Huber, Former Deputy Minister of Child and Family Programs:

*“In this extraordinary time of COVID-19, it is very important to be able to understand the mental health impacts related to child welfare services for clients and staff so that future decisions can be based on evidence-based research.”*

## SAMPLE INFORMATION BRIEFS AND POSTERS



### How is the Site Supported?

The Digital Connections Hub received the endorsement of Saskatchewan’s Ministry of Social Services, Eagles Nest Youth Ranch, as well as Manitoba’s Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba and Macdonald Youth Services. These organizations provide services to thousands of children and youth in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, whether within child welfare settings or in the community. This project was funded by a SHRF Research Connections Grant: COVID-19 Rapid Response; and a CIHR Operating Grant: Knowledge Synthesis COVID-19 in Mental Health and Substance Abuse.

For more information, please visit: [childtraumaresearch.ca](http://childtraumaresearch.ca) or contact us at [ctrc@uregina.ca](mailto:ctrc@uregina.ca). Connect with us on LinkedIn: Child Trauma Research Centre, Facebook: URCTR, Twitter: @UR\_CTRC





# Social Work is Essential

The essential work provided by qualified, compassionate, and committed social workers benefits all people in Canada. Each March, we celebrate the important contributions social work professionals make to our families and communities.

**Celebrate Social Work Week  
March 15 - 19**

**Get involved!**

[casw-acts.ca](http://casw-acts.ca)

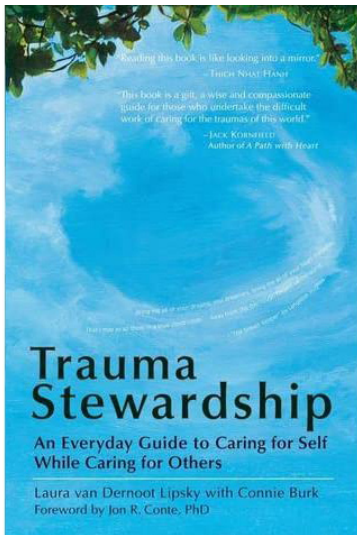
[#NationalSocialWorkMonth](https://twitter.com/NationalSocialWorkMonth)



# News Briefs

## Recommended Additional Reading

This is a great resource in terms of trauma stewardship, burnout and self-care.



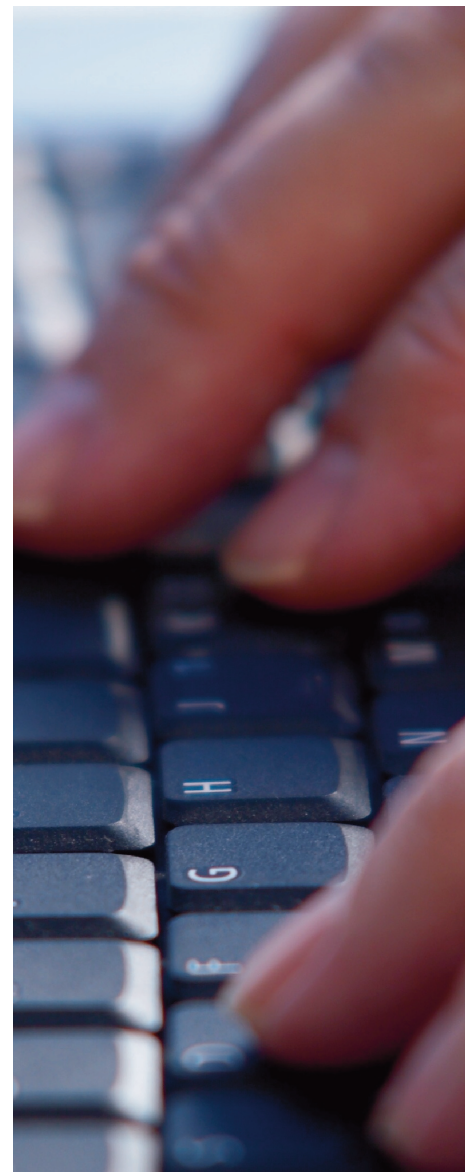
## The *five* Directions



### Trauma Stewardship

A daily practice through which individuals, organizations, and societies tend to the hardship, pain, or trauma experienced by humans, other living beings, or our planet itself. By developing the deep sense of awareness needed to care for ourselves while caring for others and the world around us, we can greatly enhance our potential to work for change, ethically and with integrity, for generations to come.

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## Practice Ethics Consultation

Facing an ethical dilemma? The Practice Ethics Committee is available to respond to ethical dilemmas, including those that arise due to the pandemic. To contact the committee, log into your Member's Home Page on our website, complete the form that is there, and submit. It will be forwarded to the Committee for review and response.

## Educational Opportunities

Please check the SASW Website and Facebook page for educational opportunities during pandemic restrictions.

## Get Involved

#WeAreAllTreatyPeople  
#amplifymelanatedvoices

@RPIRG Regina Public Interest Group  
@SURJYXE Stand Up for Racial Justice YXE chapter  
@arnetworksask Saskatoon Anti-Racism Network

## Social Work Week Events

Watch SASW website for listing of branch-sponsored events during Social Work Week.