



ANNUAL REPORT

April 1, 2016 - March 31, 2017

Annual General Meeting held June 22, 2017
City of North Vancouver Library, 3rd Floor Program Room
North Vancouver, BC

www.livingsystems.ca

Mission Statement

The mission of Living Systems is to contribute to the knowledge of human behavior from a natural systems perspective and to offer that knowledge through the provision of counselling, training and education to interested members of the community.

Living Systems is a registered society supported by:

Individual donations and memberships
North Shore Municipalities
Vancouver Foundation
BC Gaming Commission

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mark Smith, MSW RSW
Family Systems Therapist
Collaborative Divorce Coach
Parenting Coordinator

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CLINICAL COUNSELLORS

Randy Frost M.Div RCC

Lois Walker M.Div RCC

Mary Frost MS RCC

Margaret Anne Speak MA CCC

ASSOCIATE CLINICAL COUNSELLORS

Devana Weiss MA, RCC

Leila Howard, MA, RCC

Katherine White, MA, RCC

RESIDENTS & INTERNS

David Galloway, Diploma, FEA

Christina Lin, M.C.S

Jude Barnes, B.Sc, J.D.

Mehrnoush Poursaket

Maybo Lui, Pursing a Master's Degree in Family Studies

Taan Hariri, Pursing a Master's Degree in Counselling Psychology

Ming Chau, MA, RCC, CCC

Lori-Anne Boutin-Crawford, BA, BEd, M.Div

Business & Development Report

This past fiscal year we had a net loss of \$5,000 mainly due to a deficit in the Clinical Training Program. We were fortunate to receive grants from the Gaming Commission, District of North Vancouver, City of North Vancouver and District of West Vancouver. Our Vancouver Foundation funds also contributed to our financial position. Individual donations play a significant role in helping us sustain and balance our budget.

This year has focused on developing our Counselling Program. Katie White has taken on a part time contract job with Living Systems as the Clinical Manager. Her role has been instrumental in updating and implementing new policies and procedures that are in-line with legal and ethical standards. Katie White and Dave Galloway have been working on a database that will help us collect valuable information for grant application purposes.

We have focused more energy on marketing the Clinical Training Program in hopes that more people will enroll in this valuable program.

We held a very successful conference in March 3 & 4, 2017 in Vancouver, BC on Trauma and the Family: Widening the Lens with Dr. Papero, Dr. Smith and Douglas Hardie.

We completed an upgrade to our website design and maintenance program with the help of Dave Galloway and a website expert. This new site will go live over the next month.

Direct deposit came into effect in February 2017 for contractors and interns.

We currently have approximately 40 Members of the Society. The volunteer program with Living Systems continues. A yearly estimate of total volunteer time is 671 hours, representing about \$34,000. Counsellors contribute significant volunteer hours to sustain our services such as providing intake services, consultation, instruction, or time on committees.

Peet Nienabeer, our Accountant volunteers many hours on financial documents and being available for questions or planning. Our

administrative volunteer is Sheri Lindsay and Shelley Wales is our graphic designer that provides some volunteer hours.

Thank you to Mark Smith and the Board who have unique skills and contributions that are valuable to this organization. Thank you to Randy Frost, Lois Walker and Katie White for their overall leadership. Thank you to Margaret Anne for her role as the Conference Chair and intake role and to Mary Frost, Devana Weiss, Dave Galloway for all the additional volunteer hours that go unspoken in helping this organization spread the word about Bowen Family Systems Theory & Therapy.

Leila Howard, MA, RCC
Business and Development Manager

Clinical Manager Report

In September 2016, I began a new part-time role with Living Systems as the Clinical Manager. As of July, 2017 our clinical team consists of four contractor level clinicians, three associate clinical contractor clinicians, two residents and six interns (with a 7th returning for the summer). Our clinical team operates out of 9 offices across the Lower Mainland allowing us to provide services to a large number of individuals, couples and families.

Thus far I have focused on updating our policies and procedures as well as our clinical forms. This has included an updated informed consent form, a new case summary form, and a new children in therapy consent form, all of which are now in use by all members of the clinical team. In addition, I have taken responsibility for the grievance and complaint process and updating the related policies. I have also begun administrative supervision of our clinicians to assure that all Living Systems policies and procedures are being complied with. I continue to be impressed by the caliber of our clinicians.

The next big undertaking is the development of a Living Systems Database. By the end of 2017 the goal is to have all clinicians entering their sessions into the database. This database will provide better access to our client data which in turn will allow for better

analysis that can be used to apply for grants. Additionally, this database will create a more streamlined process for clinicians submitting their monthly invoices. Dave Galloway has been wonderful with setting this up and walking me through it.

I would like to personally thank Randy, Leila, Lois, and the Board for their support.

Respectfully
Katherine White MSc RMFT RCC
Clinical Manager

Conference Report

Living systems spring conference 'Trauma and the Family: Widening the Lens' was presented in March of this year at SFU Harbour Centre in Vancouver. The main speakers were Dr. Dan Papero and Dr. Walter Smith. In addition speaker, Doug Hardie presented a short paper. The conference was well attended and the questions and comments from the audience contributed to a lively discussion around the influence of family and the social environment on the onset, process and outcome of a traumatic event or a series of traumatic events.

Once again, Living Systems was successful in engaging the opportunity to look at an issue from a Bowen Family Systems perspective. As we begin our discussions for our March 2018 conference I would like to acknowledge the many volunteer hours contributed by our committee: Randy Frost, Mary Frost, Lois Walker, Leila Howard and Katie White.

Margaret-Anne Speak, MA, CCC
Conference Chair

Training and Research Report

During the past year, five interns have participated in the advanced group of the clinical internship training program in marriage and family therapy and pastoral counselling. They are second year interns Maybo Lui, Taan Hariri, third year intern Mehrnoush Poursaket; eighth year intern Christina Lin; and eleventh year intern David Galloway. The year has been structured to make conceptual links between Bowen theory and emerging knowledge in the natural sciences. The required text for the year was the recently published book, The Family Emotional System: An Integrative concept for Theory, Science and Practice, co-edited by Dan Papero and Robert Noone. Students were asked to consider more carefully how the predictability of the family emotional system can inform clinical practice. Final papers are presented by interns at the Clinical Conferences in May and June.

This past year we have had two interns in the first year training program. They have received a thorough introduction to Bowen family systems theory and therapy by reading almost all of Bowen's book Family Therapy in Clinical Practice the Kerr/Bowen book Family Evaluation as well as other chapters and articles. First year students write research papers on some aspect of Bowen theory of their own choosing and present their papers at the June meeting of the Clinical Conference.

Lois Walker co-teaches the advanced group of trainees and also provides individual supervision to a number of first year and advanced trainees.

Randy Frost had a book chapter entitled "Thinking Systems about the Supernatural and about God" published in Bowen Theory and Theology: What's God Got to do with it? Schwabe & Goodine (Eds.), Voyagers, 2016.

Randy Frost presented on "The Predictability of the Family Emotional System" at a clinical conference sponsored by the Bowen Center on January 13, 2017 in Washington DC. As part of the day, he conducted separate interviews with two different families that explored the degree to which the theory can be used to predict family emotional process in each family. Erika Gulliker and Don Wills, both

members of our board, arranged for the use of the studio at St. Paul's hospital.

Randy Frost presented a paper on "Links between Bowen Theory and Evolutionary Theory at a conference in Houston, Texas February 17-18, 2017 entitled "Being Human: Lessons from Science, Nature, and Bowen Theory." The conference was sponsored by the Center for the Study of Natural Systems and the Family.

Michael Nel is winding up a two year stint as the interim president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon this July. Randy Frost has been representing pastoral counselling on the FACTS board while Michael has been away. He has also served as on the task force charged with developing an entry level competency profile for counselling therapists. The task force updated an earlier profile first developed from 2004-2006 that has been used as a template for several other provinces where regulatory colleges for therapists have been established. The competencies in the updated profile have received a high degree of validation through a comprehensive online survey involving the memberships of the associations making up FACTS. The next task for the task force is defining ways of assessing the entry level competencies. The American Association of Pastoral Counselors has awarded Living Systems a \$4500 grant to fund pastoral counselling's share of the cost of the federation's work. Living Systems has continued to receive bimonthly webcasts of a meeting on theory sponsored by the Bowen Center and a monthly webinar by Dr. Kerr sponsored by the Bowen Theory Academy. The advanced training group views the Kerr webinar each month as part of the training program. Since January 2013, Living Systems has also received a monthly webinar from the Bowen Center called "Conversations with the Faculty", organized by Lois Walker. Faculty at the Bowen Center take turns presenting on their own work throughout the year.

Randy Frost participates in a Think Tank organized by Dr. Michael Kerr, Director of the Bowen Theory Academy that meets monthly on line and a research seminar that meets three times a year in Washington DC led by Dr. Daniel Papero.

Lois Walker has opted to take a sabbatical in 2018 and will not be teaching in the advanced program in the coming year. She intends to be available for individual and group supervision of interns during her

sabbatical. The sabbatical year is part of what she is calling a year of transition as she ponders the next phase of her life. I am deeply grateful to Lois for her rich contributions to the training program and all aspects of Living Systems over many years. She is a gifted clinician, supervisor, and teacher, and a fine person to boot. I wish her the very best as she enters her year of transition and hope that she will find a way to continue to contribute to training and education through Living Systems in the future.

Randy Frost, M.Div, RCC
Director of Training and Research
Living Systems

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

“The human family displays the characteristics of a living system. The unit is flexible and fluid. For the family, the question is not whether individuals respond to one another, but how they respond. A shift in the functional state of the family is reflected in the state or condition of each individual organism. The shifts can be reflected behaviourally, or they may be contained within the body walls of the affected persons. The implications of such a view are far-reaching. Behaviour may not be the only product of relationship. The health of each family member may be directly related to the functional state of the family unit.”

- Dan Papero, pg. 26, Bowen Family System Theory

We are here tonight to acknowledge the work of Living Systems over the last year... it's really about celebrating the family, supporting families, and acknowledging our family here at Living Systems...

And, speaking of family, as mentioned, part of our family has moved on and part is moving on... Jean Howson retired last Spring since we last met, and Lois Walker who is beginning a year of transition toward moving on in the Spring of 2018. Both of these strong women embody the spirit of Living Systems, not only in terms of their tireless efforts toward our overall mission, but through the time they have given and the leadership they have taken within Living Systems. They have modelled through their actions what it means to work toward being differentiated, to be that non-anxious presence in the midst of a living system.

I want to acknowledge the tireless efforts of others as well... the clinicians of Living Systems, Randy's leadership, Leila's efforts and those of Katie White, and, of course, those of the Board. We are all working together to bring a good service and product to the community.

As a Board and a Leadership team of Randy, Leila and Katie, we are entering a period of reflection as an organization that will strengthen us over all and take us to another level of organization... believe me! Our marketing committee continues its work; the conference committee has come through again with a timely conference on

Trauma and the Family and our training program and groups continue to meet the needs of the community.

Having said that, we couldn't manage without the generous grants we have been fortunate to again receive this year from particularly the Gaming Commission, and also the District of North Vancouver and City of North Vancouver. And the ongoing support of the Dave and Maria Galloway is always appreciated.

Thank you all...

Mark Smith MSW, RSW
President of the Board,
Living Systems Society

Summary of Living Systems Strategic Plan

(Developed in 2002)

The Strategic Plan envisions a focused effort to develop an integrated mission of counselling, training, education and research. Key elements of the strategy include:

- an explicit effort to foster integration among the four elements of the Society's mission
- a shift in the model of leadership from consensus to more clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the Board, the Leadership Team, and for each component of the Society's mission
- each element of the Society's mission will generate its own funds to pay for the actual delivery of services
- a minimal infrastructure of administrative support that is funded by existing grants and donations
- defined goals, objectives, timelines, people responsible, cost and source of funding for each component of the Society's mission.

VISION

The Society will contribute to and help extend knowledge of human behavior from a systems perspective. Systems research is the glue that binds together the four elements of the Society's mission and along with its pastoral orientation, sets the Society apart as a counselling and training presence in the lower mainland.

RESEARCH

Initial goals of the plan focus on solving some methodological challenges of systems research that will permit the use of key variables of family systems theory in funded research projects. Subsequent goals include application for funding of formal research projects, training in systems research in the internship program, and fostering more of a research attitude in each area of the Society's mission.

TRAINING

Significant goals include developing a four-times-a-year training program for people who live at a distance from Vancouver, revision of the weekly in-town internship program and of the clergy program, and development of a year-long course for non-clinicians interested in studying Bowen Theory. Special efforts will be made to invite professionals outside the field of mental health to consider training in systems theory for its contribution to the practice of their professions. Efforts will also be made to invite professionals from diverse cultures to consider training in an approach that focuses on variables of human emotional functioning which operate in every culture.

COUNSELLING

The Society will carefully expand the network of counsellors contracting with the Society to new locations not currently served by the Society. We also intend to increase the number of referrals to the Society by 10% and to increase the amount of subsidy available to low income clients. We will endeavor to widen our ability to provide counselling services to families from diverse cultures.

EDUCATION

The plan envisions increasing attendance at the two yearly conferences held by the Society on average by 10% by expanding the network of people promoting conferences and through co-sponsorship of conferences with other organizations. The minimal goal is to cover total costs of the two conferences with registration fees.

FINANCES

The plan was designed to be feasible at levels of funding that existed at the time the plan was developed in 2001. This level of funding requires that the Leadership Team donate significant amounts of time toward the implementation of the plan. Additional funding would enable a timely implementation of the plan that is not dependent on the ability of the leadership to free up time on a volunteer basis. The Board has undertaken to explore the possibility of a fundraising effort that would allow the Society to pay for more of the time for development called for by the strategic plan.