



ANNUAL REPORT

April 1, 2018 - March 31, 2019

Annual General Meeting held May 16, 2019
Vancouver Public Library, Level I, Alma Room
350 W Georgia St, 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
District of North Vancouver and City of Vancouver Municipality
Vancouver Foundation
BC Gaming Commission

Living Systems Business Office
209-1500 Marine Drive
North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 1T7
Phone: (604) 926-5496
Fax: 604 904-5141
info@livingsystems.ca
livingsystems.ca

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

President

Erica Guliker, MA, LMC
Director, Strategic Renewal & Capital Assets
Providence Health Care

Member at Large

Ariel Creighton
Retired

Secretary/Acting Treasurer

Don Wills, MA, PLog
Associate Project Director, Redevelopment
Providence Health Care

Member at Large

Dan DeBeyer, Bsc, MBC
Strategic Advisor, IMIT, First Nations
Health Authority

Member at Large

CLINICAL COUNSELLORS

Randy Frost M.Div RCC

Lois Walker M.Div RCC

Mary Frost MS RCC

Margaret Anne Speak MA CCC

Leila Howard, MA, RCC

Katherine White, MSc, RMFT, RCC

Devana Weiss, MA, RCC

ASSOCIATE CLINICAL COUNSELLORS

Catriona Remocker, MPH, RCC

Bonnie Hall, MA, RCC

RESIDENTS & INTERNS

David Galloway, Diploma, FEA

Christina Lin, M.C.S

Jude Barnes, B.Sc, J.D.

Mehrnoush Poursaket

Maybo Lui, MFS

Lori-Anne Boutin-Crawford, M.Div

Pamela Richard, MSW, RSW

Bruce Hiebert, MTS, M.Div, Ph.D

Nicole Bae, MA

Ivy Leung, MSSc, EMBA, MSc

Zubehr Habib, CLC

Sarah Ruggier, MA, RCC

Anne Little, Ph.D

Pegah Behbahani, Master's Student

Business & Finance Report

This past fiscal year we had a net gain of approximately \$5,000. All our programs were slightly ahead of budget with a small deficit in our Research Program. We were fortunate to receive grants from the BC Gaming Commission, District of North Vancouver and City of North Vancouver.

Our Vancouver Foundation investment also contributed funds to our financial position. We appreciated receiving a stock donation from Maria and Dave Galloway worth approximately \$5,000 which helps us diversify our financial portfolio. As well, we received individual donations from others who wanted to support the services we offer.

The theme this fiscal year was initiating or enhancing new projects. For the first time we offered a “Series of Clinical Presentations” to the public. These presentations have attracted therapists and other health professionals. We launched an "Assessment Research Project", thanks to 13 volunteers, with the goal of providing insight and feedback to further develop the Assessment model designed by Dr. Daniel Papero.

For a second time, we offered, “Building Better Relationships”, a course offered by Bonnie Hall. This course continues to have solid interest and excellent feedback.

We applied for over 30 new grants this fiscal year using a new grant database we purchased in the fall of 2018. Although no additional funds were awarded, it was an important project to evaluate where we can put our grant focus next fiscal year.

Our Clinical training program had a sufficient number of students to exceed the budget in this program. The overall quality of students is strong.

Our counselling referrals have increased by 25% since last year. We are receiving an average of about 67 referral inquiries a month (either by phone or e-mail). Most offices continue to have a two week to a month wait-list for referrals for lower income individuals or couples. We are doing our best to address this challenge but funds are limited. We launched our top 9 conferences via live stream on our website thanks to Dave Galloway’s help. Our website continues to be the

number one source of referrals. There has been a 25% increase in the number of visitors to the website since May 2018. The session duration per user has also increased by 33% to 1 minute and 53 seconds on average.

Last but not least, the Leadership Team and the Board have begun the process of revising our strategic plan with the guidance and expertise of our Board Members, Dan DeBeyer and Don Wills.

We currently have approximately 38 Members of the Society. The volunteer program with Living Systems continues with a yearly estimate of 671 hours of total volunteer time which represents about \$34,000. Contracted Counsellors, Associate Counsellors and Residents contribute significant volunteer hours to sustain our services such as; providing intake services, consultation, instruction, participating on committees, developing our website, helping with research projects, assisting with live-video conference streaming and developing a new client database, just to name some of the ways in which people volunteer.

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

Thank you to Mark Smith, and the Board who all contribute leadership to this unique organization. Thank you to Randy Frost and Katie White who are part of the Leadership Team, to our Contracted Counsellors, Associate Counsellors, Residents and Interns who all have important roles in this organization and for all the volunteer hours that go unspoken.

Leila Howard, MA, RCC
Business and Finance Director

Clinical Director's Report

In fiscal year 2018-2019, our clinical team consists of seven contractor level clinicians, two associate clinical contractors, five residents and eight interns. This year saw the movement of Leila Howard, Devana Weiss and Katherine White into the Clinical Contractor role, as well as Bonnie Hall into an Associate Clinical contractor role. Our first-year interns began seeing clients in late February. Our clinical team currently operates out of 10 offices, allowing us to provide services throughout the Lower Mainland.

An important part of my role in Living Systems is to keep policies, procedures and forms up to date. Our policy and procedures manual is up to date and all new clinicians have been trained on this manual. I have continued to provide administrative supervision for our clinicians to address matters of ethics or procedural concerns as they may arise in clinical work, as well as the rare complaint from clients. I am happy to report that we have gone another year without a formal complaint or grievance.

The database is now ready to go live. Important thanks go out with Dave Galloway and his employer Traction, who granted us a space in their Traction for Good Program which provided a grant for support in developing the database. I updated our intake form to collect data for this initiative which can be used to apply for grants and better assist our clinicians in their work. The next phase will be to add this information to our database and bring it up to date. There may be a need in the future to address assistance with data entry.

The other large project that was undertaken this year was to open our clinical meetings to the public, these meetings are a mix of theory and clinical presentations from our counsellors or faculty. We have had two successful meetings, the first with Randy Frost and Bonnie Hall and the second with Lois Walker and have a third happening today with Katherine White and Catriona Remocker. I see these as a good platform to increase our presence in the community and to get other people exposed and interested in Bowen Theory.

Next year we will continue this program and supplement it with internal meetings.

I would like to thank Leila, Randy, Lois and the Board for their support throughout the year and all our clinicians for their hard work and dedication to Bowen Family Systems Theory. I would also like to specifically thank Dave Galloway for his dedication, creativity and innovative thinking on our media and database projects.

Respectfully,
Katherine White MSc RMFT RCC
Clinical Director

Training and Research Report

During the past year, nine interns have participated in the advanced group of the clinical internship training program in marriage and family therapy and pastoral counselling. They are 2nd year interns Na Young Bae, Pamela Richmond, and Bruce Hiebert; 3d year interns, Lori-Anne Boutin-Crawford and Catriona Remocker, 4th year intern Maybo Lui; 5th year intern Mehrnoush Poursaket; 10th year intern Christina Lin, and 13th year intern David Galloway. This year we are reading Michael Kerr's new book, Bowen Theory's Secrets: Revealing the Hidden Life of Families as well as numerous articles from the journal, Family Systems. Trainees also experimented with the use of Dan Papero's framework for family assessment. Final papers are presented by interns at Clinical Conferences in May and June.

This past year we have five interns in the first year training program. They are Zubehr Habib, Anne Little, Sarah Ruggier, Ivy Leung and Pegah Behbehani. They have received a thorough introduction to Bowen family systems theory 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 will present their papers at one of the Clinical Conferences in June.

Living Systems has enlisted a working group of 14 that includes contractors, as well as present and past trainees to experiment with the framework for family assessment recently developed by Dr. Daniel Papero. The working group is meeting four times to discuss their efforts to apply the framework to their own family or to clinical families. Each participant will write a paper for the final meeting on

June 1, 2019 describing their experience using the framework along with any recommendations they may have.

Randy Frost chaired the planning committee for a conference sponsored by the Bowen Center called "The Family and Child Development: A Systems Approach to Theory and Practice" in Washington DC April 13-14, 2018. He presented a paper at that conference entitled "Bowen Theory as a Resource to Help Answer Incisive Questions about Child Development." He also presented a paper entitled "The Predictability of the Family Emotional System at the Second International Conference on Bowen Theory held in Hong Kong May 17-19, 2018. He serves on a clergy steering committee of the Bowen Center that plans conferences and training for clergy through the Bowen Center. The most recent conference took place on January 17, 2019 in Arlington, Virginia and was entitled "Us Against Them: Ministry in an Age of Polarization". Ron Richardson was the keynote speaker.

Randy Frost has continued to represent pastoral counselling on the FACTS board. He is also serving on a committee to expand entry level competencies previously developed to include working with First Nations. Lobbying efforts of MLA's and the health ministry to establish a college for Counselling Therapists continue. 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 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 this past year by Christina Lin. Faculty at the Bowen Center take turns presenting on their own work throughout the year.

Randy Frost continues to participate 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. He also chairs the Network Seminar for the Advancement of Bowen theory which meets

twice a year at the Bowen Center. The seminar facilitates collaboration among vetted training programs throughout the world and the Bowen Center. The two international conferences on Bowen theory grew out of discussions among network seminar members at the biannual meetings. The third international conference is scheduled to take place in Sweden in 2020.

Lois Walker has returned from sabbatical and resumed her role teaching and supervising in the advanced training program and providing individual supervision for both first year and advanced trainees as well as group supervision of clinical contractors. Welcome back Lois!

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

President's Report

There's a quote from Woody Allen that Roberta Gilbert has in her book "Extraordinary Relationships." It's from the movie Annie Hall. Woody and Diane Keaton are on the plane and she says, "I know, let's face it, I don't think our relationship was working," and Woody answers, "A relationship, I think, is like a shark, you know? It has to constantly move forward or it dies. And I think what we got on our hands is a dead shark."

This year has been a year of moving forward in many ways for Living Systems which always bodies well for an organization. That's not to say there aren't years of simply maintaining the growth, which has its place, but growth years are interesting and can be exciting.

We have been on a journey of Strategic Planning this year which has had Randy, Leila and Katie looking at their roles in the organization and the structure of the organization. Board Members Dan Debeyer and Don Wills have brought their expertise with Strategic Planning from the business sector which has meant not only that we have benefitted from their oversight of the process, but they bring a vast amount of experience from outside of Living Systems as a different lens through which we can look at our operation. All this obviously toward setting a course for the next several years, optimizing our efforts and shaping an organization that meets the needs of those within it, but also the community at large.

Those efforts at the Strategic Planning level have been coupled with an increased intake, and a healthy training program. In addition, we've added to our website our top 9 conferences by streaming or downloading which are then viewed through Vimeo. This allows us to provide easy access to those interested in Bowen Theory as well as creates an additional revenue source for the organization.

This year has also seen us engage in some new clinical initiatives. Several of us have been meeting since December to think through and learn to operationalize Dan Papero's Family Assessment framework and pilot its use with clients. In addition, again reflecting forward movement, at last year's AGM I mentioned the Second International Conference in Bowen Theory that took place in Hong Kong. Jenny Brown from Australia had posted photos that had Randy

in them and she had mentioned Ron Richardson's participation. When she posted information on Facebook about her new Parent Hope Project Katie and I both expressed interest in being kept in the loop about what she was learning through her research. This led to a series of e-mail and an invitation for Living Systems to participate in piloting the project in Canada. So, a few of us, Katie, Randy and myself, were recently trained by Jenny Brown and look forward to piloting her Parent Hope Project through our practices here in the Lower Mainland.

So, I see these many things as indications of movement forward for our organization... I'd like to thank Randy, Leila and Katie and their leadership efforts at the clinical and management level, as well as the Board for their continued devotion to the ongoing mission of Living Systems. I'd like to thank Dave Galloway and his time and effort to get the conferences online and available for purchase. I'd also like to thank him for energy toward the database and the generous donation from his workplace, Traction on Demand, which went a long way.

Once again, I'd like to thank our therapists and trainees who are the lifeblood of our agency. You're the face of the organization in many ways since you are who the community at large sees when they come through the doors. Many of you also volunteer your time which is much appreciated. Of course, we do have many who volunteer, as Leila has mentioned, and we rely on their time and efforts toward supporting our mission. Thank you all...

I'd also like to thank Peet Nienaber for his providing the accounting for our organization. And I acknowledge he's generous with his time toward our needs. And last, but not least, thank you to the Gaming Commission for their recent generous grant, the District of North Vancouver, City of North Vancouver. And, as always, thanks to the Galloway's for their ongoing generous support and the support of other individual donors.

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.