



#202(B) – 6715-76 Ave / Edmonton, Alberta / T6B 0A9 / 902-899-7917

The Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations is a national body established to serve as a coordinating and networking organization for provincial and territorial Child and Youth Care professional associations. Part of our mandate is to advocate for children and youth, and to act as an agent for the promotion of professional child and youth care [CYC].

Our thoughts are with the youth, their families, the CYC workers, and their families following the incident at the Behavioural Health Foundation on May 30, 2016. As stated on our Facebook page (May 30, 2016) CYC Practitioners know that violence is a potential fact of our work. We work with individuals who have been hurt, and struggle to engage in effective relationships with individuals, communities, and systems. The emotional responses of the folks we work with is often incongruent with what might be expected from typical children and adolescents confronted with caring and challenge. We know that this atypical response may be aggressive, flight or fight behaviour, however that cannot ever make us complacent about being confronted with the reality of that fight response or lacking in compassionate response to both the youngsters and CYC practitioners involved.

It is for these reasons that CYC professionals need to be well trained, well supervised, and the youth to practitioner ratio in any given program needs to ensure opportunity for effective therapeutic intervention versus simple behaviour management. The Child and Youth Care Workers' Association of Manitoba [CYCWAM] has been engaged for many years in advocating for quality CYC practice in order that the young people in Manitoba are well supported in their growing up.

Most provincial governments invest well in early childhood education; or at the very least recognize the importance of this intervention in the growth of the citizens. Most provincial governments recognize that education of young people in public school must be funded and in-serviced. Both of these areas of working with children and youth require minimum education, and regulated professional status yet the support and intervention with young people who are struggling in school, in family, and in community is often implemented by individuals without specific and specialized education or training and is under resourced on many levels in most provinces.

What is the message that the provincial and federal governments wish to deliver by positioning in this way?

The government of Ontario recently commissioned a report (Because Young People Matter) and the outcome of that report can be used as a platform for change well outside of Ontario – in an interview related to this report one of the authors, Kiaras Gharabaghi, director of Ryerson University's CYC program expressed worry that "...people are ultimately discarded as objects in the system" (CBC News Online May 2016 11pm ET).

Whether youngsters are wards of the provincial ministry or in voluntary programs (like the BHF program) is not relevant to the discussion. As a country who has fully signed onto the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, provincial and federal governments have a responsibility to recognize that all children (up to age 18) "...need special safeguards and care..." (Preamble UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) and it is the responsibility of the government to ensure the conditions exist for them to receive this. Decision makers in the Ministries involved in funding, legislating, and regulating programs that support children and young people need to recognize, accept, and actualize this responsibility.

The Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations positions to support the Child and Youth Care Workers' Association of Manitoba in its advocacy of essential services for children, youth, and families and in its position that Child and Youth Care Practitioners should be educated specific to the demands of the job.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Shaw". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelly Shaw MA CYS CYC-P  
President Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations