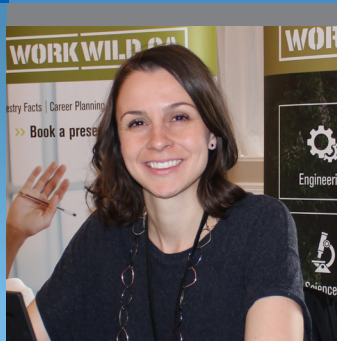




# CAREER MOMENTUM

June 2022



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**CDAA**  
*Current. Connected. Committed.*



## Career Momentum Member Focus Edition

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*By Paula Wischoff Yerama, CCDP  
Executive Director,  
Career Development Association of Alberta*

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**W**elcome Summer! And welcome to our Member Focus edition of Career Momentum for June, 2022. This issue we spotlight Director-at-Large Sharmin Surani. Find out more about Sharmin and her path to the career development profession in our interview below.

As part of our 25th anniversary recognition, it's been fun to look back on past issues of Career Momentum from our archives. Are you certified? It all began with a committee and a pilot program. See our Look Back section below.

We hope you're enjoying the new Career Momentum, launched in 2021, with its wider distribution and monthly publication schedule. Previously, Career Momentum was published quarterly, and issued to members only. If you are one of our many subscribers, we encourage you to consider joining as a member. and to explore [all the benefits](#) of membership.

### **Career Development: A Look Back**

So much has happened in 25 years! We've not only grown our membership and services, but marked some big milestones for our profession along the way. This article from the Career Momentum archives illustrates the dedicated efforts of our members in bringing mainstream recognition to the field of career development.

Enjoy [Certification Committee Update](#), published in Career Momentum, September 2004..

## Certification Committee Update - September, 2004

After a summer break, the certification process pilot is now in its final stages and will involve YOU!

Volunteers from across the province, from various aspects of career work, have completed their process to apply for certification and to evaluate the process. The evaluators, registrar and executive have now reviewed the results and will be making recommendations to you for your consideration in an upcoming mail-out.

### WATCH FOR OUR MAILOUT

**It is important for you to read carefully the last momentum update in June 2004 on the certification process and to follow through on the mail-out so you can have input and consultation. A detailed explanation will be provided.**

We are very excited to have this in motion and look forward to the results. Details were worked out and we continue to be grateful to have Laurie McCreary-Burke as Registrar to assist us in completing this process.

We are very grateful to the volunteers, evaluators and financial supporters for their major contribution to this project and its progress! We have chosen to keep them anonymous at this point.

We are also completing the sub-process and documentation to set up the certification process. This includes finalizing the Appeals process as well as Continuing Education Credits needed to implement a certification/ registration process.

The pilot volunteers will soon be officially applying for certification and receiving their designation. This is a great milestone in our work!

After completion of the pilot, it will be finalized and recommendations for its formal implementation will be made to the CDAA executive committee. We are excited that we are finalizing the pilot and reaching implementation. We believe that we will have a solid certification process to provide to YOU! It continues to be our hope to implement a formal certification registry in 2004 - 2005.

### PLEASE STAY TUNED

**For continuing progress on this important project of the Association and please respond to the upcoming mail-out.**

Thank you for your support and please feel free to contact the committee with your input or questions.

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**"The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."**

**-- Alvin Toffler**



## Ethics: Do we do what we say we will do?

by Gisela Theurer and Roberta Neault

Jennifer works in an agency that provides employment services to individuals with disabilities<sup>1</sup>. One of her colleagues, Margaret, has been struggling with her workload and the stress of the job, and is occasionally very abrupt and impatient with clients. Jennifer observes this behaviour, and tries to talk to Margaret, who brushes her off. Management of the agency appears tolerant of Margaret's behaviour, as she is a long-term employee and her productivity appears satisfactory.

Jennifer is affiliated with a professional association, and is aware of the responsibility to take action when inappropriate behaviour is observed. However, she is not aware of anyone, ever, reporting a colleague's unprofessional behaviour. She feels distressed and is unclear about her employer's support for any action she might take.

The word 'ethics' is constantly in the news. We once read the acronym "DWWSWWD", which stands for "Do What We Say We Will Do". However, career practitioners realize that our work has become more complex, so it appears to be fitting to change this statement to a question: "Do We Do What We Say We Will Do?" Jennifer knows what she 'should' do, but does not feel she is able to act on what she agrees is part of her professional obligation. Ethical behaviour used to be defined through common sense and empathy – now it appears that the meaning of ethics has become much grayer. Professionals are concerned about survival in the changing political climate: Can we be ethical in today's bottom line environment? How do we maintain our ethical standards

when someone else has the decision-making power? How can Jennifer report a colleague, when her agency has not placed a strong emphasis on ethics, not taught staff a decision making process when presented with an ethical dilemma?

Ethical fitness is the capacity to recognize the nature of a challenge, and respond with a robust understanding of the dilemma, especially when several options have ethical foundations<sup>2</sup>.

We have to be mentally engaged and committed through feelings as well as through the intellect. It is vital that we as career practitioners have an understanding of the basis of ethics: our common values. With an understanding of our commonalities, raised awareness and mindfulness, we are better prepared to articulate and think through the increasing complexities in our work.

Ethical decisions are formed by inner impulses (personal values), judgments, and knowledge about professional obligations. There are four paradigms that are relevant for this discussion: individual versus community, justice versus mercy, short-term versus long-term, and truth versus loyalty. For example, how do you make a choice when there is a conflict between the needs of an individual and a community? If you have a disruptive client in a group, how do you choose who takes priority: the individual (who has multiple barriers and without your support may be in a worsening situation) or the group (whose learning is diminished by the individual's actions)? In Jennifer's case, she is aware that both her choices (reporting or not reporting Margaret to her professional association) may have some negative consequences.

Many career practitioners are members of professional associations or organizations that provide a code of ethics (e.g., Canadian Counselling Association<sup>3</sup>, NETWERCC<sup>4</sup>, and the Canadian Association of Rehabilitation Professionals<sup>5</sup>). As a result of the National Standards and Guidelines for Career Development, Canadian career practitioners also have a specific code of ethics to guide their work<sup>6</sup>. An important feature of this code is the accompanying Ethical Decision Making Model, which provides a five-step process for making ethical decisions within our field:

- Recognize that an ethical dilemma exists.
- Identify the relevant issues, all of the parties involved, and corresponding pertinent ethical principles from the Code of Ethics.
- Examine the risks and benefits of each alternative action.
- Choose a solution, take action and evaluate the results.
- Learn from the situation.

Ethical fitness, like physical fitness, takes a commitment to continuous practice. Ethical dilemmas benefit from discussions with peers, as we grapple with diverse perspectives and conflicting needs. Courses, seminars, workshops and online discussion forums provide rich opportunities for career practitioners to share dilemmas and explore potential solutions. For Jennifer to take positive action when a dilemma arises, she and her colleagues need to be encouraged to participate in regular discussions about the myriad ethical dilemmas that arise in our day-to-day work. John Gardner states that a 'good' community needs to find a productive balance between individuality and group obligation<sup>7</sup>.

*Continued on p. 11*

Our ethics shape how we participate in our work and our community. Discussions and reflections on these questions are, therefore, exciting, challenging and truly essential to our profession.

<sup>1</sup>The names and incident are fictitious and a combination of several situations presented to the first author.

<sup>2</sup>Some information in this article is from: Kidder, R.M. (2003). *How Good People Make Tough Choices*. New York: HarperCollins.

<sup>3</sup>[www.ccacc.ca/Ethics.htm](http://www.ccacc.ca/Ethics.htm)

<sup>4</sup>[www.netwercc.com/index.html](http://www.netwercc.com/index.html) (go to About Us, scroll down to Code of Ethics)

<sup>5</sup>[www.carpnational.org/](http://www.carpnational.org/)

<sup>6</sup>[www.career-dev-guidelines.org](http://www.career-dev-guidelines.org) Scroll down to Standards and Guidelines. Select Code of Ethics.

<sup>7</sup>John Gardner, p. 130, in: Kidder, R.M. (2003). *How Good People Make Tough Choices*. New York: HarperCollins.

*Gisela Theurer, M.A., C.C.R.C., has a Master's degree in Counselling Psychology, is a graduate of The Coaches Training Institute, and has 25 years of experience in community services and entrepreneurial development. She currently operates a coaching and consulting business. For further information, check her website: [www.gmt-consultants.com](http://www.gmt-consultants.com)*

*Roberta Neault, PhD, CCC, RRP has a PhD in Educational Psychology and a Master's in Counselling. She teaches Professional Ethics in the Campus Alberta Master's in Applied Psychology program and co-developed/co-instructs the fully online Ethics for Career Practitioners course with Gisela in the Career Management Professional program. Contact [info@lifestrategies.ca](mailto:info@lifestrategies.ca) or visit [www.lifestrategies.ca](http://www.lifestrategies.ca), for more information.*

## Working the Web

### Getting Back to Work and School

Mount Royal College now has Career Services On Line; this site includes many links to other sites which makes it a very useful and user friendly reference and resource for adults and students.

[www.mtroyal.ca/careerservices/students/onlineresource.shtml#planning](http://www.mtroyal.ca/careerservices/students/onlineresource.shtml#planning)

I found this site in the Calgary Sun: [www.fabjob.com](http://www.fabjob.com). It has excellent job descriptions and one can purchase detailed information about how to become a \_\_\_\_\_ or develop a career in a specific field of work. It includes both Canadian and U.S. sites and links

The MSN Careers site includes some good articles. Naturally, it is American, however, that is okay. I liked the one about networking [www.careers.msn.com](http://www.careers.msn.com).

I also subscribe to a newsletter that includes articles and links for adults and students of all ages. It is an American site, but a good one. The two links that are most useful for our application are: [www.about.com/careers](http://www.about.com/careers) [www.about.com/education](http://www.about.com/education)

There is a back-to-school feature at this time on the main link: [www.backtoschool.about.com](http://www.backtoschool.about.com).

For the high school students or anyone planning to return to post secondary, the following site may be helpful. Out of several Canadian sites available, I chose this one because it is in Alberta. [www.uleth.ca/reg-ces/majors](http://www.uleth.ca/reg-ces/majors)

I discovered a new site that has potential called All Info about Canadian Jobs:

[www.canadianjobs.allinfo-about.com](http://www.canadianjobs.allinfo-about.com).

There are links and articles for all client groups including youth, post secondary students, aboriginal specific and adults. Not every link is Canadian, however, that should not be an issue.

Looking for a part-time job? Try [www.calgaryparttime.com](http://www.calgaryparttime.com). It includes actual job listings plus links to portfolio building and other relevant topics. An Edmonton and Winnipeg equivalent are also available and others are in development.

I am including one site that provides access to a series of quizzes for self assessment. I have used them with a variety of students and adults in one to one and group settings. [www.jobsetc.ca/toolbox/quizzes/quizzes\\_home.do?lang=e](http://www.jobsetc.ca/toolbox/quizzes/quizzes_home.do?lang=e)

Interested in updating or adding to your Career Practitioner Education? I found this on-line course advertised in Contact Point: [www.conestogac.on.ca/career](http://www.conestogac.on.ca/career). I have not compared it to what is available at the University of Calgary or Concordia College in Edmonton, but the outline looks interesting.

*Vicky Driver, Career Practitioner  
Calgary Board of Education*





## CDAA Board Member Profile: Sharmin Surani, CED, BBA, MBA Director-at-Large

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*By Paula Wischoff-Yerama*

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Sharmin is a very active CDAA member, who recently joined our Board of Directors as Director-at-Large. We wanted to get to know more about Sharmin and what drew her to the career development profession. Thank you for sharing your story with us, Sharmin!

*Tell us about your entry into and progression in the career development profession.*

I have always enjoyed helping my younger brother through his high school course selection to University and professional designation. I enjoyed doing that a lot but did not know if this profession existed then. In late 2014 when the economy crashed, I lost my job. I started naturally following some of the career advising steps for myself to find my right employment and a steady career. It seemed I was doing things right when someone told me to help them as well then another and so I started giving presentations at a few places. This is when I realized I enjoy this and it should be my profession. I then went on to find a job in this field and alongside started my certification process.

*As a relatively new CDAA member and board member can you share your motivation for getting involved and how it has enhanced your work as a career development practitioner?*

I think this association is such an important aspect of professional lives today. With the drastic changes in the economy, future of work and digitization impact on careers, CDAA members have such an important role to play in supporting people to continuously develop their careers and grow. As a board member, it gives me the opportunity to empower our members to continue the wonderful work we do. It helps me contribute to the larger impact we make as community. The organization has been extremely supportive in my career journey and I am really enjoying giving back.

*What might you say to someone to encourage them to get involved with their professional association?*

The opportunity to learn to think big. If one is interested in career growth, getting involved in. The association helps to see situations and think from a larger picture. It helps with growing your network and connect with some incredibly versatile skilled individuals one can learn from. Together we make a difference.



*The past year has been full of challenges and opportunities. What have been the most significant challenges and opportunities for you and your clients this past year?*

For my clients to search for a new employment completely virtual has been tough. However, at the same time the opportunity to evolve their knowledge and grow their career has been very positive. Networking was fully virtual which was a challenge as it did not give that personal touch to a meeting. However, it brought the aspect of work from home option which many women welcomed. In some cases was study from home.

*How does your career development experience impact other areas of your life?*

Every time I meet a friend or a cousin, I happen to automatically wear my Career Advisor hat. I have had the opportunity to volunteer in my community more often, I was able to support my friend in her career and several other random individuals I met through social media. I certainly have started asking lots more questions now. Each time, I help my friends and family, it is such a fulfilling experience, I know I will treasure for lifetime.

*Tell us something interesting about you (personal or professional), your goals / dreams for the future (personal or professional), your vision for career development in Alberta, etc.*

I was born in India and brought up in Tanzania. While I was in University, our guidance counselor told me that I will do best in a profession where I will help people. At the time, I was told that is called volunteering not a profession. Therefore the journey was long but it is a fruitful destination. I will always be thankful for the opportunity this profession gave me to implement the first of a kind, Women in Technology program in Calgary. I would love to continue to solve community challenges to the best of my ability while giving back to support career success of individuals. My vision for career development in Alberta is that it continues to grow and support fellow Albertans. Like I said, more than ever, today, the Albertans and economy need career development professionals to help people find their passion.