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Press Release – For Immediate Distribution

February is Psychology Month – What Is a Psychologist?

February is Psychology Month in Canada. An initiative sponsored by the Canadian Psychological Association that began in 2005, the goal of Psychology Month is to generate grassroots activities that will raise Canadians' awareness of the role psychology plays in their lives and in their communities. Psychology Month encourages all members of the psychology profession to connect with their communities and show them the value and benefits of their work.

2021 has been a year of unprecedented stress and mental health challenges, resulting in many more people identifying their struggles, and reaching out for assistance, but often not sure where to turn. For 2021 APNL is hoping to clarify What Is a Psychologist and what role we can play within the mental health system.

- Psychologists are trained to understand how people think, feel, and behave. Psychologists can help people to understand, explain and change their feelings, thinking, and behaviour
- There are currently 222 Registered Psychologists working in the NL. There are approximately 18,000 Psychologists in Canada
- It takes approximately a decade to train a Psychologist – 4 years honours degree, 2 years Masters and/or 4-6+ years Doctorate, 1 year Residency, 1-2 years supervised practice, two-part licencing exam
- MUN created the first English-language Doctorate of Clinical Psychology (PsyD) in the country.
- Psychologists provide supervision to graduate students, doctoral residents and provisionally registered Psychologists as well as supervision of student research.
- The title “Psychologist” is protected and can only be used in NL by someone registered with the Newfoundland and Labrador Psychology Board (NLPB). All Registered Psychologists in NL must be registered by the NLPB.
- Psychologists work in hospitals, community mental health and addictions centres, schools, universities, the corrections system, community services and in private practice
- Psychologists are the only licensed, regulated professionals trained in the assessment and diagnosis of Learning Disorders. Psychologists, Psychiatrists and Physicians are all trained

in differential diagnosis and making mental health diagnoses using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-V)

- Psychologists are trained in research and statistics, and taught to critically analyze research studies and results. Many Psychologists are actively involved in research.
- Psychologists are extensively trained in psychometric assessment tools, interpretation and diagnosis for concerns such as neurodevelopmental disorders (e.g., Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD), Intellectual Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, Concussions/Brain Injuries, Personality Disorders, Dementia, and neurocognitive impairments as a results of stroke, epilepsy etc.
- Psychologists may use a variety of standardized questionnaires to measure symptoms such as anxiety, depression, OCD, attention/concentration, adaptive functioning, executive functioning, behavioural issues, disordered eating, and other mood and personality factors. A standardized questionnaire has been designed and researched by a test company, which has established norms that are used to understand individual results.
- Psychologists provide health-related interventions for issues such as eating disorders, sleep concerns, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and other long-term chronic health conditions.
- Educational psychologists travel to schools throughout the province and work directly with students in schools, as well as their families, school staff, and other professionals. Educational Psychologists' duties might be summarized as ABCD:
Assessment and diagnosis
Behavioural consultation and support
Counselling and Therapy (including crisis response supports)
eDucation team (network with school professionals and other mental health & medical service providers to develop a support plan for students)
- Psychologists use trauma-informed practice in their work, and many specialize in the assessment and treatment of trauma
- Psychologists provide evidence-based interventions (treatments that have research evidence to support their effectiveness) for a variety of conditions including anxiety, depression, OCD etc.
- Psychologists work within multidisciplinary teams. In provinces such as Ontario they are included in primary integrated health care teams alongside physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners and other allied health professionals

- Information shared with a Psychologist is confidential with a few legal exceptions (e.g. immediate concerns re suicide/homicide, risk to a minor)
- Most Psychological services do not require a physician referral. Individuals can self-refer for services via Mental Health Central Intake (within Eastern Health 777-2200 for Child, 752-8888 for Adult). Private Psychologists do not require a referral, although some private insurance plans may request one.
- The cost to see a Psychologist in private practice may be covered by extended health insurance plans, and/or workplace Employee and Family Assistance Plans. There is no cost to see a Psychologist within the health care system.

Psychologists can be accessed through your local health care centre, via workplace Employee Assistance programs, and privately (see www.apnl.ca – click on Find a Psychologist for more details.).

Media interviews with a Psychologist on this (or other topics), can be arranged by contacting Dr. Janine Hubbard at 682-0235 or janine@janinehubbard.com