

# CSSEA NEWS

COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION

A member newsletter  
published six times a year

August 2010  
Volume 17, Issue 03

## A Different Kind of Intelligence

Doris Sun, Communications Coordinator

It's often called the 'other kind of smart.' Emotional intelligence (EI), or the ability to recognize one's behaviours and manage them according to a situation, is increasingly being considered a significant criteria when evaluating an employee's fit in the workplace. This signals a departure from a traditional focus on Intelligence Quotient, or IQ, in that it predicts an employee's success based on factors like emotion, thought, empathy and mood management. And before you dismiss this as new-age hocus pocus, consider these points:

**EI Can Determine Performance:** Mike Poskey, an HR executive, argues in his article, "The Importance of Emotional Intelligence," that it's an employee with the ability to communicate with others effectively, manage change well, solve problems and use humor that will succeed in the workplace. "This 'clarity' in thinking and 'composure' in stressful and chaotic situations is what separates top performers from weak performers," he says. Along the same logic, this is why some individuals with high aptitudes but low EI often fail to adapt to a workplace or thrive in an organization's changing circumstances.

**EI Can Build Workplace Morale:** Many of us have worked alongside someone who constantly vents, complains and stresses when asked to complete everyday tasks. While you may be sympathetic and supportive at first, you soon become drained and avoid them altogether. In fact, you soon realize you are not the only one doing this! Situations in which low-EI employees negatively affect a workplace may cause an overall rift in the functioning of the organization and is therefore, an important area to screen when hiring new staff. At the same time, it's important for employers to recognize employees with low EI and



deal with them in a supportive manner. Newspaper columnist, Donna Nebenzahl, writes in "Exhibiting 'other kind of smart'" that there are often internal personal issues at play when someone shows low EI. In one situation, an aggressive employee realized his poor workplace attitude actually stemmed from depression and a long-standing anger he was harbouring against his father, who constantly belittled him. The man, with the support of his workplace, sought counselling, took up a hobby he was passionate in and in turn, improved his emotional conduct.

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CSSEA

# From the CEO

Just when most of us were questioning whether summer would ever grace us with its presence, mother nature granted us some wonderfully warm weather. With rising temperatures finally hitting much of the province and with children out of school, it's truly beginning to feel like summer.

We at CSSEA have also wound down slightly in the last few weeks. Perhaps most indicative of that was CSSEA's Bargaining Committee and the Community Social Services Bargaining Association agreeing to reconvene their bargaining efforts in September. Talks over the last two months have been steady, with both sides acknowledging a greater understanding of the

other's positions. We look forward to returning to the table in the fall refreshed and renewed.

**SUMMERTIME  
STILL BUSY AT  
CSSEA**  
- Lorne Reider

Despite a wind down in some areas, there have been plenty of initiatives keeping us busy. AGM preparation, for instance, is well underway, with several dozen members already

registering. The event always provides timely and valuable HRLR courses and we encourage you to sign up.

Having recently sent out the Turnover Survey, which will now be conducted annually, we are hard at work compiling results and producing the report. It is always eye-opening to see turnover trends in our sector and I look forward to sharing the results with you soon. I also look forward to re-connecting with you in the fall. ■



A \$500,000 award by a labour relations arbitrator against the Greater Toronto Airport Authority (GTAA), for a \$50,000-a-year employee, has stunned employers.

The arbitrator, Owen Shime, justified this massive award by citing the breach of an invented "mental security" provision supposedly implied in every collective agreement.

"In my view, one of the main purposes of a collective agreement is to provide employees with 'psychological benefit' and 'mental security' in being gainfully employed," he said, adding that "the object of the collective agreement to both secure a psychological benefit and also mental security was within the reasonable contemplation of the parties and mental distress damages arising from the breach are recoverable."

Like many employers, the GTAA faced a costly absenteeism problem, which it was trying to limit through an attendance-monitoring program. The griever, a fleet coordinator, had taken a four-week leave after

surgery. Because of her relationship with another employee under scrutiny for false sick leave, she was placed under observation. Her partner was fired for sick leave fraud.

**\$500,000 'mental  
security' award a  
shocker**  
by Howard Levitt  
Adapted from The National Post

After obtaining videotape evidence of the griever, while on leave, establishing mobility inconsistent with her claim of being unable to work, she was asked if she could return to work in an accommodated role.

When she returned, instead of discussing accommodation, the GTAA asked her to report with her union representative to a meeting two days later, purportedly

to discuss what work she could perform. During that meeting, the GTAA asked questions regarding her physical limitations and addressed inconsistencies based on its videotaped evidence. She was suspended and subsequently terminated for being absent from work dishonestly. The arbitrator found that the GTAA ignored supporting evidence and failed to consult medical experts. He took into account the GTAA's knowledge she had suffered post-traumatic stress caused by physical and sexual abuse from her then husband that could be retriggered by being terminated and labelled as dishonest. The griever was subsequently re-employed, at \$20,000 a year. The arbitrator awarded her \$400,000 for loss of past and future income, a sum equivalent to eight years of her salary and benefits, from the date of termination to the date of what would have been early retirement. In addition, there were punitive and mental distress damages of \$50,000 each.

The GTAA is seeking judicial review. ■

# New Series: You Asked, We Listened

During the recent town hall meetings, some members expressed their desire for clarification about the roles played by key stakeholders. To address these inquiries, we launched, in our last issue, a special series to look at the “who, what, why and how” of those stakeholder organizations. The series continues with a look at CSSEA’s funders and how the funding process works.

## Who funds the sector?

Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development

Ministry of Attorney General

BC Housing Commission

Ministry of Children and Family Development

Community Living BC

Ministry of Education

Ministry of Health Services (including regional authorities)

Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport

Ministry of Housing and Social Development

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

## Key roles of funders?

- 1) Work with PSEC to develop the collective bargaining mandate
- 2) Establish funding policy
- 3) Develop appropriate service delivery models
- 4) Manage service contracts

## CSSEA’s relationship with funders

Under CSSEA’s guiding principles it is accountable to balance the interests of member agencies and government.

CSSEA works to ensure that government understands the human resource and labour relations implications of their decisions but is precluded from advocating on behalf of member agencies.

## How does CSSEA support your funders?

CSSEA gives funders an objective picture of trends in the social services sector through regular data collection

CSSEA provides advice on the HRLR impact of proposed government policies

# In Profile: Julie Renton, program coordinator at Westcoast Family Resources

Society gives us an intimate look into the day-to-day life of its agency

## Agency at a glance

**Who:** Westcoast Family Resources Society

**What:** An accredited family service agency offering intensive parenting and counselling programs. The agency employs over 60 staff

**When:** In operation since 1984

**Where:** 4 programs throughout the Lower Mainland: Maple Ridge, Tri-Cities, North Shore and Vancouver

**Why:** Improving the lives of families in BC

**How:** Working with families in their homes or in the community; providing clinical counselling with adults or play therapy with children; running education and support groups; and supervising visits between parents and their children to ensure safety

## Describe the individuals who use your agency's services.

We work with families who are struggling with issues such as: poverty, mental health, addiction or not having strong family or social networks on which to rely. The majority of our referrals are from the Ministry of Children and Family Development. We accept self-referrals at our North Shore Program.

## What makes your work worthwhile?

When we see families improve their parenting and communication skills through counselling and education, it makes our job worthwhile. We help families in need, we support children to enhance their connections/relationships with their caregivers/

parents, making a lasting difference in the lives of families.

## What is the hardest part of your job?

The hardest part is finding programs that can meet family needs immediately. Another challenge is managing tight budgets in this time of cutbacks.

## What kinds of activities/events do you put on for those who use your services?

We host a Christmas Party for families at each program throughout our agency. This is a huge success



Staff at the Annual Staff Appreciation Breakfast.

as families arrive with grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles. We have Santa who gives presents; we have appetizers and refreshments. Through the generosity of our donors families receive tickets to different sporting events and festivals.

## How do you build cohesiveness among employees in your organization?

We do a number of different things both as an agency and in individual programs. We have our yearly staff appreciation breakfast. This is a chance for the management team to spoil the staff by making and serving breakfast. Our managers turned chefs make bacon, pancakes and eggs for everyone to enjoy. We also hold a staff barbecue in the summer.

We honour those who have worked in our agency for 5, 10, 15 and 20 years at our AGM. We have team building days and agency training days. We also distribute an annual Staff Satisfaction survey to check the pulse of our agency.

## How do you reward employees for their hard work?

We have something we call Catching the Best. This is an opportunity for our staff to anonymously choose a



Staff members and a Program Director meet for training and to review Policy and Procedures.

colleague who they believe has gone above and beyond the call of duty. We acknowledge the Catching the Best employee in our monthly staff bulletin.

## What's your suggestion for a great summer read for those working in our sector and why?

Gabor Mate's *In the Realm of the Hungry Ghosts* is recommended because it connects us to our own fragile nature and gives us hope despite brain damage and exposure to drugs/poverty. Another book is *Still Alice* by Lisa Genova. This is a beautifully written and touching story of a woman who develops early onset Alzheimer's. It is written from the perspective of the woman who has the disease and how it impacts her family. ■

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**EI can be learned:** If you went on the Internet and typed in “Emotional Intelligence training,” you would come up with approximately 6 million page hits. A myriad of institutions offers courses that will purportedly increase your EI. What that training boils down to is shifting the way you think and encouraging you to engage the emotional parts of the brain. Increasing EI involves being aware of what you see, hear and feel and is based on non-verbal learning and real-life practice. This means that, when a stressful situation occurs at work that causes strong emotions to flood your psyche, you must remind your brain to recognize those feelings and hone them in. It is a long-term commitment and one that will be strengthened with awareness and connection to your feelings. ■

*To learn more about Emotional Intelligence, sign up for our session on it at this year's AGM and Fall Conference.*

## Sectoral Case Updates

**Class 4 Driver's License – Issue:** Interpretation of Article 28.12, specifically, which costs an employer is obligated to pay. **Status:** A number of different scenarios have been grieved and CSSEA is consolidating these grievances with a view of placing them before a single arbitrator for adjudication.

**Use of sick leave by part-time employees – Issue:** Use of sick leave credits by part time employees on days outside their regularly scheduled shifts. **Status:** Arbitrator Vince Ready has been appointed as mediator/ arbitrator on this file and the parties are awaiting an early cancellation date from his calendar.

**Joint Job Evaluation Program (JJEP) – Issue:** Re-interpretation of the documents governing the JJEP to include CSSEA's legislated role. **Status:** The matter was reviewed and it was decided Arbitrator Steeves will handle the case. CSSEA has contacted Arbitrator Steeves for new dates.

**Medical Form – Issue:** Whether employees who are absent from work should fill out the “Confidential Medical Authorization & Occupational Fitness Assessment Form.” **Status:** This issue is before Arbitrator Wayne Moore and the parties have agreed to work to develop a new form for general use, without prejudice to their respective legal positions.

**Variance of Certification and Declaration re: Bargaining Agency – Issue:** The HEU has attempted to file an application with the Labour Relations Board to cancel the BCGEU's certification. **Status:** CSSEA and the BCGEU have filed opposing responses and the HEU will have an opportunity to file a final response in August.

**BCGEU and UFCW Applications – Issue:** The decision of Internal Umpire Irene Holden, who concluded the BCGEU had violated the CSSBA's Articles of Association. **Status:** CSSEA filed a lengthy application for standing in these disputes on a number of bases. In June 2010, the Labour Relations Board rejected the BCGEU and UFCW's applications and upheld the Holden decision. The Labour Relations Board also rejected CSSEA's application for standing. CSSEA has filed an application for Reconsideration of the Board's own decision under section 141. The BCGEU has also applied for Reconsideration.

**CSSEA's Application to Amend Articles (formerly called CSSEA's Unfair Labour Practice Complaint) – Issue:** CSSEA has filed an application with the Labour Relations Board asking the Board to take immediate steps to amend the CSSBA's Articles of Association due to the rampant dysfunction demonstrated since November 2009 and its continuation at the bargaining table. **Status:** CSSEA is awaiting further information from the Board.

## Bargaining Update

Both the CSSEA Bargaining Committee and Community Social Services Bargaining Association agreed to reconvene bargaining in September, after about two months of negotiations.

CSSEA would like thank the divisional bargaining teams committees for their input and dedication to bargaining.

## AGM Reminder

The AGM is now just two months away! See you in beautiful Kelowna from October 5-7!

Don't forget our Green Initiative!

Make time for the Tuscan dinner!



Lunchtime keynote speaker!

Provincial Showcase

Updates on our AGM page

## Get Involved! Run for Your Panel



Members are encouraged to get involved in CSSEA's governance and run for your panels.

Key responsibilities:

- Select board representative
- Serve on bargaining team
- Provide direction to CSSEA
- Serve as divisional leader

To run:

- Complete a Candidate Form, which can be found on CSSEA's AGM web page. If your application is submitted by September 24, it will be posted on our website
- Let your name stand for nomination from the floor during your divisional session

## Website 101



We have received several inquiries recently about where Job Descriptions and Templates and Forms are housed on our website.

For your convenience, we created a new Templates and Forms section under HRLR Resources. The new page is organized according to subject matter and will allow for you to navigate the website with greater ease.

You will also find Job Descriptions under HRLR Resources. Just click on Joint Job Evaluation Plan and look for the Job Descriptions link.

If you have any questions or suggestions for our website, feel free to email them to Doris Sun at [dsun@cssea.bc.ca](mailto:dsun@cssea.bc.ca)

## Thank you!

Thanks for filling out our recent turnover survey! We appreciate your feedback and are now hard at work compiling the results!