

**UFV in the Community:
Counselling, Advocacy, Learning & Leading**



Our mission is to provide a safe and confidential space to further develop wellness and mutual empowerment for all community members. We provide counselling with integrity, as humble and empathic learners. Our practice is always connected to our roots in social justice and honours the strengths of the diverse lived experiences of those we meet.



Project: Teaching Counselling Clinic (UFV in the Community: Counselling, Advocacy, Learning, and Leading)

Project lead: Margaret Coombes, School of Social Work and Human Services, Faculty of Professional Studies.

The School of Social Work and Human Services (SWHS) requested to establish a UFV Teaching Counselling Clinic. The School of SWHS's goal was to supplement and complement the existing neighbourhood network of support by offering direct counselling services while providing field placement opportunities to our BSW, MSW, and Social Services Diploma students. The initiative was an opportunity for faculty and community providers, who are therapists, to supervise students and provide much-needed services to individuals and families in the local community.

In collaboration with the Vice-principal and education counsellors at Abbotsford Senior Secondary School, CALL resumed services. Experienced supervisors and practicum students provided free services to the Secondary students in Winter 2020. Supervisors and students co-facilitated interviews with individuals; services ranged from one to six sessions, and the service focus shifted to the Secondary students who were experiencing anxiety. CALL pivoted to hybrid service delivery, offering individuals the option of an online remote service and in-person service at the Sweeney Centre. CALL, similar to other counselling agencies, followed the provincial guidelines for WorksafeBC COVID-19 safety precautions.

Experts in online counselling trained our students in digital communication, the different online ethical considerations, confidentiality issues, and best practices for cyber social work. Student groups completed projects and tasks such as revising forms, creating an excel tracking system, a promotional video and were introduced to grant writing. Several students acted as liaisons to the school counsellors, managed the intake referrals, interview schedules, and service inquiries using multiple modes of communications and matched the clients to their student counsellor and clinical lead. The CALL clinicians and practicum students provided quality service to the secondary youth. In partnership with the school counsellors, we created an easily accessible and reliable service that met the secondary students' online and in-person service needs.

Many faculty and staff volunteered their time to make this service a success. Faculty and community providers went above and beyond to volunteer and provide training to our CALL practicum diploma, BSW, and MSW students. The trainers were Patrick Storey, *Mental Health First Aid*; Brianna Strumm, development and facilitating *Online Youth Groups*; Carolyn Burke and Tamika Schilbe co-presented on *Holistic Health Approaches Anxiety and Self-Compassion in Times of Stress*. Dr. Raven Sinclair was also a guest speaker in a shared session with the Social Justice project and the CALL students. Throughout the semester, Kelly Guiaya, who has extensive child welfare management experience, provided practicum students group supervision using *Solution Focused therapy*. Dr. Leah Douglas was the clinical lead and along with Natasha Files, MSW RCSW. Together they offered individual and group supervision and pieces of trainings on *CBT, EMFFT, and Narrative therapy*. As a result, the CALL team pivoted and made hybrid services a reality.

FIT paid for the Cybercounselling online (level 1) training session. The community providers were invited to the training. On February 9, 2021, Lawrence Murphy's webinar introduced sixty-six (66) participants to the critical ethical, practical, and clinical aspects of using video in communicating with clients at a distance. Participants learned about the computer, internet security, essential elements of the technology, how to compensate for the absence of non-verbals, set boundaries and self-care, and best ways to build an online relationship.

Kim Norman, Associate Professor, Communications Department, on February 12, 2021 (while on sabbatical), delivered a workshop on Grant Writing Basics. She reviewed some essential tips and tools, discussed the importance of the fit, preparation, opportunities, connections in the community and the craft of writing. It led to our teamwork with UFV Relations, submitting a grant, and exploring the possibilities of a sponsor/funder.

In summary, the faculty and I have learned a great deal about running a teaching service, and our students received the first-hand experience of all aspects of service operations. Our practicum students gained some knowledge of the realities of community partnerships, developing and managing policies, resources (space, phones, laptops), procedures, referrals, admission, funding issues, and the challenges and rewards of direct services to a vulnerable group of secondary students and working with exhausted district counsellors. The UFV students stated the experience was emotional and surpassed their learning outcomes.