

NOTEBOOK

Issue #5 December 17, 2020



A HOLIDAY MESSAGE FROM THE NVTA PRESIDENT

This year has been extraordinarily challenging for teachers in ways that we have never experienced before. On top of significant additional responsibilities and workload at school, we are all dealing with significant upheaval and disruption in our personal lives. This has, in many cases, limited our personal abilities to access our support networks with family and friends as well as impacting many activities that we usually enjoy outside of work. It is important to recognize how this additional stress throughout our lives impacts our capacity at work for all the extra activities that teachers participate in to support students.

More than ever this Winter Break, I encourage all members to get a real break from school and all the work related to school. We might not be able to do all the activities we usually do over the break, but take time for yourself and find new ways to connect with family and friends in our new virtual world. Find time to read a book, enjoy time in nature, watch a favourite movie or just take time to do nothing at all.

As we welcome 2021 with hopeful anticipation, the stress on the system and on members directly will not abate for quite a while. Teachers should remember to continue to plan with realistic expectations for themselves and their students. Whether it is a senior secondary course that needs to find a way to complete a course in less than 10 weeks to a Kindergarten classroom that needs to build in significant amounts of time each day to support very young students with hand washing, everyone is reinventing the plan as they go along. However, sometimes no amount of careful planning will help with the stress members are experiencing.

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WELLNESS PROGRAMS FOR TEACHERS

BCTF Starling Program

This program was developed by Dr. Andrew Miki in conjunction with BC teachers. His Starling Program is an online mental health and wellness tool that is designed specifically for teachers. It helps you assess, monitor, and improve your mental fitness in the privacy of your home. As a member of BC Teachers' Federation, it is available to you and your family members to use anywhere and anytime you want, for free. Starling is and will always be 100 percent confidential. Starling helps teachers learn about stress, mental fitness exercises, and how to break unhealthy patterns that may lead to anxiety and depression. Starling provides:

Online training tools and education videos based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

- Case study videos of a teacher named Virginia
- Evidence based training and tools that are available anytime and anywhere in the world
- An assessment of symptoms and functioning that tracks progress over time
- A five-module preventative mental health program
- A rules engine to provide unique recommendations for each user
- Early intervention programs for anxiety and/or depression

Additional coverage is provided for family members. Members can access Starling by signing up at starlingminds.com. All you need is your six-digit BCTF member identification number that you use to sign into the BCTF portal. If you are unsure of your BCTF ID, you can email portal@bctf.ca or call to speak to a BCTF staff person (604-871-2119 or 1-800-663-9163, local 2119).

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A HOLIDAY MESSAGE FROM THE NVTA PRESIDENT

In this edition of the Notebook, we outline various supports and programs that can assist teachers to deal with many different types of stressors, both in their work and personal lives. We encourage all members to consider the various supports outlined and access them when needed. Additionally, all of us at the NVTA office are here to provide advice and help directly to all members when needed. If you are struggling and not sure what steps to take, then I encourage you to contact us directly for further support.

I hope everyone finds some magic in this holiday season and here's to 2021!

Carolyn Pena

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BCTF Health Wellness Program

The BCTF Health and Wellness Program assists teachers who are unable to maintain, or return to, their teaching positions due to a medical illness or disability by funding an early intervention rehabilitation program. This program is offered on a voluntary basis to members in contracts who pay into the SIP program.

The Health and Wellness Program contracts professional rehabilitation consultants in local communities to coordinate services that help to improve the teacher's health and functional abilities. Many NVTA members have accessed this program and found excellent support for their individual needs. For more information or to refer yourself to the program, visit <https://www.bctf.ca/wellness/>.

NVSD Employee and Family Assistance Program

NVSD provides a wide variety of counselling, coaching and support to teachers through Homewood Health. Counselling services can cover any challenge:

- Family
- Depression
- Marital
- Life transitions\change
- Relationships
- Grief\bereavement
- Addictions
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Other personal issues

A wide variety of counsellors are available and if you don't find the right fit at first, ask for a different counsellor. Members can access up to 12 sessions of counselling.

Teachers can access this resource by phone at 1-800-663-1142 or at homeweb.ca/.

NVTA MEETINGS & EVENTS CALENDAR 2020-2021

Christmas Break – Dec 19, 2020 – Jan 3, 2021

JANUARY 2021

- 4 Schools reopen
- 20 NVTA Representative Assembly
- 27 **NVTA General Meeting - elect delegates to the BCTF Annual General Meeting**

FEBRUARY 2021

- 15 Family Day Stat Holiday
- 17 NVTA Representative Assembly
- 26 District-wide Professional Development Day

MARCH 2021

- 10 NVTA Representative Assembly meeting with BCTF AGM Delegates

Spring Break – March 13, 2021 – March 28, 2021

- 20-23 105th BCTF AGM
- 29 Schools reopen

APRIL 2021

- 2-5 Easter Long Weekend
- 21 NVTA Representative Assembly – followed by NVTA Exec All Candidates Meeting

MAY 2021

- 10 District-wide Professional Development Day
- 12 **NVTA Annual General Meeting – elect NVTA Executive & Chairs 2021-2022**
- 19 NVTA Representative Assembly
- 24 Victoria Day

JUNE 2021

- 14 Retirement Tea (TBC)
- 16 NVTA Representative Assembly
- 29 Last day of school
- 30 Administration Day

