

Transition

CANADIAN FAMILIES MATTER

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Military Families
Communications and Media

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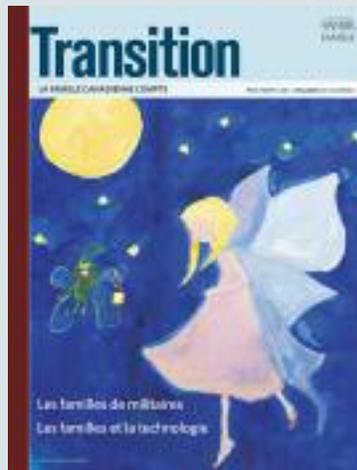
The Pink-Fairy by Lauren, 10 years old,
Ottawa, Ontario

This painting is called *The Pink-Fairy*, based on the very feisty, high-spirited Pink-Fairy character in the first novel of Fay Maddison's trilogy *Natasha's Wood and the Legend of Fairyland*, an adaptation of her feature-length film of the same name. The extremely talented young artist, Lauren, is a Youth Ambassador for the Natasha's Wood Foundation project.



www.natashaswoodfoundation.com

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Transition

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From the Editor



Welcome to the newly redesigned *Transition*! The most notable change you will observe is the move away from a “theme-based” publication. One of the goals of the redesign was to provide high value for you by providing a cross-section of family-related topics and themes in every issue. Moreover, each article will now be available as a stand-alone piece, searchable on the Vanier Institute’s website by topic. The topic names,

positioned in the page headers, provide a quick reference as you flip through the magazine.

In addition to contributions by field experts and academics, *Transition* now also includes our recommended reading “Off the Vanier Bookshelf” and at-a-glance “Facts and Stats” on a variety of topics.

This issue begins with Vicky Snyder’s “Caring for Each Other, Together and Apart: Military Families in Canada,” examining the unique experiences and realities of families in the Canadian Forces.

Next, family law professor Rollie Thompson explains the Supreme Court’s recent ruling on *Eric v. Lola* in Quebec in “Dividing Matrimonial Property: Common-Law Partners Still Excluded from Property Laws.” The article offers information about common-law partners’ property rights in the event of the dissolution of their relationship.

In “Strengthening Ties Through Technology,” Nathan Battams of the Vanier Institute takes a look at the impact that mobile Internet devices and social media are having on the way family members stay connected with each other.

A specialization within family mediation is breaking new ground when it comes to dealing with the issues that arise with aging parents. In “Elder Mediation for Stronger Family Identity,” Elizabeth Sterritt describes when and why an Elder Mediator is called upon by families in times of crisis.

In “Off the Vanier Bookshelf,” Nathan Battams reviews *Father Involvement in Canada*, which looks at recent research into the diverse situations faced by men raising children.

He also takes a look at how new technologies are impacting gambling and how it in turn is impacting families, in “Gambling with Our (Kids’) Futures’ Revisited.”

Action Canada Fellow Vass Bednar led a task force that looked into the challenges faced by young carers in Canada. In “Young Carers Gaining Visibility in Canada,” she highlights best practices from around the world that could be implemented to increase support for young Canadian carers.

Finally, in this issue’s “Facts and Stats,” discover the sources of tension and what brings satisfaction to those who work in family businesses.

If you have ideas for future issues or would like to submit something you’ve written, including first-hand perspectives on family-related issues, please write to us at editor@vanierinstitute.ca. We look forward to your ongoing suggestions and comments, and invite you to subscribe or renew your subscription. Of course, we hope you’ll recommend to others that they do the same!

Veronica Schami
Editor

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From the Chief Executive Officer



A few years ago, we reached the 40-year milestone in publishing *Transition* magazine. We are proud that *Transition* has become a national resource, widely read and well respected by researchers, educators, students, journalists, family-service workers, doctors, lawyers, parents and many others interested in or involved with families. Over the years, experts from across North America have contributed a range of accessible, insightful and informative articles for our readers, who have an appreciation of and for family life and family experiences in Canada today.

Today, it is my pleasure to introduce Vanier Institute's redesigned *Transition* magazine. We have been listening to you, our readers. You have provided us with valuable ideas, suggestions and preferences, and we have incorporated your input into our redesign. As before, *Transition* will come out four times a year, bringing you timely, thoughtful, accessible, evidence-based articles. We will still offer both print and digital versions, and article reprints in PDF format will be available on our website. As always, we will publish in both English and French, but a separate issue will be printed in each language, instead of merging both into one document. When you subscribe to the print version,

you will be able to request your copy in English, French or both.

Transition will continue to explore and examine families in Canada, in all of their diversity. Each edition will have a feature article and a secondary piece, plus a series of departments covering articles across our research spectrum, including broad topics such as Families and Society, Family Diversity, Family Formation, Family Roles and Responsibilities and Family Well-Being. Next year, we will also recognize the 20th anniversary of the UN's International Year of the Family; in 2015, we will celebrate the Institute's 50th anniversary by exploring family life from 1965 to the present.

We are intent on listening to you. If you have comments about any article, have an idea for a future article or would like to propose an article for submission, we would like to hear from you. Contact the editor at editor@vanierinstitute.ca or call 613-228-8500, ext. 302.

Thank you for your interest, dedication and participation in redesigning the new *Transition*.

Sincerely,



Nora Spinks
Chief Executive Officer



Transition will continue to explore and examine families in Canada, in all of their diversity.

Caring for Each Other, Together and Apart

Military Families in Canada

VICKY SNYDER

Over 57,000 families in Canada have a mother, father, daughter, son or several family members serving in the military. These military families are directly affected by the duties and commitments of military personnel and by the unique workplace experiences and challenges they face. The impact that military culture has on the life of a military member – and by extension, his or her family – is a big part of what makes life in a military family so unique.

Portrait of a modern Canadian military family

Specifically, military families are a direct reflection of the mutually reinforcing nature of the relationship between the “military” and “family” – as one changes, so does the other. The past military families were composed largely of a military father and a stay-at-home mother. These families tended to live together as neighbours on a military base in a PMQ (Permanent Married Quarters), where understanding came through shared experience and support was often close at hand. Today, more than one out of 10 military spouses is male, nearly half of all military spouses have full-time jobs and women comprise 12% of the Canadian Forces.^{1,2}

These changes have compelled a “revisioning” of family and family life within the Canadian Forces. Today’s Forces are acknowledging and actively working to support military families as they fulfill work, community and family responsibilities within military culture.

Today’s Forces are acknowledging and actively working to support military families as they fulfill work, community and family responsibilities within military culture.



Resiliency, flexibility and adaptability

Adaptation is the hallmark of life in a military family. Military families do the usual work of caring, providing, parenting and nurturing, only they do so while also navigating frequent relocations, temporary housing arrangements, spousal unemployment or underemployment, family separations, deployments and the long and unpredictable work hours of military personnel. Fulfilling family obligations and meeting the needs of individual members in this context of continuous change is both exhilarating and exhausting.

Janice³ is married to a soldier who makes time every week to record a short video message on her phone for their twin boys: "He does this so that I will always have video footage of him if he were to leave on short notice. This way, when he returns, our boys, who are only two, will remember him as their dad because they were able to see and 'talk' to him every night."

Living together and apart

Living apart is a nearly universal military family experience. At some point, military members are either deployed or called to serve away from the family, or a family might be relocated to a new home away from friends, extended family and community supports. This call can come at any time and often with little notice. A 2009 report found that 77% of surveyed spouses married to a military member reported experiencing deployment at least once, while approximately one-quarter experienced the deployment of their spouse more than four times.

This can pull family closer together or push them apart. In families with more than one serving military member, the challenges are magnified.⁴

Relocating together and apart

Some military families experience relocation *while* their military family member is deployed, meaning the family must move without the support of the deployed military family member.

On average, relocation (also known as "getting posted") occurs every two to five years, giving military family life a unique rhythm and history anchored by a changing landscape. With the news of relocation comes the busyness of finding a new home, a new school, a new doctor, new employment and, of course, a new community of friends and supporters.

Working together and apart

When entire families move to accommodate the job demands of a military member, the impact on a spouse can be heavy. Oftentimes, military spouses have difficulty finding employment and maintaining career momentum. For some, it can feel a bit like an uphill battle. Rachel, the working wife of a Commanding Officer reflects, "When people say to me, 'You're so driven! Why are you not a manager?' I try and explain to them that it is because I start back at zero every time we move."

The increasing number of military spouses pursuing their own careers means new questions are being asked by families when the call to relocate comes, namely, "Who is going and for how long?"



With two career paths to navigate, it is no longer a given that an entire family will follow a military member to a new posting.

For those who do relocate, securing employment can be complicated by finding child care, meeting new language requirements, learning new cultural norms and responding to concerns about long-term employability and reliability from employers who may view a military spouse as a job “flight risk.” For some, the challenges are insurmountable and lead to either unemployment or underemployment in lower paying and lesser qualified positions.⁵

Adventures together and apart

For some children, moving to a new city, province or country holds the promise of new friends and new adventures. For others, the prospect of moving, perhaps “again,” can be very unsettling.

To minimize the potential anxiety that moving can evoke, many families try to involve the children as much as possible in the move. Some families make it a practice to bring their children to look at different houses and to learn about possible schools, community groups and after-school activities in advance. Not only does this help excite and prepare children for what lies ahead, it also serves to normalize a fundamental aspect of life in military families: mobility.

When asked to reflect on a childhood spent as a military “brat,” adults often reminisce about how it had been challenging at the time, but admit that it has made them a stronger person. By accessing the supports of various community-based services, families find ways to navigate the requirements of mobility while supporting the healthy development of all family members.

Parenting together and apart

Developing effective routines, expectations and communication skills are essential tools for any family. For military families, the unpredictable pattern of separation, relocation and reconnection can make maintaining stability and harmony difficult. This is particularly true for military parents who experience what is commonly referred to as “serial single parenting/ grandparenting” created by the intermittent absence of one or both partners.

When “serial single parenting/grandparenting,” the parents/grandparents left behind face the challenge of maintaining a consistent set of parenting and family norms and expectations on their own. In addition, efforts to maintain a



By accessing the supports of various community-based services, families find ways to navigate the requirements of mobility while supporting the healthy development of all family members.

new order can be frustrated when the military member returns home and roles and responsibilities are reassigned.

Caring for each other, together and apart

Working to dismantle the myths and misconceptions associated with the military and a military lifestyle is an essential part of supporting military members and their families. While all familial arrangements require accommodations and compromise from each family member, examining the unique familial arrangements required of a military family provides each Canadian the occasion to gain a better understanding of some of the opportunities and challenges associated with life in a military family.

Vicky Snyder was the Military Families Initiative Project Coordinator at the Vanier Institute (January–August 2013).

¹ Julie Coulthard and Jason Dunn, *Canadian Forces Spousal/Partner Employment and Income Project: Research Framework and Methodology* (2009), accessed October 29, 2013, <http://bit.ly/1dlpBUh>.

² National Defence, *Women in the Canadian Forces* (2013), accessed October 30, 2013, <http://bit.ly/yAtSjw>.

³ The names used in the article are not necessarily the real names of the contributors.

⁴ Kerry Sudom, *Quality of Life Among Military Families: Results from the 2008/2009 Survey of Canadian Forces Spouses* (August 2010), accessed June 4, 2013, <http://bit.ly/14J1oqP>.

⁵ Coulthard and Dunn.

Many common-law partners would be shocked to discover they don't have the same property rights as married spouses.

Dividing Matrimonial Property

Common-Law Partners Still Excluded from Property Laws

ROLLIE THOMPSON

Not much changed for common-law couples, in Quebec or anywhere else in Canada, when the Supreme Court of Canada handed down its decision in the *Eric v. Lola* case on January 25, 2013. In a split decision, the Court ruled that the Quebec government had not violated the Charter's right to equality by excluding all common-law couples from laws dividing matrimonial property. In that ruling, they upheld their 2002 decision in a Nova Scotia common-law property case, *Walsh v. Bona*.

Many common-law partners would be shocked to discover they don't have the same property rights as married spouses. They would be further shocked to hear that the Supreme Court thought this was okay.

According to the 2011 Census, 20% of Canadian couples now live in common-law relationships. In Quebec, the proportion is much higher, accounting for 38% of all couples. Some of those couples consciously choose common-law over marriage to avoid legal obligations, but most



of them simply make assumptions about their legal rights.

As a practising family law lawyer in Nova Scotia, both in a private firm and then at legal aid, I spent a lot of time explaining to female clients who weren't married:

Yes, in almost every way, the law treats your relationship as if you were married. For government benefits, CPP, workers compensation, income tax, child custody, even spousal support. But - and this is a big "but" - not when it comes to the property that you and your partner have. When split up, the law says what's in your name is yours and what's in his name is his. Almost like you were strangers.

Each time I explained this law, my clients would not believe me at first. They believed they had the same rights as married people, that they were entitled to "half of everything" if their relationship ended.

In most provinces and territories in Canada, common-law partners do *not* have the same property rights of married spouses. Some jurisdictions have extended marital property rights to common-law couples who have lived together for at least two or three years (NWT, Nunavut, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia, as of March 2013). Partners there have rights to the division of property upon the breakdown of their relationship, with the presumption of a 50/50 split and clear procedures to work out the details. With such laws and procedures, most property cases settle at the 50/50 split, without need of court.

If they *don't* live in one of those places, then what can common-law partners do to protect themselves and each other?

First, they can enter into a “cohabitation agreement” when they start living together, an agreement that sets out their rights and obligations during cohabitation and upon separation if that should happen, including the ownership and division of property. But most couples don't.

Second, partners can be very careful to acquire and hold property in joint names, like when they buy a house or invest money. But when a couple is together and happy, they often don't think about such eventualities.

Third, if there is no cohabitation agreement and most of the property is in the name of one of the partners, then the common-law partner without property can make a claim of “unjust enrichment” against the partner with the property. This claim will require a lawyer, it will take time and expense to sort out, it will often have to go to court and there is no presumption in law that common-law couples should share equally. The partner without property will have to prove a contribution to the property (e.g. part of a down payment on the house or work renovating the home), and the extent of that contribution, in order to get an award.

In 2011, the Supreme Court of Canada did give some guidance to lower courts for these common-law cases, in the *Kerr v. Baranow* decision. In some unjust enrichment cases, said the Court, the couple could be proved to have a “joint family venture,” and then there could be greater sharing of property at the end of the relationship – but not necessarily 50%. However, proving a “joint family venture” turns out to be an expensive and complicated process. In order to do so, one must prove four things through detailed evidence of their coupled life: mutual effort and

teamwork, economic integration of finances, an actual intent to share and priority to the family over individual interests.

So, back to the Supreme Court's decision regarding the *Eric v. Lola* case: in Quebec, common-law partners (or *conjoints de fait*) have no claim to marital-like property rights at the end of their relationship. Even more surprising, in Quebec, these partners have no claim to spousal support either, unlike any other province in Canada. Any changes in the legal situation of *conjoints de fait* in Quebec, or common-law couples in other provinces, will require legislative change.

Children are present in 50% of common-law relationships. When the relationship ends, the parent with custody of the children may not be able to stay in the family home. Without fair property division, that parent (and the children) may also experience a lower standard of living as a result. All of the abstract discussions about “choice” and adult decisions lose sight of the needs of children after relationships break down, no matter whether their parents are married or common-law.

Rollie Thompson is a professor of family law at the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University.

Any changes in the legal situation of *conjoints de fait* in Quebec, or common-law couples in other provinces, will require legislative change.



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Whether we're at home, at work or even walking down the street, the odds are that we're never beyond the technological reach of our social networks. Even as we sleep, many of us are within an arm's length of our cellphones, which are quickly becoming our primary tool for calling, emailing, texting or tweeting friends and family.

Strengthening Ties Through Technology

NATHAN BATTAMS

The rapid evolution and spread of portable communication technologies over the past decade have been truly staggering, and as more and more Canadians acquire smartphones, tablet devices, laptop computers and social network profiles, we become all the closer to being a perpetually "connected" people. Once considered the purview of the young, these communicational tools are being embraced by a growing number of Canadians seeking to foster interpersonal and intergenerational connections in ways that weren't previously possible.

Connecting generations

Many Canadian parents now rely on communication technologies to help nurture and manage their family ties, whether it's by video chatting with their kids in university or texting their spouse while in the middle of a grocery run. Of the Canadian parents surveyed earlier this year, seven in 10 said that they "depend on technology to keep their families connected."¹ Surveys have also indicated that while parents are less likely than younger Canadians to use mobile

Internet devices to "stay close with their friends" (38% vs. 62%, respectively), they are *more* likely than their kids to report using them to stay connected with family (52% vs. 48%, respectively).²

While the over-50 crowd is often portrayed as technologically inept or otherwise not interested in today's gadgetry, research has shown that many older Canadians regularly use Web-based video communication services to keep in touch with loved ones. In a recent study on the use of online video communication among Canadians aged 55 and older, the majority of participants reported using video chatting services such as Skype on at least a monthly basis (a quarter of this group reported doing so "several times a week").³ The study also found that those who had regular contact with family and friends used video chatting because it enhanced their "social presence" due to the face-to-face nature of the communication. Participants noted that video chatting helped them to avoid the challenges of travel, particularly for those who were rural parents with urban children. Researchers concluded that

“none of the participants in our study fit the ageist stereotype of being disinterested in technology.”⁴

Modern communication technologies are becoming increasingly popular among all age groups, but there’s no question that Millennials are the most likely to be tech-savvy. Their greater exposure to the Internet and modern communications from an early age has provided them with a “head start” above their older counterparts. As smartphones and tablet devices both feature user interfaces that are modelled after Web browsers (both in terms of look and functionality), people with a relative lack of Internet experience face a greater learning curve when trying to navigate through menus and applications via touch screens.

In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that young people tend to be more adept with these new technologies and more likely to use them frequently. Mobile phones and smartphones have become a staple among Canadian youth, with 81% of surveyed 18- to 35-year-olds reporting using these devices earlier this year (61% of 50- to 64-year-olds).⁵ For many people, these portable devices are quickly becoming a primary access point to the Internet: a 2011 Statistics Canada study showed that one-third of Internet users in Canada went online with wireless handheld devices, 59% of whom were under the age of 35.⁶

Portable connections

While it now seems hard to believe there was a time before we were “connected” 24/7, the first BlackBerry was released only in 2003, and the first iPhone a mere *six years ago*. While these devices were initially used mostly by mobile workers and technophiles, they have since become popular among Canadians of all stripes: in fact, nearly half (47%) of surveyed Canadians reported earlier this year that they used smartphones – up from 23% in 2011.⁷

Since the introduction of the iPad in 2010, the proliferation of tablet computers has been equally impressive: this year, 1 in 5 Canadians surveyed reported using tablets – *double* the proportion recorded last year.⁸ With such rapid growth in the portable communication technology market, statistics on the usage patterns of different Canadians quickly become obsolete (much like the technologies themselves). But with people now reporting that they use an average 2.3 of these devices, and the continued growth in ownership

and usage patterns, it’s clear that these tools have become a big part of our lives.⁹

Portable communication technologies are not only more prevalent, but also are used more frequently. Earlier this year, the majority (55%) of surveyed Canadians aged 16 to 64 reported that they “never” or “rarely” turned off their mobile phones or smartphones. Younger people were far less likely to take a break from their devices than their older counterparts: only 14% of 18- to 35-year-olds said that they shut their phones off “a lot of the time,” compared to 32% of Canadians aged 50 to 64.¹⁰

Social connections

Canada is one of the world’s most “socially networked” nations. Half of the surveyed population, or 60% of all online Canadians, reported having a social media profile in 2011.¹¹ While the 18- to 34-year-olds had the highest membership rates on social networking sites (86%), the majority of 35- to 54-year-olds (62%) and a growing number of Canadians aged 55 and older (43%) also reported having an account. A more recent survey designed to measure the frequency of social media use found that 51% of the 50 to 64 age group reported that they do *not* spend time on social networking on an average day (either because they use social media infrequently or because they don’t use it at all), compared with only 22% of those aged 35 and under.¹³

Communication technologies are being embraced by a growing number of Canadians seeking to foster interpersonal and intergenerational connections.



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Seven in 10 Canadian parents said that they “depend on technology to keep their families connected.”

Family connections

While we use social media for a variety of reasons, many of us use these services to nurture and maintain our family ties. In 2012, the majority (52%) of surveyed 18- to 24-year-olds said that they were friends with their parents on Facebook, and of those whose parents had an account, only one in 10 reported that they weren't “Facebook friends” with them.¹⁴ For parents whose kids are off at university or college, social media can provide a casual vantage point into their children's lives, one that would have been inaccessible through infrequent phone calls or periodic visits. In 2012, 21% of surveyed Canadian parents said that they use social media to “keep track” of their kids – something that may cause some tension among youth who are more guarded about their online social life. Regardless, many actively facilitate these

intergenerational ties, with four in 10 saying that they help their parents use technology that brings them closer together.¹⁵

The face of communication has changed significantly over the past decade. As high-speed Internet access – already ubiquitous in urban centres – continues to expand into rural and remote areas, the number of Canadians using portable and/or Web-based communication technologies to stay close to family and friends will almost certainly continue to rise. For anyone with access, these devices and services make communications possible as often as they please – and from wherever they please – without the traditional constraints of land lines and snail mail. However, while new technologies may have changed the nature and frequency of our communication, the content remains fundamentally the same: we all seek to nurture and maintain our social ties, regardless of the tools we use to do so.

Nathan Battams is a researcher and writer at the Vanier Institute of the Family, Ottawa, ON.

¹ Ipsos (2013). *Four in Five (84%) of Canadian Parents Believe Technology Allows Families to Be Better Connected*. Accessed June 28, 2013. <http://bit.ly/13hDPET>

² Vision Critical (2012). *Rogers Innovation Report: 2012 Trend Watch* (August 2012). Accessed January 16, 2013. <http://roge.rs/10pStMI>

³ Mary C. Milliken, Susan O'Donnell, Kerri Gibson and Betty Daniels (2012). “Older Citizens and Video Communications: A Case Study,” in *Journal of Community Informatics* (Vol. 8, No. 1). Accessed July 5, 2013. <http://bit.ly/1cGIWJ>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ipsos (2013). “Socialogue: Think Small,” from *Ipsos Open Thinking Exchange* (Detailed Tables). Accessed July 3, 2013. <http://bit.ly/13lwaek>

⁶ Statistics Canada (2011). “Individual Internet Use and E-Commerce,” in *The Daily* (October 12, 2011). Accessed July 5, 2013. <http://bit.ly/n5gbz7>

⁷ Ipsos (2013). “Close to Half of Canadians Now Own a Smartphone,” from *Mobil-ology* (Detailed Tables). Accessed March 3, 2013. <http://bit.ly/13hEy9f>

⁸ Ipsos (2013). “Close to Half of Canadians Now Own a Smartphone,” from *Mobil-ology*. Accessed March 3, 2013. <http://bit.ly/13hDPET>

⁹ Ipsos (2013). “Socialogue: Think Small,” from *Ipsos Open Thinking Exchange*. Accessed June 28, 2013. <http://bit.ly/14PudTJ>

¹⁰ Ipsos (2013). “Socialogue: Allergic to the Off Switch,” from *Ipsos Open Thinking Exchange* (Detailed Tables). Accessed June 28, 2013. <http://bit.ly/11aPHKD>

¹¹ Ipsos (2011). *Canada's Love Affair with Online Social Networking Continues*. Accessed July 8, 2013. <http://bit.ly/nnDhvk>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ipsos (2012). “Socialogue: The Most Common Butterfly on Earth Is the Social Butterfly,” from *Ipsos Open Thinking Exchange* (Detailed Tables, Section 2). Accessed July 9, 2013. <http://bit.ly/1eq0T9j>

¹⁴ Vision Critical (2012).

¹⁵ Ibid.

A new and specialized family mediation, Elder Mediation addresses practical concerns and strengthens families' relationships.

Elder Mediation

FOR STRONGER FAMILY IDENTITY

ELIZABETH STERRITT

For many of us, there will come a time when an elderly member of our family will require significant assistance. Among other things, we may be called upon to:

- Arrange for the sale of the family home
- See to the financial and estate planning needs of an elderly parent/relative
- Devise a plan for the sharing of a cottage among adult children
- Arrange for caregiving

Having to make critical, life-altering decisions at what can be an intensely emotional and difficult time may lead to hostility among family members. Old resentments from childhood may resurface, disagreements about how to proceed may arise and new conflicts may develop.

Elder Mediation is a new and specialized area within family mediation, and it offers the potential both to address practical concerns and to strengthen the family's relationships. A professionally trained Elder Mediator creates an opportunity for family members to come together to articulate and discuss issues that have led to conflict for them, and sets the tone for preserving the family identity.

The mediator constructs a welcoming environment for a productive conversation in what is most frequently a multi-party, multi-issue setting. This conversation invites family members to explore possibilities for resolving conflict in a collaborative way.

Meeting to discuss a crucial family issue takes place in person. Out-of-town siblings may join in over the telephone or Skype. The creativity of the meeting style exemplifies a flexible and inclusive approach to encourage as many family members as possible to join in the conversation. Designed from the outset to be proactive, this process helps families.

The family assumes a key role in problem identification and resolution. For example, in the case of a diagnosis of dementia, a mediated action plan may alleviate the stresses and strains placed upon caregivers through the creation of a circle of care.

By committing to be part of the circle of care, family members volunteer to help by doing such things as cutting the grass, clearing snow, preparing meals or driving parents and relatives to appointments. The circle of care strengthens the bonds of kinship and contributes to the quality of life of the relative with dementia. This new quality of life touches the entire family. As a result of a mediated family conversation, family members enable the person with dementia to stay at home longer as a result of their loving support and assistance. Through the conscious choice of participating in a circle of care, the family bypasses placement of their loved one in a nursing home for a familiar, stable and loving environment – the family home. By sharing positive feelings about their proactive actions, they also strengthen the family's identity.

For families who choose to participate in Elder Mediation, the opportunity to reinforce the family's identity is considerable. Working with a certified Elder Mediator opens the door to a future-focused conversation for families. This focus on the future nurtures and supports the family identity by empowering the participants to revitalize already existing relationships and better prepare for the future.

When families need strong and practical measures to work through conflict and preserve relationships, Elder Mediation helps. Elder Mediation renews the family identity by addressing the family's present crisis while simultaneously focusing on effective collaboration. Elder Mediation is a viable new approach for safeguarding and strengthening family ties in times of crisis.

Elizabeth Sterritt, M.Ed., Acc.FM, Cert.EM, is a certified Elder Mediator in private practice in Ottawa.

OFF THE VANIER BOOKSHELF

NATHAN BATTAMS

Fatherhood is a subject of growing interest in Canada, fuelled by a shifting social, economic and demographic landscape. In this context, many teachers, researchers, theorists and policy-makers have been calling for more information about Canadian fathers. *Father Involvement in Canada: Diversity, Renewal, and Transformation* is a response to this call; it presents a collection of essays that provides an up-to-date overview of knowledge about paternal involvement in Canada.

The push for greater research into fatherhood in Canada has been driven by a number of factors. These include the rise of lone-parent fathers, the growing number of men who share full child-raising responsibilities with their partners and a greater need to understand the unique situational challenges of fathers who are young, Aboriginal, divorced, separated or living in same-sex relationships. Canadian fathers, in short, are more diverse than ever, and research into fatherhood needs to take this into account.

Collaborative and interdisciplinary, this book tackles the need for the recognition of diversity by bringing together research from a variety of fields, including population studies, social work, sociology, child and youth care, psychology, family studies and family therapy. *Father Involvement in Canada* is the first collection of its kind to summarize knowledge on such a broad range of topics while also challenging mainstream notions about masculinity, discussing what fatherhood means to men, exploring how men conceptualize their role in healthy child development and looking at how children contribute to their fathers' development as adult men.

Father Involvement in Canada also gives attention to the context of fathering in Canada as this affects how boys learn parenting skills and perceive their role in child development. Contributors examine the portrayal of fathers and fatherhood in the media, parenting programs, policy discussions and society as a whole. This contextual approach provides

Father Involvement in Canada: Diversity, Renewal, and Transformation

Edited by Jessica Ball and Kerry Daly.
Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012.



This book tackles the need for the recognition of diversity by bringing together research from a variety of fields.

readers with a more thorough understanding of how ideas about fatherhood are created, disseminated and reinforced in society.

By highlighting research, theory and practice models that address fathering trends and issues, *Father Involvement in Canada* is an ideal handbook for students, instructors, scholars and decision makers involved in social science, social services and social development policies.

Nathan Battams is a researcher and writer at the Vanier Institute of the Family, Ottawa, ON.



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“Gambling with Our (Kids’) Futures” Revisited

NATHAN BATTAMS

In 2006, the Vanier Institute published an article by Arlene Moscovitch on the impact that gambling has on children and families.¹ Since then, Canadian gambling revenues have remained steady, at approximately \$13.75 billion annually.² However, as governments continue to explore opportunities for additional sources of revenue, gambling expansion is being considered across Canada, including the opening of new casinos, legalization of Internet gambling and further expansion of electronic gambling machines into non-casino venues.

In addition, gambling businesses have sought to expand their customer base by embracing new technologies and targeting new demographics. We can now gamble alone at electronic slot machines in casinos furnished with ATMs but without clocks or windows, or at home at any time via the Internet and now even on our cellphones.³

Around 6 in 10 Canadians living alone reported spending money on at least one gambling activity in 2011.⁴ Now that technology has made it possible to gamble alone anytime and anywhere, people with gambling problems are surrounded by gambling opportunities like never before. Research suggests that approximately 35%–40% of gambling revenues come from the estimated 4.7% of people who struggle with problem and pathological gambling.⁵ These “best customers” tend to be drawn from vulnerable groups within our society: youth, seniors, people living with low incomes, newcomers and people suffering from social isolation.⁶

Risks, costs and consequences

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and Toronto Public Health have identified a range of consequences for people’s health and well-

being that result from “problem gambling,” including financial difficulties, alcohol- or fatigue-related traffic fatalities, family breakdown and divorce, family/intimate partner violence, impaired child development, neglect and poverty.⁷ In addition, the strong feelings gambling problems can invoke among family members can make it even harder to manage the problem.

In Australia, researchers interviewed fifteen 7- to 18-year-olds living in households with a “problem gambler” who described the experience as one of “pervasive loss.” Those losses included time spent

WHAT IS “PROBLEM GAMBLING”?*

Unlike casual gambling, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) identifies a person’s gambling behaviour as problematic when it interferes with their work, school, health, financial well-being or interpersonal relationships. The most detrimental forms of gambling include:

Harmful gambling

People who are harmful gamblers experience some of the complications and difficulties described above as a result of their behaviour.

Pathological gambling

Pathological gamblers experience the same issues as harmful gamblers, but to a much greater degree. All aspects of their lives are affected, as they feel unable to control the urge to gamble despite knowledge of its harmful effects.



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with parents, a lost sense of safety, a loss of relationships with extended families and a loss of material security. The losses were so profound that researchers concluded that “parental problem gambling must now be considered a significant child health as well as social problem.”⁸

Prevention and harm reduction

Treatment for gambling problems emphasizes prevention and harm reduction by restricting gambling access, including restricting the general *availability* of gambling, restricting the more harmful types of gambling and restricting the *number* and *location* of gambling venues.⁹ If government dependency on gambling revenues continues or increases, this could fuel the expansion of gambling options and the growth of the gambling industry. The resulting increase in opportunities for gambling could result in financial, health and social consequences for people with gambling problems. In order to mitigate the negative impacts gambling can have on individuals, families and communities, a combination of conversation, research, education and regulation is required.

Nathan Battams is a researcher and writer at the Vanier Institute of the Family, Ottawa, ON.

With additional research provided by Arlene Moscovitch.

¹ Arlene Moscovitch (2006). “Gambling with Our (Kids’) Futures: Gambling As a Family Policy Issue,” from *Contemporary Family Trends*. Vanier Institute of the Family. Accessed June 12, 2013. <http://bit.ly/14wgh5x>

² Katherine Marshall (2011). “Gambling 2011,” in *Perspectives on Labour and Income* (September 23, 2011). Statistics Canada Catalogue No. 75-001-X. Accessed February 28, 2013. <http://bit.ly/qkJIWW>

³ P.J. Adams, J. Raeburn and K. de Silva (2009). “A Question of Balance: Prioritizing Public Health Responses to Harm from Gambling,” in *Addiction* 104(5), 688-691. Accessed February 28, 2013. <http://1.usa.gov/14gDVQC>

⁴ Marshall (2011).

⁵ Jason J. Azmier (2005). *Gambling in Canada 2005: Statistics and Context*. Canada West Foundation (June 2005). Accessed February 28, 2013. <http://bit.ly/12XK9Xe>

⁶ Toronto Public Health and CAMH (2012). *The Health Impacts of Gambling Expansion in Toronto, Technical Report 9* (November 2012). Accessed February 28, 2013. <http://bit.ly/QZqGQ1>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ P. Darbyshire, C. Oster and H. Carrig (2001). “The Experience of Pervasive Loss: Children and Young People Living in a Family Where Parental Gambling Is a Problem,” in *Journal of Gambling Studies* (Spring 2001); 17(1):23-45. Accessed March 1, 2013. <http://1.usa.gov/1b9jiYu>

⁹ R.J. Williams, B.L. West and R.I. Simpson (2008). *Prevention of Problem Gambling: A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence*. Report prepared for the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre (December 1, 2007). Accessed February 28, 2013. <http://bit.ly/13DmCJL>

* Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (2008). *Problem Gambling: The Issues, the Options*. Accessed July 12, 2013. <http://bit.ly/1ctpFZY>

** Ibid.



IMPACT ON FAMILIES**

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) identifies several ways in which gambling problems can affect families:

Financial stress

Problem gambling can result in a loss of savings, property or belongings, affecting the well-being of family members.

Emotional strain

The strong feelings gambling problems evoke among family members can make it hard to fulfill family responsibilities, obligations and commitments.

Social withdrawal

People with gambling problems may have a harder time establishing and maintaining relationships with family members and friends.

Physical/mental health risks

People with gambling problems may experience anxiety, depression and physical ailments, such as ulcers, headaches and poor sleep.

Family burnout

Family members coping with a person’s gambling problem may burn out after trying to keep control and forgetting to care for themselves.

Children’s isolation

Children in a family with a parent who has a gambling problem may feel neglected, blame themselves, have difficulty trusting others or misbehave.

Physical/emotional abuse

Gambling problems may lead to physical or emotional abuse of a family member.

As many as 1 in 10 Canadian youth have had or will have the responsibility of caring for an adult.

Young Carers

Gaining Visibility in Canada

VASS BEDNAR

Young carers are young people who provide significant care in the home to family members in need as a result of illness, disability or other challenges. Like other family caregivers, young carers may help a grandparent take the right medication. They may help look after a chronically ill sister or stay up worrying about what to do if their father's dialysis machine stops working during the night. The variety of duties they take on is almost endless.

While young carers are found in every classroom in Canada, they are too often invisible to their teachers and others who could provide support when needed. As such, young carers may not receive the care that *they* need. When properly supported, young caregiving can be a positive life experience. However, without proper support, young carers can run into educational, health and social barriers that may last a lifetime. These barriers translate into costs and lost opportunities for young carers and for society.

These costs were outlined last summer when the Vanier Institute of the Family released the report "Young Carers in Canada: The Hidden Costs and Benefits of Young Caregiving." Since that time, inspired by the Vanier report, a group of young Canadians has conducted additional research through the Action Canada Fellowship. They struck a Task Force after learning that early research suggests that as many as 1 in 10 Canadian youth have had or will have the responsibility of caring in the home. And, according to Janet Fast at the University of Alberta, 10.2% of women and 7.4% of men caregivers over the age of 45 first provided care as an adolescent or young adult (under age 25), totalling more than 338,000 young caregivers in Canada, based on an analysis of the 2007 General Social Survey.

Although being a young carer can be tough, it can also be rewarding. It teaches responsibility and empathy, and brings new closeness between the caregiver and the cared-for. Unfortunately, young

carers often bear the burden of caregiving alone and in silence. Too often, the stresses of being a young carer seep into other parts of their lives. Young carers can show up to school exhausted after staying up all night with an ill parent or misbehave in class because of frustrations at home. These behaviours can lead to a "troublemaker" label, alienation and an increased risk of dropping out of school.

The issue presents a unique opportunity to learn from other jurisdictions that have responded to young carers, namely, the UK and Australia. The UK conducts a national survey to gain insight into the number of young carers. Some schools there also have "Young Carer Cards," which can help young people identify themselves discreetly to a teacher. In Australia, the country champions various rights for young carers. These are just a few examples of many opportunities for Canadians to take action in supporting these youth.

Just as an adult may need to choose between working in the labour force and caring for a seriously ill or injured loved one, a young person may face a distressing choice between doing their homework and providing home care. A better understanding of this invisible population will help them better manage their multiple responsibilities without negative consequences for their own health and their futures.

Vass Bednar is a 2012–2013 Action Canada Fellow. Her Task Force focused on the challenge of young carers in Canada and produced the report "Who Cares About Young Carers? Raising Awareness for an Invisible Population" in February 2013.



For a young carer's perspective, see "Lucky" the *Young Carer Rap*, a Vanier Institute of the Family partnership project at <http://bit.ly/1dVTE8S>.



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FACTS AND STATS



Family Businesses

50%, 34% & 16% Proportion of surveyed Canadian family business members who said their companies were owned by the first, second and third generations, respectively¹

93% Proportion of surveyed Canadian family business members who have a family member as the current CEO²

36% Proportion of surveyed Canadian family business members who reported “some to a lot” of tension over family members actively involved in the business not consulting the wider family on key issues³

39% Proportion of surveyed Canadian family business members who said they’ve experienced “some to a lot” of tension over performance of family members actively involved in the business⁴

26% Proportion of surveyed family business members who cite “the role ‘in-laws’ should or shouldn’t play in the business” as a cause of “some” or “a lot” of tension⁵

33% Proportion of surveyed Canadian family business members who rank “having a sense of ownership and identity” as the top characteristic of a family business⁶

47% Proportion of surveyed Canadian family business members who say that “family passion” is their leading competitive advantage⁷

48% Proportion of surveyed Canadian family business members who report that their business uses Family Assemblies/Meetings (periodic or regular meetings with only family members who are active in the business) – 15% “Yes, with a formal status”; 33% “Yes, informally”⁸

16% Proportion of surveyed Canadian family business members who report that their business uses a Family Constitution (set of family business written rules that helps govern the family’s employment, ownership and wealth distribution) – 7% “Yes, with a formal status”; 9% “Yes, informally”⁹

70% Proportion of surveyed executives in a family business who agree or strongly agree that “being part of a family business has helped them cope with the economic slump”¹⁰

40% & 35% Proportion of surveyed Canadian family business members who indicate as of special importance issues related to succession of ownership and succession of senior management, respectively¹¹

¹ PwC (2011). *2010/11 PwC Global Family Business Survey – Canadian Supplement* (survey, conducted June–August 2010). Accessed May 22, 2013. <http://pwc.to/NerzRW>

² KPMG Enterprise (2012). *Family Ties: Canadian Business in the Family Way* (survey, conducted June 2011–January 2012). Accessed May 22, 2013. <http://bit.ly/19L4Ojy>

³ PwC (2011).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ KPMG Enterprise (2012).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ PwC (2011).

¹¹ KPMG Enterprise (2012).

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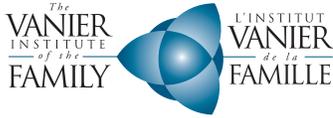
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