

Connections

Volume 3, Issue 2

September 2018

Fall Update

by Randy Grieser, CEO

The fall training season is here! In the last few weeks there has been an increase in activity at our office. Staff are finished with their summer vacations, and “all hand are on deck” as we prep for a very busy fall. The volume of requests for training, and the registrations for fall public workshops are increasing each week.

Our Purpose

Earlier this summer, during a staff development day, we had a lengthy and meaningful conversation about our mission and values. We ended up keeping the core meaning of our mission (in my experience, the mission of an organization rarely changes), but changed it to what we think is more inspirational. We are now naming our purpose: **To Inspire Learning and Improve Lives**. You will also see it appear in our marketing material as: **Inspiring Learning. Improving Lives**. I encourage you to find ways to incorporate this phrase into your introductions. I firmly believe one of the reasons for our success is that our purpose is something people are inspired by. There are a lot of other places people can go to for professional development training, but they come to us for a reason—we are more than just a provider of training!

Summer Training

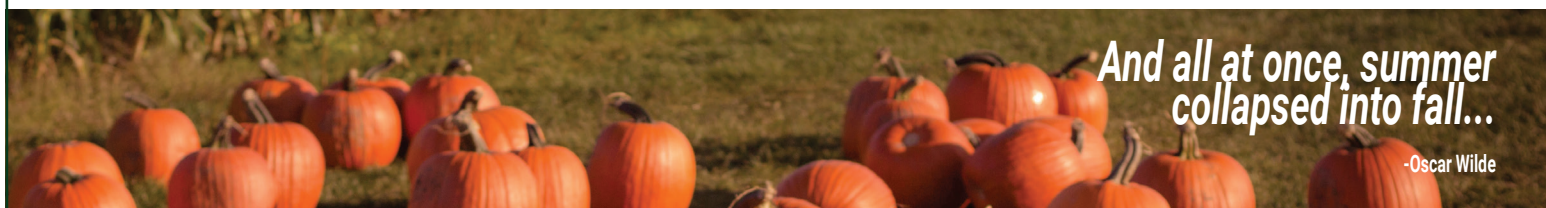
Historically, we’ve done very little training in the summer months. This year was an exception, and I suspect it will be the new norm. Highlighting the summer public workshops were two 10-day certificate programs for CTRI and two 5-day certificate programs for ACHIEVE. All of these were in Winnipeg. Next summer we plan to offer one in Vancouver and one in Toronto, in addition to the two that will be held in Winnipeg. It’s a unique training experience to be a part of a group that has committed to spending a high number of days together. We have found that people are more willing to commit to this length of training during the summer, rather than the other months of the year. As such, we have been increasingly adding more summer workshop options.

The USA - Again

For those of you who have been with us for three years or more, you know that we used to offer public workshops in the USA. For three years we offered public workshops in Washington DC, Minneapolis, Seattle, Portland, Ann Arbor, Dallas, Denver, and Seattle. We put a ton of work into this endeavor, and it didn’t work out very well for us (we had low enrollment in most places, and often ran workshops at a loss). As a result, we ended our offering of public workshops in the USA. We continued to provide on-site training to a few clients each year. This year, we have had an increase of on-site training requests in the USA, including various government agencies and the University of Notre Dame. So, we’ve decided to offer a few public workshops in Chicago and Seattle to test the market once again. We hope to take what we learned a few years ago and try again, but this time starting small. If we’re successful, we may slowly add a few more cities. Stay tuned!

Personally

My summer has been consumed with pushing our new book, *The Culture Question*, to the finish line. Eric, Mike, Wendy, and I are almost there. The process of writing a book never seems to end, but it eventually does. You can expect to see the book before the end of the year. This summer, Heidi and I have also moved – It’s been eleven years since our last move and I’ve forgotten how much work it takes. My first training trip for the fall is in late September – I’m off to Red Deer for a conference address, and then up to Whitehorse for a one-day workshop. I look forward to seeing some of you on my fall travels.



*And all at once, summer
collapsed into fall...*

-Oscar Wilde

Staff Development Day

Each year, CTRI plans something unique for our staff development day. This year we divided our time between some important work and good competitive play. Here are some photos from our very first cooking competition.



The Birth of a Workshop

by Nathan Gerbrandt, Managing Director, CTRI

New trainers often ask me, "How do you go about developing workshops?" Here's the answer!



We've fine tuned a one year workshop development cycle into something we're proud to call "our process." Each workshop begins as an organic idea put forward by participants, staff, or trainers.

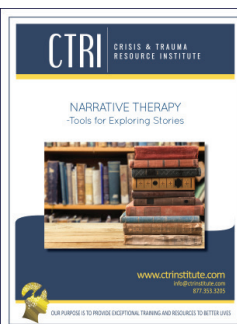
(Yes, we do pay attention to evaluations comments) At the beginning of each calendar year, these ideas are proposed and evaluated by leadership staff and Training Development Specialists. Many excellent ideas surface, but after in-depth discussions, we let some ideas go.

Around Feb-March, the few selected ideas are paired with a lead author (normally someone who has trained with us for several years) who has a strong background in the area.



We settle on an outline, description, and title for the workshop by the end of March. Development of the manual, PowerPoint, NFD, and video clips are a huge summertime task, but our Clinical Director, Vicki Enns, shepherds this person through the many challenges of turning ideas and concepts into practical tools to transfer knowledge. At the 90% completion point, the manual is put through a "trial by fire". The author presents the workshop to a team of trainers who identify holes, correct pacing, add activities, and imagine how this will land in diverse contexts across the country.

With this direction, the author does a final round of writing before the materials deadline of September first. We take the month to improve formatting, polish visuals, and proofread before our shiny new workshop sees the light of day at its first public delivery in October. Inevitably one last round of tweaks are made before it's shared with all of you and participants across the country. Usually after the trainer has delivered the workshop over the course of the year, they will take the following summer to do another round of updates and changes.



Meet our Trainers

Every issue we introduce you to some of the creative and enthusiastic people that work with us. We've asked them to answer a few questions to help you get to know them better.

This issue we present:



Ted Power

St. John's, NL

In addition to working with CTRI, you might find Ted playing his guitar or hanging out at home reading - maybe a biography of Tom Waits, since it's not likely he'll get him over as a dinner guest any time soon.

What do you do beyond training with CTRI/ACHIEVE?

I'm a guidance counsellor and Coordinator for Accessibility Services at the College of the North Atlantic in St. John's, Newfoundland. I have been with the College for about 10 years.

What is your favorite CTRI/ACHIEVE workshop to deliver and why?

Hard to say. I like the diversity of the topics. Exploring the different areas of mental health is always interesting.

How many years have you trained with CTRI/ACHIEVE?

I've been with CTRI for about a year now.

What is one of your hobbies/what do you do for fun?

Probably just strolling around my house and playing guitar. Seeing what it sounds like in various rooms and hallways. I find it quite relaxing.

What is your favorite book?

Hard to say but the first ones that come to mind are "City of Thieves" or "25th Hour", both by David Benioff. He's currently a co-writer on Game of Thrones on HBO. I read a lot of biographies as well. Bruce Springsteen's and Bryan Cranston's are stand-outs I've read over the past year.

Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest and why??

Probably Stephen Colbert. Seems like a very down-to-earth yet very interesting guy. If not him, then Tom Waits. However, with that choice I'm reminded of the movie "Coffee & Cigarettes" where him and Iggy Pop have a coffee together and it doesn't go so well. YouTube it!

What animal best represents you and why?

Probably a dog because, well, they're the best and it's more the attitude I strive to have. Also, they are experts on practicing mindfulness so I'd like to attain that!

Favorite fall tweet:

"I spilled my pumpkin spice latte and now a bunch of ants are making brunch plans and doing yoga."



Shadell Permanand

Chicago, IL

In addition to working with CTRI, Shadell enjoys being a mom, singing (including karaoke), and eating chocolate. While she takes her work and studies seriously, she also has a long list of hobbies that keep her smiling.

What do you do beyond training with CTRI/ACHIEVE?

I am a mother to two amazing human beings who are the most important people in my life:) Besides singing sporadically in a choir and volunteering related to various social justice issues, I also work freelance on a part-time basis. At present my work is predominantly focused on facilitating workshops for private clients on the topics of restorative justice, culture and diversity and conflict resolution. I am also working on my LL.M in Dispute Resolution at Osgoode Hall Law School – set to graduate in 2019!

What is your favorite CTRI/ACHIEVE workshop to deliver and why?

Well, besides the Diversity and Culture workshop I developed (a topic about which I am passionate), my favorite workshop to deliver is the flagship course –De-escalating Potentially Violent Situations. It is an excellent course. The idea that anyone is capable of violence and that our biases about human nature affect our approach to de-escalating violence are important concepts to discuss. I particularly like the idea of brain shifting. I always refer to the school shooting incident where a courageous woman, Antoinette Tuff, is given credit for de-escalating an active shooter and saving hundreds of children's lives. Here is a link to an article about the incident <https://www.cnn.com/2014/02/22/us/tuff-survivor-gunman/index.html> - I get a little emotional every time!

How many years have you trained with CTRI/ACHIEVE?

I moved to Chicago in 2011 and my green card was approved in February 2014. I started at CTRI/ACHIEVE in March 2014:)

What is one of your hobbies/what do you do for fun?

Fun is a core value:) I enjoy everything from live music, theater, musical theater, the symphony, films, dancing, enjoying good food, family gatherings, hosting/attending parties, singing, performing, karaoke, the beach, travelling, skiing, hiking, going for walks, reading and more! I am also a runner – I ran my first marathon in 2017 and I am about to run my first half marathon this month

If you could only have coffee, chocolate or alcohol, which would it be and why?

Hands down – chocolate! Especially if it is from Delight Chocolate in Toronto! They have the best handmade truffles, hot chocolate and chocolate ice cream. Mmmmmm....

What is your favorite book?

"Cutting for Stone" by Abraham Verghese. Fascinating story! Warning: If you are queasy about medical procedures/surgery, then this is not the book for you.

Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest and why?

Nelson Mandela. He is such an inspiration on so many levels! I have so many questions for him! I actually had the opportunity to meet him once (in 1998), but to actually sit down with him and have an in depth conversation would be amazing! [I want to know more about how he became the person he is. I would like to have his insight and coaching on important concepts like justice, leadership, forgiveness, accountability, healing, integrity, role modelling - to name just a few!]

Getting Ready for Your First Fall Workshop

by Vicki Enns, Clinical Director, CTRI



We're heading into the fall training season, which brings a buzz of being busy, more routines in our daily schedule, and, unfortunately (in my mind)... socks. This also means many of us are getting busier with trainings coming up in the fall.

We all get routines and habits around training, so the beginning of a new season can be a prime time to insert some fresh ideas and new habits to enliven your experience.

Here are some tips for brushing off (or brushing up) your training prep:

- **Give yourself some preparation time.** Start early to dig out those notes, or print off the latest powerpoint. Take some time even with those familiar workshops to review and remember the great ideas that occurred to you in your last training.
- **Insert some fresh ideas.** One of the ways I get excited for a training, even if I've done it many times before, is to add one new activity, video, or story. Find that spot where you can bring in novelty – it gives you a jolt of dopamine (for you brain nerds) and makes it a little more fresh.
- **Learn something new.** The trainer website has training videos for most of our workshops. Find one featuring a trainer you haven't watched before, even if it isn't your topic. Learning from each other is a great benefit of being part of this team!
- **Try new activities.** I'm always looking for different ways to teach, energize, or create a learning environment for participants. Check out the Resources section on the trainer website for some activity and facilitation ideas. Send us your ideas – we hope to add significantly to this section this year.
- **Do some research.** Go to a library database, or search Google Scholar and find some recent research on the topic you are facilitating. Weaving a new finding into your teaching adds credibility and can renew your own curiosity on a topic that might seem "old hat".
- **Identify a positive takeaway.** And finally, a more personal tip for once you're training. I've developed a quirky habit after a workshop. When everyone has left the room and I've gathered all the stray evaluations and made sure I've got my computer power cord (I've left too many behind), I make a conscious effort to remember and absorb my own positive takeaway. It may be a comment of appreciation from someone, or a key question I hadn't thought of before. I've noticed this small effort helps me leave the training with a sense of completion and feeling a little more ready for the next one. Then I say thank you and goodbye to the room. That's the quirky part.



8 Tips for Facilitating Better Dialogue

by Wendy Loewen, Training Development Specialist, ACHIEVE

When leading a workshop, our goal is to facilitate dialogue—both dialogue as a whole group, and dialogue between participants. This is not always an easy task, but it is an essential one. Here are a few suggestions for you to consider as you plan for your next workshop:



- **Set the expectations.** At the start of each workshop, I let groups know that I will be asking lots of questions, and that I expect them to answer.
- **Get them talking early.** I aim to have them talking within the first 15 minutes of the workshop. Doing table group introductions and connecting them to the theme of the workshop early on can help participants meet others and get conversations flowing.
- **Allow participants time to prepare.** I've more recently started experimenting with giving participants a few minutes of quiet reflection before asking them to contribute at their tables.
- **Never draw attention to the quiet.** Avoid making comments about how quiet the group is. Instead, notice and comment on the behaviours you want to affirm—in this case, positive vocal participation.
- **Move people around.** Sometimes you need to give people the opportunity to meet others in the room and help them not to rely on the same group for every discussion – especially multi-day workshops.
- **Put people on the spot.** You want to be careful with this, but I think it is fine to ask people what they think directly, particularly later in the day once you've gotten to know people.
- **Always validate.** Even if someone says something “wacky,” try not to disagree completely. And always thank them for their ideas.
- **Be comfortable with silences.** This is hard to do, but it is highly effective. Instead of being uncomfortable with the silence after you have posed a question, stand in front of the group (not behind a podium or table), hands at your side, gently smile, look as comfortable as you can – and wait.

