



## Cascade Christian Counselling E-News

Cascade Christian Counselling Annual Winter  
E-Newsletter



## **FORTY YEARS OF SERVICE**

**by Rudy Ouwehand**  
**President Cascade Christian Counselling**

On January 14, 1980 a group of concerned people from various Reformed churches in the lower mainland of British Columbia met to discuss the feasibility of setting up a Christian mental health association. At the time Dr. Harry Van Belle was offering counselling services under the auspices of a Canadian branch (Bethesda Canada) of the Bethesda Hospital Association in Denver, Colorado.

In order for supporters to receive tax deductions for their donations it was necessary for a strictly Canadian organization to be set up, and so the Cascade Christian Counselling Association (CCCA) was born. A Constitution and By-Laws were adopted and members were invited to join for an annual \$5.00 fee.

On April 27, 1981 the first general membership meeting was held in Langley. The first Board members were elected and a Promotion Committee was formed. In January 1982 the number of Board members was increased to 12 and at that time also a contract was extended to Dr. Dick Farenhorst for the position of Director - Therapist. Dr. Harry Van Belle left Cascade in June of 1982 urging CCCA to remain a professional Christian counselling program.

Phone

(604) 585 1411

Email:

[info@cascadechristiancounselling.com](mailto:info@cascadechristiancounselling.com)

Website:

[www.cascadechristiancounselling.com](http://www.cascadechristiancounselling.com)

Address:

Unit 201 The Guildford Plaza,  
14980 104th Avenue,  
Surrey BC V3R 1M9

Unit 207 Ambassador Building  
33119 South Fraser Way,  
Abbotsford BC V2S 2B1

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During the 1980's a number of part-time counsellors were hired. Attempts were made also to establish satellite centers on Vancouver Island, the Okanagan and Bulkley Valley, Prince George and Kamloops. Our main services are offered in Surrey and Abbotsford and we have been serving the Smithers area from the beginning and continue to serve other areas of British Columbia.

During the 1990's Casey DeHaas became a Board member and has served on and off since then. He reflects the faithfulness of the many Board members who have served, some for much more than their three year terms! A new office was opened in Abbotsford in 1993.

In the 2000's Rudy Ouwehand joined the Board and served as President 2002-2006 and again in 2015 - present. Those were the years of much active promotion of Cascade in our supporting communities. Annual general meetings were held with great attendance and important speakers. In 2003 and 2004 we held a Hootenanny and "Hoot-tooh" which were successful fundraisers for us. May 2009 - 2015 we held annual golf tournaments which were also great fundraisers for us.

In 2011 Dr Dick Farenhorst started to work part time and Elaine Binnema joined Cascade part time and then took over when Dr. Farenhorst retired in 2012. After two other, short-term directors, the Board decided to try working without a full time Director but using contract counsellors instead. This began in 2016 and has proven to be very successful for Cascade. Our counsellors meet together or sometimes with some Board members to keep open communication. Scheduling is handled by our excellent office staff led by Marion Ottevangers who has been working for Cascade now for almost twenty-two years!

The number of clients served has been gradually increasing, especially in the past few years and our income has been able to keep up with or ahead of expenses so that we are on a very sound financial footing.

What amazed me in reading through the history and the Board Minutes of these past years is the large number of names that indicated a steady flow of volunteers serving Cascade. The faithful work of many part-time counsellors throughout the 40 years, but now especially when we are on a contractual basis with them has been a real blessing to Cascade.

From the beginning, it was the desire of Cascade Christian Counselling Association (CCCA) to follow the advice of Dr. Harry Van Belle, our founder when he left us and commended us to God's guidance with his parting words on June 7, 1982:

***"1. CCCA must strive to maintain its Christian character. If it loses its sense of responsibility to and dependency on, the Lord, the Association will fail.  
2. CCCA is a program in professional Christian counselling. Treat the therapist(s) with care!  
3. People must get involved because the therapist cannot do it alone. We must be a compassionate people in the Lord."***

Over the years these words became prophetic as the Lord has blessed Cascade Christian Counselling Association in its therapists, counsellors, Board members, office staff and many thousands of clients! It is our prayer that God will continue to bless us as we seek to serve him and our Christian community in the years ahead.

# RESPONDING TO TRAUMA

by Monique Hoving-Smeets

One of the many questions I get asked by people who have experienced trauma is "what are the ways my family or friends can best support me"? To find good answers to that, understanding different aspects of trauma is vital. The most common reaction is the freeze and flop response; both involuntary responses of the nervous system which leave the person immobilized during the traumatic event, as well as long after the overwhelming experience.

Discovering traumatic events in the life of a loved one can be a shocking experience. This frequently results in our own body going into fight or flight mode (and possibly into freeze or flop if our own trauma was experienced in the past). The fight response sometimes looks like asking many questions of the person who experienced the trauma. You may experience extreme anger and find yourself talking louder to the person or responding in shock. Your heart rate often increases, giving you a sense of urgency wanting to take action and you may communicate this to the person with trauma. While the above responses make sense, they can cause significant distress in the person who experienced the trauma. Research has shown that those who experienced the flop (dissociative) response while the trauma occurred, are more prone to develop full PTSD.

The difficulty of the freeze and flop response is that they continue to be activated by ways of triggers long after the event. When your loved one experiences it, it is very important to know what to do and what not to do. In the freeze response the person is unable to say or move much. The body is stiff and they are unable to think or provide answers. The flop response is signalled by a complete disengagement from the present. Their eyes may be glazed, eye pupils are small and their voice may sound robotic often partnered with slow, shallow breaths.

Here is what may be helpful:  
Use a soft gentle tone to describe what you see is happening "I am noticing something has shifted in you, can I gently put my hand on your hand" (the answer may be no, please do not continue).

You may gently use the person's name and ask them if they feel like they are in the room with you. If they say no, ask them to slowly move their eyes in different directions and have their head follow their eyes slowly (e.g. eyes looking up, face gently moves up too). If they are sitting down, ask if you can get them a blanket or a pillow (or just offer it to them by gesture).

Pressure on the body can help make the person feel safer. Helping somebody to get unstuck from the freeze or flop response includes gentle tone of voice, but it may have to be clear (not too soft as they may actually not be able to hear it due to the brain not being present)

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Ask them to notice a particular colour or item in the room can they describe it to you. Giving the brain a small task like that, requires the brain to be activated and return to the present. Once the person seems less frozen, they should be able to move a bit (encourage movement) be more present.

Ask them if its helpful for them to share with you what just happened, and if they are aware what triggered this response. It is best also to talk to the person if they have a preferred way for you to manage the situation when they feel triggered. Sometimes they just don't want to be alone, but can't handle close proximity.

If you or someone you know has experienced a traumatic event, seek assistance, educate yourself and the person to what they need most from you. Counsellors at Cascade Christian Counselling are happy to assist.

