

Charlottetown Rural Career Day highlights many careers on PEI

by Heidi Riley

Recently, many professionals gathered at Charlottetown Rural High School to share their employment experiences with students. The next three pages feature some of the stories of people who explained details about their career and what it took to get there.

Working in the Mental Health field

CMHA-PEI is a non-profit organization which has promoted the mental health of Islanders for the past 59 years. “Mental health is defined as how you feel about yourself, about other people, and the world around you,” says **Tayte Willows**.

“Mental illness is an illness in the brain. Just like physical illness, mental illness can be treated with medication, diet, lifestyle changes, and working with professionals.

“Work in the mental health field has been exploding for the last 20 years. There are opportunities in many areas of mental health.”

- 1. Education:** teaching people how to recognize and take care of their own mental health or the mental health of others.
- 2. Support:** one-one-one therapy with a trained Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Counsellor, Peer Support Worker, or Therapist.
- 3. Research and Advocacy:** a lot of work is happening in the field to provide good research. Advocacy is trying to convince government, community members, policy makers, and service providers that change is needed.



Tayte Willows, Community Development Manager, Canadian Mental Health Association-PEI Division (CMHA-PEI).

A wide variety of employment options

Psychiatrists earn a four-year undergraduate degree, take a four-year medical degree, a year of residency, and then study for an additional four years.

Therapists: Most therapists on PEI have a degree in nursing, social work, or education.

School Counsellor or Mental Health Therapist: Education includes a four-year undergraduate degree, a two-year Master’s program, and another year of training.

Social Work: A Bachelor of Social Work is a four-year degree. An additional year of graduate study is required for a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. Those with a non-social work undergraduate degree complete two years of study for a Master’s degree.

Where do mental health professionals work?

- **Public services:** Family doctors, community mental health, hospital in-patient care, emergency departments.
- **Private Services:** Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Counsellor, or Therapist.
- **Community Services:** collaborate with public and private services.

Tayte’s employment journey

Tayte graduated in 2009 from a high school in Halifax. She studied for two years at Maritime Christian College in Charlottetown and then spent a year with Canada World Youth, working in Newfoundland and then in Ghana. She went on to a science degree at UPEI majoring in Family Science before choosing the mental health field.

For more about the **Canadian Mental Health Association-PEI Division**, visit www.pei.cmha.ca



CMHA-PEI offers many volunteer opportunities for office work and helping with events and programs. Call **902-628-1648**, for more information.

A career in conflict mediation

A mediator is a neutral person who works with people to help resolve conflict. They help clear up miscommunication so people can understand each other.

“Mediators help people in conflict by focusing on what matters to the people involved, and addressing how that impacts their working or family relationship,” says **Jacinta Gallant**. “The goal is to improve communication to enhance good decision-making and problem-solving.”

How to become a mediator

“It is best to first get an education in something else. For example, nurses can become mediators in the health industry because they understand the medical system and have learned how to work with conflict. Construction mediators get called in during a construction dispute because they have expert knowledge and know how to resolve conflict.

“You don’t have to be a lawyer to be a mediator. If you are thinking of pursuing counselling, social work, psychology, education, health, policing, or environmental issues, there is a need for people knowledgeable in those areas who can also manage conflict.



Jacinta Gallant, Lawyer & Mediator, Waterstone Law Group. Submitted photo.

Jacinta’s employment journey

Jacinta went to high school on PEI, took a four-year undergraduate degree in political science, and went on to three years of law school.

“As a lawyer, I did a lot of courtroom law, with criminal, family, and civil suits. When I worked with families going through separation and divorce, I soon realized that whether they won or lost, many clients did not feel that justice was served. Their family conflict worsened and it was hard for them to make a healthy transition to two homes.

“I wanted to do more than argue my case in court, so I took mediation training. Since then, I have spent more time with clients trying to understand their needs and the kind of relationship they want to have after separation. It is a whole different conversation. With help, many clients can make good decisions to resolve their conflict.”

For more about **Waterstone Law Group**, visit www.waterstonelawpei.ca

For more about conflict resolution training, visit www.upei.ca/programsandcourses/interpersonal-and-workplace-conflict-resolution-certificate

