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## *School Counsellor*

SPRING 2026

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perfectionism**

**When  
awareness  
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**When  
conversations  
become action**

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Message from the president of the MSCA

## NATASHIA HERRING

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Hello everyone!

As the school year continues I want to extend a message of gratitude to all of you for all of the amazing work you do to support the students, staff and communities you work with. It is through your compassion for others and skills to help that so many of our students connect with the supports that they need. As we make our way through this second half of the school year I hope you also find time for the things that bring you a sense of wellness.

Thank you to those who joined us in October for our MTS PD day at Collège Jeanne-Sauvé this fall, we greatly appreciate the time spent learning together and for your support. We look forward to bringing our members more helpful PD in the fall.

Lastly, we are always looking for folks to get involved with MSCA either to help organize PD opportunities, assist with SAGE, or to share their perspectives with fellow counsellors. We are also looking to host virtual MSCA meetings for those who are in rural locations who might want to join. If you are interested, please reach out at [msca.president.mb@gmail.com](mailto:msca.president.mb@gmail.com).

Take care everyone, and all the best as we continue the 2025/2026 school year. ●

# BOOK REVIEW: **Dealing with Feeling**

## Reviewed from a school counsellor's perspective

BY DR. MARC BRACKETT

*Dealing with Feeling* by Dr. Marc Brackett is a thoughtfully designed, research-informed resource that supports children in developing emotional awareness, emotional language, and self-regulation skills. Drawing from decades of research in emotional intelligence and grounded in the well-established RULER framework, the book translates complex concepts related to neuroscience and emotional development into practical, child-friendly strategies that are highly applicable in school settings.

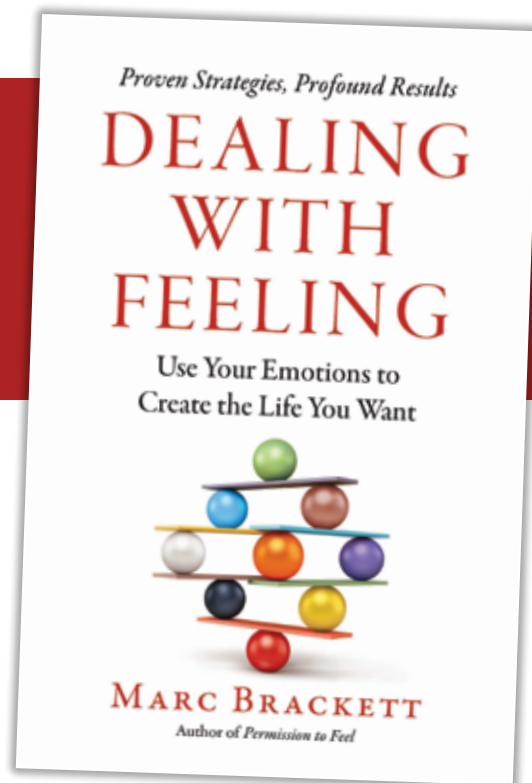
From a school counsellor's perspective, this book is especially valuable because it bridges the gap between theory and day-to-day practice. Dr. Brackett emphasizes that emotions are not problems to be fixed, but signals to be understood. This perspective aligns strongly with trauma-informed and needs-based approaches to behaviour commonly used in schools. The book reinforces the idea that all feelings are valid, while also guiding children toward appropriate ways of expressing and managing those feelings. This distinction is critical in counselling work, where the focus is often on

helping students separate emotions from behaviours.

One of the book's core strengths is its focus on emotional literacy. Many students struggle not because they feel "too much", but because they lack the language to describe what is happening internally. *Dealing with Feeling* expands emotional vocabulary beyond basic labels such as "happy", "sad", or "angry", encouraging children to recognize more nuanced emotional states. This increased precision supports self-awareness and allows counsellors and educators to intervene more effectively, particularly for students who experience emotional dysregulation, anxiety, or frustration-based behaviours.

A particularly impactful contribution of *Dealing with Feeling* is its emphasis on coregulation as the foundation of emotional development and well-being. Dr. Brackett makes clear that there is no meaningful personal relationship without coregulation, as adults and children are constantly influencing one another's emotional states, especially in learning environments. The book thoughtfully distinguishes between

healthy and unhealthy coregulation and underscores the importance of adults modeling calm, respectful, and emotionally attuned responses. This has important implications for educators, educational assistants, counsellors, and anyone working in schools, as attachment styles are shaped through early and ongoing experiences of emotion coregulation. Daily interactions with trusted adults at school can either reinforce or help repair a child's sense of safety and regulation. Dr. Brackett emphasizes that as parents, guardians, and educators, it is our responsibility to teach children positive self-regulation skills, and that this learning occurs first through consistent and beneficial adult modeling. Healthy coregulation begins with understanding what a child is feeling, considering what they may need in the moment, and intentionally choosing a supportive goal. This approach strengthens relationships, builds trust, and supports long-term emotional competence.



Rather than remaining theoretical, Dr. Brackett intentionally moves emotion science into practice by offering detailed, accessible strategies that readers can use immediately. He provides practical guidance for quieting the mind and body, redirecting unhelpful thought patterns, and strengthening emotional regulation through connection and supportive relationships. The book also highlights ways to optimize emotional regulation on a budget, emphasizing small, everyday actions that can make a meaningful difference in emotional well-being. Brackett further explores how children learn to regulate emotions most effectively, underscoring the role of explicit instruction, modeling, and emotionally responsive environments. Through discussion of RULER classrooms developed by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, the book illustrates how emotional intelligence can be intentionally taught in schools, including an abridged lesson that models the RULER approach in action. This practical structure

makes the book highly adaptable for individual counselling sessions, small groups, and classroom instruction, providing educators and counsellors with concrete tools to support emotional literacy, regulation, and shared emotional language across school settings.

From a school-wide perspective, *Dealing with Feeling* complements frameworks such as PBIS, Circle of Courage, and restorative practices by positioning emotional understanding as a foundation for positive behaviour. The book encourages adults to model emotional awareness and regulation, reinforcing the idea that emotional intelligence is learned through relationships. This modeling is particularly impactful for students who have experienced adversity, as predictable and emotionally responsive adult interactions contribute to a sense of safety, belonging, and trust.

*Dealing with Feeling* also aligns well with Manitoba's evolving Framework for Learning, including the principles outlined in Mamàhtawisiwin, by emphasizing relationships,

belonging, emotional safety, and the holistic development of the child. The book supports Manitoba curriculum and social-emotional learning competencies by strengthening self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and responsible decision-making. Its strengths-based and inclusive approach honours diverse experiences and ways of knowing while reinforcing student well-being as foundational to engagement and academic success.

Overall, *Dealing with Feeling* is a practical, compassionate, and evidence-based resource that supports the emotional development of children while empowering the adults who support them. It is particularly well suited for elementary-aged students and serves as a strong foundation for schools seeking to strengthen emotional literacy, coregulation practices, and emotionally responsive environments. From a school counsellor's perspective, this book is a valuable addition to any school community committed to fostering emotionally safe, connected, and resilient learners. ●



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# Releasing perfectionism

BY SANDRA SCOTT



It's hard for perfectionists to stay in the present, they are usually a few steps ahead. As human beings, nothing can be perfect—period. We are not wired that way. But the high expectations and critical perspective that push perfectionists means it's always close to perfect. With self-oriented perfectionism, there is excessive energy being spent on pleasing others and gaining their approval. This validation supports self-worth and confidence, instead of this being generated internally.

There is a constant need to push forward; asking for help feels like

sign of weakness and contributes to the internal narrative that people will conclude, "you can't handle it". Emotions are traded for a mask because trusting others is also precarious. Delegating anything is hard as they worry that the outcome won't be perfect; this excessive need for control also creates friction with relationships.

Trying something new or being spontaneous is paralyzing. Without any time for preparation or research, there is a risk that whatever happens will not be perfect. This will result in avoidance and contribute to

difficulties with socializing and nurturing relationships. If a mistake is made it can cause sleepless nights and negative self-talk.

The perfectionist is constantly giving and rejects receiving. Compliments cannot be absorbed or believed. There are ongoing comparisons happening which serve to further chip away at a fragile sense of self-worth and confidence.

The fear of failure will cause procrastination as there is often overthinking. They cannot look at the journey and the process that happens while achieving a goal—only the outcome matters.

Let's shift gears and go through some strategies to release perfectionism, starting with creating situations that decrease the opportunity for something to be perfect. Setting a timer can be a helpful solution for getting tasks/projects moving and providing an end point.

Be silly—inject some serious fun into each day: sing, dance, run, paint, make snow people. Spend time in nature, listen to the rain, watch snow fall, or feel the crunch of fall leaves. These activities allow us to be in the present and re-connect with our bodies and express emotions. As



## Manitoba Women in Trades Conference

### Women in Trades-Building Equity in Construction!

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Hosted by the Manitoba Construction Sector Council (MCSC), supporting a skilled, inclusive, and future-ready construction workforce in Manitoba.

To advance this goal, MCSC hosts a biennial Women in Trades Conference that brings together women and LGBTQ2S+ individuals currently working in the construction industry, as well as those exploring pathways into construction careers.

The conference also welcomes men working in the construction sector who recognize their role as stakeholders in equity initiatives.



For more information: [info@mbcsc.com](mailto:info@mbcsc.com) | Registration details coming soon



this happens, interest can grow with enjoying an activity and appreciating it. Socialization comes with doing something for yourself, choosing yourself without a specific goal.

Try something new: knitting, baking, painting, sewing. Simple activities offer the ability to move from that mindset of preparing and being the expert to trying and doing it the best that you can.

Create opportunities to make decisions and cultivate increasing trust within ourselves. This means leaning into self-care, being playful regularly, and reminding yourself that constantly focusing on what others think is unsustainable.

Being mindful also keeps us in the present and gives us the opportunity to enjoy the process of

doing something, not just the joy of completing it. Remembering that doing something good enough is okay. This will release the rigidity of focus on the minute details that can be time wasters and create time and space for meaningful connections with friends, self-care, hobbies, and enjoying life. This process of somatic awareness can also increase emotional awareness; acknowledging emotions, not judging them, and providing new framework for emotional expression. It is normal to have emotions, and to ask for help, and that doesn't correlate with being weak—it actually takes courage.

Weaving in compliments unrelated to accomplishments or outcomes can be helpful. Try focusing on someone's effort, opinion, or how kind/helpful they are, this can rebalance self-worth. Mistakes and

disappointments happen, use them as learning opportunities and not something to be feared.

When there is a decrease in constant comparison and pushing to avoid negative consequences, then there can be a leaning into cheering yourself on and feeling a more natural pull and expecting positive outcomes.

At Thrive Counselling, we work with people of all ages, including children, teens, couples and families. If you or someone you know needs mental health support, we have a diverse group of skilled therapists who are allies or members of the 2SLGBTQI+ community. We are ready to walk with you on your therapy journey.

*Sandra Scott, MMFT, RMFT, CCC  
Owner, Clinic Director ●*



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# When awareness outpaces readiness

BY JANET CAMPBELL

*Janet Campbell is the President & CEO of The Joy Smith Foundation, a national organization dedicated to ending human trafficking through education, prevention, and survivor support. Her work focuses on trauma-informed systems, early prevention, and strengthening community responses to exploitation. For more information, visit [www.joysmithfoundation.com](http://www.joysmithfoundation.com). To contact, use 204-691-2455 or [info@joysmithfoundation.com](mailto:info@joysmithfoundation.com).*



School counsellors are noticing and carrying more than ever before.

Awareness of human trafficking and exploitation has grown, but many counsellors are now carrying that awareness within systems that are not yet equipped to respond safely or consistently.

The result is tension: recognizing that something feels wrong, while feeling pressure to act before a student is ready, or before the system itself is prepared to respond.

## The weight counsellors are carrying

Today's counsellors are navigating increasingly complex student realities. Mental health concerns, family instability, online harm, exploitation, and coercive relationships often overlap. At the same time, expectations around safeguarding and risk management continue to intensify.

Many counsellors describe feeling caught between:

- Wanting to protect a student without pushing them away,
- Noticing concerning patterns without enough certainty to act,
- Maintaining trust while anticipating system responses they do not control.

This strain is real, and it is rarely named or acknowledged.

## Why early indicators can feel so unclear

In our work alongside survivors of human trafficking, we consistently hear that harm often began long before it could be named. Early explanations were frequently fragmented, shaped by fear, loyalty, shame, or confusion rather than clarity.

This helps explain why early indicators can feel so difficult to interpret. Human trafficking rarely begins with overt force. It more often develops gradually through attention, emotional connection, dependency, and

increasing influence over a young person's choices.

Students may not yet understand their experience as harm. They may struggle to find words for what they are experiencing even when they want support. When systems expect early recognition to produce immediate answers or decisive action, both counsellors and students can feel set up to fail.

## What has helped without pretending there are simple solutions

While there is no single "right" response, survivors consistently reflect on a few early experiences that made a meaningful difference:

- Steady presence mattered more than quick action.
- Feeling noticed without being pressured helped them stay connected.
- Being believed did not require full disclosure.
- Counsellors who acknowledged concern without demanding clarity reduced fear and isolation.

- Choice and control protected trust.

- When students felt they retained agency, they were more likely to return for support.

These approaches do not delay protection. In many cases, they are what make protection possible.

Early recognition should not be understood as a call to act faster, but to act more carefully. It requires space, patience, and systems that can tolerate uncertainty without shifting risk onto students or counsellors.

Until our responses better reflect how harm actually unfolds, counsellors will continue to carry this tension. Acknowledging this reality is not a retreat from safety, it is a step toward responding with the care, judgement, and steadiness that students need.

For many young people, safety does not begin with disclosure. It begins with a counsellor who notices and creates space for choice. ●





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# Where conversations become action

## THE MOOSE HIDE CAMPAIGN AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION



*Raven Lacerte, co-founder of the Moose Hide Campaign, with her daughter.*



*Students leading activities on Moose Hide Campaign Day in Victoria, B.C.*

Schools are one of the few places where young people can learn about healthy relationships. As students navigate identity, safety, and belonging, raising sensitive issues such as gender-based violence and finding the words to name their experiences can feel overwhelming. The Moose Hide Campaign, an Indigenous-led organization, prioritizes these conversations as the first steps toward creating healthy relationships. Learning how to have them is essential; the need is urgent.

Statistics Canada reports that while rates of intimate partner and family violence declined between 2009 and 2014, they have risen sharply in recent years. Since 2014, family violence has increased by 17 per

cent and intimate partner violence by 19 per cent. Most alarming, reports of intimate partner sexual assault have risen by 163 per cent. Women and girls account for 78 per cent of police-reported victims.

The crisis is even more severe for Indigenous women and girls. Rates of intimate partner violence are three times higher, and Indigenous women are killed at six times the rate of non-Indigenous women.

These numbers are not abstract. They represent students, families, and communities across Canada.

The campaign itself began with a conversation. While cleaning a moose hide, Raven Lacerte, a young Indigenous woman trying to make

sense of the violence affecting her community, began a conversation with her father, Paul Lacerte, who was looking for ways to protect his daughters. Together, they recognized that the moose, understood as a gift in their community, could become a symbol to raise awareness about gender-based violence and invite reflection, accountability, and healing. From the beginning, engaging men and boys and fostering healthy expressions of masculinity were central to the vision.

Ten years later, the Moose Hide pin serves as a visible commitment and an entry point for meaningful conversations about respect and care. We host a national annual Campaign Day and encourage

## From the beginning, engaging men and boys and fostering healthy expressions of masculinity were central to the vision.

students to plan activities in their schools and take action to create safer environments. Students of all ages are recognized as capable leaders within their communities and are encouraged to develop their voices and leadership skills. The campaign nurtures student capacity to live Mino-Pimatisiwin (The Good Life) through hope, purpose, and responsibility to others.

Counsellors are often on the front lines of this work and play a vital role in the well-being of school communities. They know that preventing gender-based violence begins long before harm occurs. Through a trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate approach, Moose Hide Campaign educational resources support thoughtful dialogue and relationship-building. These resources also create opportunities to strengthen relationships with local Indigenous communities by inviting their leadership and collaboration in campaign activities.

Where can schools begin?

Order Moose Hide pins to spark conversations and raise awareness about gender-based violence. Thanks to generous funding, this year pins are available in unlimited quantities at no cost to all Manitoba schools until March 31.

Register for our annual Campaign



*Indigenous leaders guiding the Moose Hide Campaign rally march in Victoria, B.C.*

Day on Thursday, May 14. This day invites school communities to turn awareness into meaningful action. In the lead-up, we will share practical suggestions to support your participation.

Integrate our educational resources. Explore lesson plans and materials designed to support facilitated dialogue, including Ending Violence: A Dialogue Guide for Facilitators and Hosts.

Reflect and plan. Consider how this work might unfold over the coming

year and how it can strengthen relationships, accountability, and reconciliation within your school community.

We celebrate the care, commitment, and leadership you bring to this work. Together, we are creating safer, more respectful schools for all students.

For more information, registration and pin orders: [www.moosehidecampaign.ca](http://www.moosehidecampaign.ca)

Questions: [tmurphy@moosehidecampaign.ca](mailto:tmurphy@moosehidecampaign.ca) ●



# Growing the future of manufacturing together



Samara Knelsen works at Maintenance Welding Products (MWP), a locally owned company supporting Manitoba's manufacturing sector through supplying welding products, equipment, and industrial solutions.

This conversation was edited for length and clarity. For the full transcript, please visit [cme-mec.ca/youth/](http://cme-mec.ca/youth/).

## What is your current role, and what does a typical day look like for you?

**SK:** I'm an outside sales representative. In this industry, sales isn't just about selling. It's about being the bridge between purchasing teams and the shop floor. That can mean recommending products, improving processes, or helping solve welding-related problems. I

travel all over Manitoba, working with companies that build a variety of different products. The company I work for puts an emphasis on building strong relationships, and continuous education—which allows me to show up genuinely, and offer real and valuable support.

## What experience or training did you need to enter manufacturing?

**SK:** For my position, you can come in with either technical knowledge or sales experience. My company was willing to help me develop my technical knowledge. I came from the refinish industry, where we served automotive repair facilities, as well as some manufacturers. I started at the bottom. I was stocking shelves and mixing paint and worked my way up from there. That experience translated well into manufacturing.

## How can people build confidence and develop the skills needed to succeed in a manufacturing environment?

**SK:** Confidence comes from trusting yourself, not to have all the answers, but to figure things out. Whether you're starting your first day or stepping into a leadership role, unexpected challenges will come up. If you trust you can handle those situations it builds patience and confidence. This can include reaching out to mentors, or anyone with experience in the field you've dedicated yourself to learning more about.

## What sparked your interest in manufacturing?

**SK:** I did not intend to work in manufacturing initially, but was drawn to MWP because of their values—as



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**Whether you're starting your first day or stepping into a leadership role, unexpected challenges will come up. If you trust you can handle those situations it builds patience and confidence.**

individuals, and as a company. What I continue to find fascinating about the Manufacturing Industry is that these products make a difference in the every day lives of many different people.

### **How has CME supported your growth?**

**SK:** CME transformed from just a word into a real support network for me. I didn't fully understand its impact when I first entered manufacturing, but much of my support has come through the connections I have made at CME, and the Young Adults in Manufacturing (YAM) committee.

The courses I've taken have been incredibly valuable because they combine leadership principles with direct application to manufacturing. I can read a leadership book, but it takes extra effort to apply it to my reality. CME speeds that process up by deeply understanding the industry and tailoring tools accordingly.

### **You serve as the Chair of the YAM committee. Why do you think this community matters?**

**SK:** To do things well, we must do them together. With so many experienced workers retiring, we need to invest in young people stepping into those roles. By creating a community where people can learn and grow together, we're building a competent future workforce. Growing alongside people who are committed

to building something meaningful is incredibly powerful.

### **What are some common misconceptions students or parents have about careers in manufacturing?**

**SK:** Speaking only for myself, I was not aware of how many different opportunities were available in this industry, many of which are incredibly creative. There is a great sense of community, and people will invest in you if you're willing to learn.

To connect with the YAM  
Community email:  
youngadultsinmfg@cme-mec.ca. ●



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# A career for leaders, listeners, and changemakers

Human Resources (HR) is more than a corporate function. At its core, it's a profession rooted in people. HR professionals are advocates and problem-solvers, supporting employees through conflict, career development, and personal challenges—often the ones ensuring workplaces remain fair, safe, and inclusive.

## Today, HR has grown far beyond its traditional role

Modern HR professionals are strategic partners who push businesses forward and help them meet their goals. They act as one of the central pillars of an organization, aligning people and culture with strategy. Whether shaping leadership pipelines, navigating change, or using analytics to guide decisions, HR ensures the heart of a business—its people—remains strong, engaged, and ready to adapt.

## Putting people first

Every organization depends on its people, and HR is the profession dedicated to supporting them. By building positive workplace cultures, HR professionals create environments where employees feel valued and connected.

They open doors to growth through training and development, ensure fairness across policies and practices, and advance initiatives promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. They also advocate for health, safety, and well-being—making sure businesses remain places where people can thrive.

## Strategic and future-focused

The role of HR extends well beyond day-to-day personnel functions. HR professionals shape business strategy, guide organizations through transformation, and bring evidence-based decision-making into boardrooms.

As businesses adapt to new technologies, AI, demographic shifts, and changing cultural expectations, business leaders are increasingly turning to HR to keep their organizations resilient and responsive.

Their work makes them central contributors to short-term business needs and long-term organizational success.

## A natural fit for students

The skills and qualities many students demonstrate in school and community activities align closely with those found in HR professionals. Students who demonstrate strong leadership or listening skills, or those who have a drive to create change, often possess the same qualities that define successful HR professionals.

Leadership can translate into roles where individuals serve as advisors, executives, and culture-shapers. Listening skills provide a foundation for conflict resolution, fairness, and wellness advocacy. A passion for change becomes the energy behind advancing inclusion, driving innovation, and helping organizations evolve.

These traits make a career in HR a natural path for students who want to connect people and business.

The skills and qualities many students demonstrate in school and community activities align closely with those found in HR professionals. Students who demonstrate strong leadership or listening skills, or those who have a drive to create change, often possess the same qualities that define successful HR professionals.

## The CPHR pathway

For students pursuing HR as a career, the Chartered Professional in Human Resources (CPHR) designation represents the national standard of excellence—similar to an accountant becoming a CPA.

The CPHR designation represents a commitment to a national standard of excellence and a dedication to upholding the gold standard in the field. It can open doors to leadership positions and increase the average HR professional's earning potential by \$20,000.

The role of Human Resources is becoming more critical to Canadian organizations every day. If your students are interested in pursuing a career dedicated to helping people and businesses thrive, encourage them to consider a career in HR.

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"AI will take all the good jobs."

"University is always the best path."

"You have to figure it all out right now."

Take the free online quiz:

Use it to:

- ✓ Spark class or group discussions
- ✓ Support reflective career learning activities
- ✓ Ease pressure students feel about their futures

Ideal for teaching & reflection – use in classrooms, career programs & counselling sessions

### About the Career Myth Buster

Many teens feel anxious about their futures – often because of myths they've absorbed about work, education and success. CERIC's Career Myth Buster quiz helps students uncover misconceptions and build confidence in exploring what comes next.

Developed with **Vox Pop Labs** and **myBlueprint**, the quiz is grounded in research and informed by input from high school students, educators and counsellors across Canada.

Help youth separate career fact from fiction – and feel more informed and hopeful about what's ahead.

Try it or share it:  
[careermythbuster.ca](http://careermythbuster.ca)



A photograph of several students sitting at desks in a classroom or lecture hall, looking towards the front. Some are using laptops. The image is partially covered by a green banner at the top and a dark green banner at the bottom.

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# Taking the Blue Heron Pathway to Education

## Access students invited to pursue a career in Education

Image description: The artwork, created by Leah Fontaine, a PhD student in the Faculty of Education, visually represents the words and image Grandfather received through ceremony.



On a beautiful summer day, members from both the Access Program and the Faculty of Education gathered on the land of Unkan Wanbdi Wakita, the Dakota Grandfather-in-Residence of the Access Program, for a ceremony to name the new pathway for students interested in a career in teaching. From the ceremony, emerged the newly adopted official name of the partnership program, which the Access Program and the Faculty of Education unveiled on Monday, September 22: Hoka Canku – the Blue Heron Pathway to Education.

### REFLECTING ON THE MEANING OF TEACHING

According to Dakota teachings, the Hoka, or Blue Heron, symbolizes patience, grace, balance, and determination – qualities that not only embody the role of teachers but also serve as central themes in EDUA 1790 Introduction to Teaching, a course offered exclusively to students in the Access Program. First offered in Fall 2024, the course invites students to explore a career in teaching, reflect on the purpose and meaning of education, and consider its impact on communities. Marti Ford, an Associate Professor and Associate Dean (Indigenous Education) in the Faculty of Education, who taught the first offering in Fall 2024, relates the significance of the course to her own experience: “I was planning on going into medicine. But I wanted time to focus on being a good mom. I wanted to help the Indigenous community. Education was the way to go. Education is such an important career. You can do so much with it. You can make changes in your own community. You can provide children with opportunities. If they have people to guide them, they can see what they can be, and they can do anything.” That sense of purpose resonates with many students. Saige Marchand, a second-year Access student with Métis roots, chose to participate in the course for similar reasons: “I knew I wanted to join a field of study that involved helping others. Education provides help and care to people of a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.” Taking the course allowed Saige to “meet people within the Education field that gave me knowledge and insight into the world of Education.”

### BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Beyond the introductory course, the Blue Heron Pathway offers Access students ongoing opportunities to deepen their connection with the Faculty of Education. Joint information sessions led by advisors from both Access and Education, networking luncheons with Education faculty and staff, as well as workshops with teachers in the field – some of them former Access students – help foster a sense of familiarity and belonging that inspire students and strengthen their commitment to pursuing a degree in Education. Throughout their academic journey, students continue to benefit from the holistic supports provided by the Access Program, which include personal counselling, spiritual guidance, and academic skill building – all of which contribute to their success and well-being as they work toward completing their first degree. With its strong emphasis on community building, the Blue Heron Pathway also models a core value of teaching. Jordan Flett, a third-year Access student from Norway House who hopes to return to his community as a Physical Education teacher, recalls how meaningful student-teacher relationships shaped his own school experience: “When I was in high school, I used to notice students with their teachers and how the students were full of joy. There are teachers who have that friendly, conversational, and honest attitude that kids can go and talk to. I want to be one of those teachers because they make school more enjoyable and comfortable.”

### SUPPORTING THE NEEDS OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The initiative could not be more timely. “It is always an honour to guide students toward the teaching profession,” says Diedre Desmarais, Director of the Access Program, “but right now, our communities are in desperate need of these trained individuals. We are so happy to be a part of this initiative that has been years in the making.” Jan Stewart, Dean of the Faculty of Education, also stresses the need for action: “We have a serious shortage of teachers in Manitoba as well as across many parts of the country. This is

particularly critical for our Indigenous communities and rural areas of Manitoba. Indigenous students need to see themselves better reflected in the schools that they attend and in the curriculum that they study. If we can encourage more Indigenous youth to be teachers, we will also be building the foundation for our next generation of educational leaders, policy makers and school administrators.” This message is not lost on students pursuing the Blue Heron Pathway – many of whom plan to return to their home communities after earning their Bachelor of Education degree. By centring the pathway in traditional Indigenous teachings, students are able to integrate both disciplinary and cultural knowledge while experiencing education through an Indigenous lens. Gherie Swampy, a student from Sagkeeng Anicinabe Nation who worked in her community as an Educational Assistant prior to joining the University of Manitoba and hopes to return as a teacher, recalls one of the most powerful moments on her journey: “My most memorable experience was sitting down and listening to Elder Mary Courchene talk about her experience as a First Nations educator and what inspired her. I loved listening to her life story and what she has overcome throughout her lifetime to achieve the things she has. This helped me bring to light the kind of educator I would love to become one day.”



**ACCESS PROGRAM**  
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*“Access gave me the confidence to go to university and pursue my dreams. Come to Access. It’s a really good program.”*

**Prairie-Rose Hapa**, UM student  
Dakota from Sioux Valley Dakota Nation

# Access Program

DISCOVER THE PATH BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR DREAMS

## The Access Program includes two paths:

The University of Manitoba Access Program (UMAP) supports students in degree and diploma programs at UM. It is available to all Manitoba residents, with preference given to Indigenous people, residents of Northern Manitoba, low income earners, and newcomers.

The Health Careers Access Program (HCAP) supports Indigenous (Status, Non-Status, Métis, Inuit students) for entry to health-related professions such as Medicine, Dentistry, Dental Hygiene, Pharmacy, Rehabilitation Sciences, Nursing and Midwifery Program. Students must be residents of Manitoba.

## Access students receive:

- Academic Advising
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