

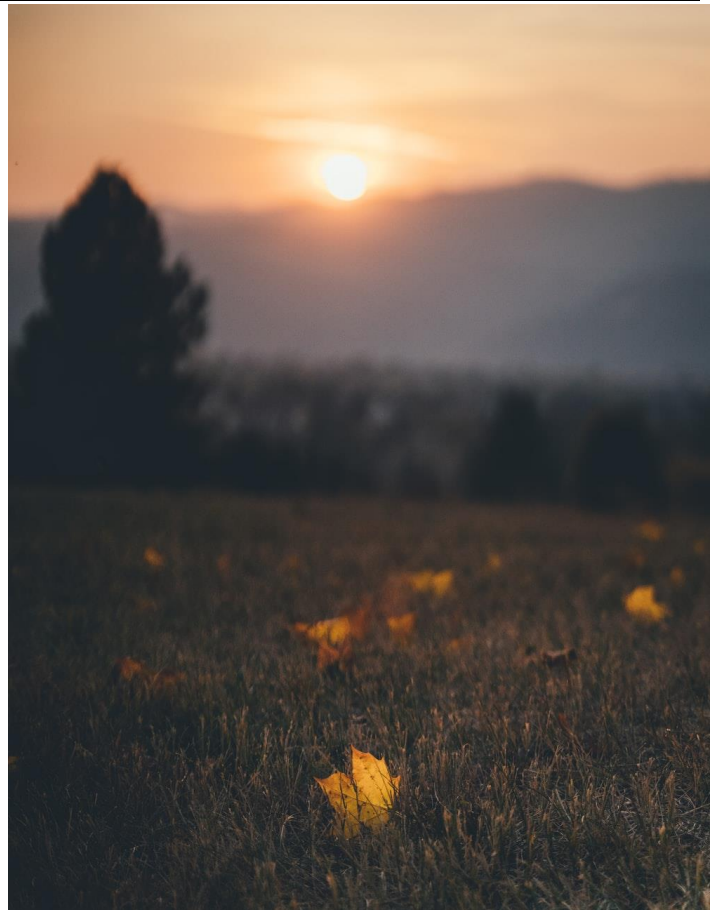
numa

caring for the spirit in island health

BECOMING AN SHP

For just shy of a decade I had the privilege of serving as the Spiritual Health Practitioner (SHP) at NRGH. For the majority of that time the Spiritual Health office was conveniently located on the main floor of the hospital near the gift shop and a set of elevators. I say convenient because I like snacks (gift shop) and because this location was a high traffic area where patients, the public and staff would regularly pass by and stop in for conversations and support throughout the day.

Whenever I wasn't too busy I would leave the door ajar as a sign that I was open for people to drop in. One thing about an open door was that I was able to hear stories and comments as people walked by or sat in the waiting area outside the door. Sometimes I would hear a weeping family member who finally sat down to process what was going on for their loved one. Other times it would be a staff member consoling a family in the open space. Everyone once in awhile I would hear someone pass by, and seeing the "Spiritual Health" sign hanging above the door quietly mumble to themselves something like "Spiritual Health? What is that?" (Generally with an expletive in



Never stop learning because
life never stops teaching.

Unknown

the sentence.)

On some occasions their curiosity would get the better of them and they would stop in to ask about the role. After explaining the unique role that Spiritual Health Practitioners have in supporting the spiritual wellness of patients, families and staff in the hospital they would then often ask the follow up question – "How does someone become a Spiritual Health Practitioner?"

To answer that question it is helpful to know that in British Columbia the provision of spiritual health care is guided by the [Ministry of Health's Framework for Spiritual Care](#). Among the many informative pieces

in that document lies the educational requirements for being a Spiritual Health Professional in B.C. which include holding a master's degree in a related field of study and a minimum of three units of Clinical-Psycho-Spiritual Education (CPE).

Clinical Psycho-Spiritual Education is an integrated practical and theoretical process where learners gain experience and skills in providing meaningful spiritual care. They practice under the direction of a qualified Clinical Educator with each unit of CPE comprising 200 hours of clinical experience and 200 hours of didactic learning, peer-engagement and individual supervision. This means that Spiritual Health Practitioners in B.C. have a minimum of 1200 hours of additional post-master's level training.

National competencies for professional spiritual health care are set by the [Canadian Association for Spiritual Care](#) and equip Spiritual Health Professionals to provide comprehensive spiritual health assessments and trauma informed/culturally safe interventions that support patients, families and health care staff in a manner that is therapeutically effective and in accordance with their belief systems.

So that is how one becomes an SHP. Starting on October 7 Island Health's Spiritual Health program is excited to partner with Fraser Health in offering CPE placements for five Spiritual Health Students who will begin their journey in becoming Spiritual Health Professionals. These students will be on site at VGH, RJH, SPH and NRGH one or two days per week to learn and practice under the guidance of the site Spiritual Health Practitioner. The unit runs until the end of March 2022.

As a program we are delighted to be a part of the learning journey of these students and to have a hand in their formation as Spiritual Health Professionals.

Over the coming months we invite you to keep an eye out for one of these students as they may be assigned to your unit – and when you meet them be sure to say hello and welcome them to Island Health!

Welcome to the following Spiritual Health students for 2021/22! Wishing you all the best in the year ahead!



Lydia Collin
NRGH



Deborah Rivet
RJH



Lynne MacFadgen
NRGH



Philip Wall
SPH



Reilly Yeo
VGH

NUMA (Greek for "spirit/breath") is produced by Island Health's Spiritual Health team to draw awareness to issues of spirituality in health care. The editor of numa is Darren Colyn, Spiritual Health Leader. To learn more about Island Health's Spiritual Health program visit the [Spiritual Health Professional Practice](#) page and to read past issues of NUMA go to the [Spiritual Health public webpage](#).