



CROSSROADS
COLLECTIVE

CONNECTIONS



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From the Editor's Desk

It is a wonderful time of year and there are a lot of exciting things happening around our office. Our therapists are working hard, furthering their studies, and doing the best to help our clients. That being said, this month our spotlight falls on speech therapy.

Our Kelowna office is taking off and we are pleased to be able to offer services in this locale. What I find most validating about Crossroads is our ability to offer wrap-around services that cater to all needs.

- Michael Zibauer



Around Our Office

For parent's with children, Crossroads has a child counselling protocol. All parents seeking counselling for their children, please note that the first intake session will be booked with you and the therapist exclusively. This allows an opportunity for you to meet the therapist and discuss important matters prior to the therapist connecting with the child. If you are booking the appointment by calling the clinic, administration will guide you accordingly.

We have new members in our Kelowna office! Check them out! Tara Henderson is a Registered Clinical Hypnotherapist and Reiki Level 2 practitioner. Andrea La is a Registered Professional Counsellor (RPC). Marc Rajotte is a Canadian Certified Counsellor (CCC) who has worked in addictions and is completing his training in Emotional Focused Therapy. We welcome them to our team and hope you contact them soon!

For parents seeking support, Alberta Health is offering a free, self-guided online professional certificate on brain development. The website link is:

<https://youthrex.com/brain-story-certificate/>

Augmenting counselling with self-learning can help you to develop skills and wellbeing.

- Mansheel Sawhney

What is Speech Therapy?

Speech Therapy aims to, both, diagnose and treat, speech impairments/disorders and other communication problems. Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) are professional degree holders for this job and work in various settings like education, health care and private clinics.

SLPs work with all ages, ranging from toddlers to adults, to provide support in improving communication. Language impairments or disorders can form at birth, develop in childhood, and even post injuries and accidents. Speech Language Therapists work alongside their clients and offer an umbrella of services and interventions for various areas such as delayed speech, articulation, fluency, language, sounds, voice, comprehension, social/cognitive communication, literacy and even feeding and swallowing.

Speech Therapy sessions often begin with an assessment to identify the problem and then the SLP works on creating a treatment plan, with specific techniques and interventions to tailor each client's needs. SLPs also provide supplemental resources and exercises for clients to practice at home on their own time. The length of speech therapy depends on several factors like age, medical condition, severity of communication problems and how frequently the client is receiving therapy.

Research has shown that early intervention of speech therapy combined with consistent sessions prove to be the most effective. Strengthening speech language skillset can also boost self-confidence.

Crossroads Collective is happy to serve all your SLP needs with professionalism and unconditional support. If you'd like an in person, or virtual consultation, check out our website or call our clinic and we'll guide you accordingly.

- Mansheel Sawhney



An introduction to a Speech Language Pathologist

Crossroads Collective is happy to inform our clients that we offer many different services to support our community. As we expand and grow in various avenues of the Collective, we would like to focus on our Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP), Ainslie Conti, and the tremendous service and expertise she provides to the community.

Ainslie's role as an SLP aligns with Crossroads Collective's role in supporting children and youth with their communication needs. Ainsley even mentions how she is able to service a broad age group from children to elderly individuals who need support. Some of the few areas where she focuses on are in regards to communication, fluency if they stutter, and vocal quality, i.e., speaking too loud or too soft.

Ainslie also supports individuals who struggle with their expressive and receptive language. She also works with neurodiverse individuals who can't speak and will provide augmentative communication support. An SLP like Ainslie can also help clients if they struggle with cognitive abilities such as executive functioning, reasoning and problem-solving skills. At Crossroads, Ainslie has mostly worked with pre-school and school-age children supporting them in improving their articulation and social language difficulties.

To become a Speech and Language pathologist (SLP), one needs to complete a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree, followed by a Master's Degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders, or similar, depending on the university. Ainslie started her education at the University of Winnipeg and completed her Master's Degree in North Carolina.

- Loretta Thorgeirson

One on one with a Speech Language Pathologist

Loretta: So, Ainsley, I just wanted to ask you some questions about your journey in becoming a Speech and Language Pathologist. These are kind of more personal questions. Okay, so the first few questions are, what made you decide to become a speech and language pathologist? Did you always want to be an SLP? Or were you on another path and were somehow drawn to this career?

Ainslie: Okay, so the answer is no. I didn't always want to be a speech pathologist. I honestly didn't know what I wanted to do. So I followed one of my friends who were going into nursing and a friend who was studying accounting to see that I did not like these careers for myself. But the one thing I knew I really liked was psychology. I was really interested in it. I started taking classes, and I loved it. And there was this one class that I took called psycholinguistics. And I thought, oh, this class is amazing. What is linguistics all about? Like, what could I do with that? So, I found out there was something called speech pathology. And so, I actually went to my old elementary school in Winnipeg. And I followed and shadowed the speech pathologist there. And as soon as I saw her doing what she did, I was like, oh, this is exactly what I want to do! I was like, this is so me! So, I just started gearing all my classes towards finishing my four-year degree because I was in the middle of doing this degree, but I had no idea what I was going to do with it. I completed that and then applied to Master's programs throughout the States. And then I went and moved to North Carolina and did my Master's in Communication Science disorders.

Loretta: Wow, that's quite the journey!

Ainslie: Yeah, it was. But honestly, you know, people always ask 'do you like your job?' and I laugh because I love, love my job! I love my job! And so, I try to make everyone go into speech!

Loretta: Well, I'm sure your clients must benefit from the passion that you have in your role as a speech and language pathologist.

Ainslie: Yeah! I mean, I love my kiddos! I'm really happy that I chose this job! I know it took me longer than I was hoping, but it was worth it!

Loretta: That's great! Okay, my next question is, I mean, with your passion for your job, what makes you unique to your profession? Like what do you bring to the field?

Ainslie: I think it is just; it is the passion! I'm very passionate about supporting children and making sure they have a voice, that they're understood, and that they can share their thoughts. and feelings and be a part of their classroom and their community. That's so important to me.



Loretta: What kind of strategies do you use and find most helpful when you're supporting your kids?

Ainslie: I mean, it's really basic, but I could just say that I use a lot of gestures, a lot of hand gestures. I use different strategies on different people.

Loretta: Ainslie, tell me, in your job, what are some of the most memorable and positive experiences you've had working with children?

Ainslie: Okay, the most rewarding things are when there is a student that you have who is completely unintelligible, and all of a sudden, they can start voicing how they're feeling and start being understood by others. And then you have other teachers come around and say, "Oh my gosh!" you know. So I feel like that's the most rewarding when they can start to be understood by people or share their voice and their opinions. It just makes me so happy and so excited for them.

Loretta: Thank you! And I guess, on the other side, what are some of the challenges or barriers you face as an SLP?

Ainslie: The amount of support on the floor. What I mean by that is that there are just not enough bodies to support all the kiddos. Not enough time is allocated to have that support for these kids. For example, this year, I'm spread across four schools in my everyday job, you know what I mean? It would be so amazing if there could be SLP support available to all kids. There's just not enough support around that's accessible and available and affordable. Do you know what I mean? I hate saying it like that.

Loretta: Yes, you're spread thin! Thank you for sharing that. I guess I could ask you, was there ever a time when you had to support kids with cultural with different cultural backgrounds?

Ainslie: We work with a lot of students who are ELL. They speak another language at home. But, as I've always run into, parents want them to be bilingual. So, they want them to acquire English, and I always tell parents it's so important to preserve their language as well. Hearing their native language at home is important too, you know. ELL also receives other support at school, specifically because they are ELL, right? And so, depending on if they had a natural language disorder, that's when we would support them.

Loretta: What impact do you hope to have on your client's lives?

Ainslie: Well, I guess my biggest hope is that they're able to express themselves and communicate with others and let their voices be heard. That is my ultimate goal, which is that everyone should have a voice no matter the situation. I feel like everybody deserves to have a voice and be able to say what they want to.

Loretta: Great, that's good. And then one more thing before we go, if you could pass on any words of wisdom to someone that's wanting to become an SLP, what would you like to say to them?

Ainslie: Do it! I don't know. No, I mean, my cousin is at the University of Chicago, and she's doing her master's, and she was like, 'You always talk so highly about your job!' and I love it. I mean, I love my job! I tell everybody that my daughter will become an SLP. Like, I don't push it on her, but I know already that she's gonna go down that road because she's already picked up all this stuff that I talked about, and like, oh my gosh, it's crazy! Like how she just absorbs it. So, I would just say it's just such an amazing and rewarding profession that is definitely worth looking into. If you could follow an SLP for a day in any setting can help you decide. You could work in a voice clinic or at the hospital or a pediatric hospital or to school or private practice! If that interests you, I would say just follow and ask someone so that you could see what they do and see if that seems the right fit for you. I don't know if that's a good answer!

Loretta: That's a fabulous answer! I appreciate you sharing! All right. That's pretty much all of my questions. Ainslie, thank you for taking the time to speak with me about your career as an SLP.

Ainslie: No problem! thanks for asking me!

- Loretta Thorgeirson





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