



Issue 74

## BrainWise Professionals Group

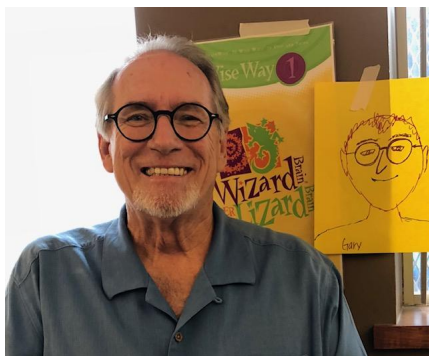
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The pandemic changed the way many health professionals and educators provide their services. BrainWise instructors in Canada - who work with children and youth with mental health issues - reached out to support their colleagues by offering a monthly Zoom gathering. The meeting is an opportunity to discuss the impact of the pandemic, the effects of virtual contact with young clients, and to discuss topics ranging from treatment methods to coping skills needed for the providers.

The visionary behind the monthly BrainWise Professionals Group is Gary Brayton, Ph.D., R.S.W., M.S.W. He introduced the idea to Hull Services therapist Jocelyn McQuay, MSc.Psych. She and her colleague, Melissa Roels, B.A. put the plan into action.

Therapists face many challenges, and the monthly group introduces them to like providers. Dr. Brayton has trained instructors throughout the provinces and knows the benefits of sharing BrainWise tips and strategies with one another. The 10 Wise Ways are retained with practice and reinforcement, and instructors use many creative activities in groups or one-on-one sessions.

The Zoom meetings with peers open opportunities for collaboration, such as BrainWise teen graduates reading stories to elementary school students and asking questions about how the characters use the 10 Wise Ways. Fun and friendly competition can be introduced by having BrainWise instructors share success stories and innovative teaching methods. For example, Dr. Brayton shared how a counselor replaced the Emotions Elevator with an Emotions Engine for select teens in his practice.



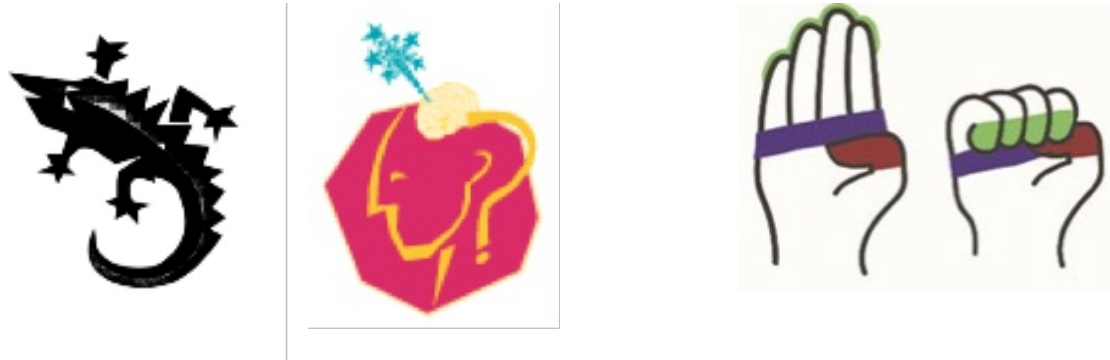
**Dr. Gary Brayton**



**Jocelyn Mc Quay and Melissa Roels**

Dr. Brayton has trained several BrainWise instructors who work in remote areas and felt connecting them with others teaching the 10 Wise Ways would engage them, too. Jocelyn and Melissa appreciate the professional support they give each other and wanted to include others.

Participants choose discussion topics and Dr. Pat and BrainWise guests from the United States are welcome to participate in Zoom meetings and to share their expertise on pertinent topics. These include how to involve parents to reinforce skills at home, ways to use BrainWise stickers, and discussing the new Lizard Brain [worksheet](#) with columns for Helpful Lizard Brain and Harmful Lizard Brain reactions. (Click the links below obtain the stickers.)



[Wizard/Lizard Stickers](#) [Stop and Think Stickers](#). (For printing, use Avery Template 22805.)

Gary, Jocelyn, and Melissa want to share their success teaching BrainWise and encourage their colleagues to teach the program with fidelity and reap the results they have seen. (See issues [56](#) and [69](#).) They know the challenges of providing mental health services and have consistently reported that clients who have learned the 10 Wise Ways change their lives for the better. They would like the BrainWise Professional Group to see similar results.

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Helping children, youth and adults recognize they have control over how they to respond to problems provides them with self-determination and hope. These results are the reason that instructors are passionate about teaching BrainWise. They know that when individuals learn and retain the skills, they will use them for life. I savor the stories instructors share of running into former students or clients years later and being warmly greeted and thanked. The consequences later of teaching the 10 Wise Ways makes our spirits soar.

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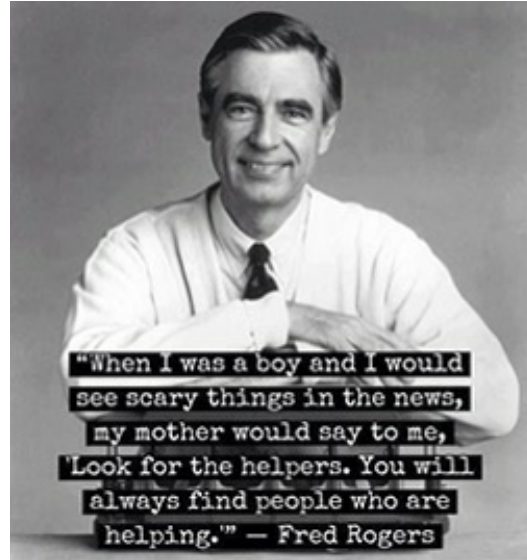
Take care,

Dr. Pat

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# On a Lighter Note

The Lizard Brain makes it easy to deny our need for support when we react and don't think about the consequences later. For example, we do not stop and think about what can happen to our mental and physical health when we dismiss ways to take care of ourselves. Instead, we are temporarily relieved when we cancel planned R & R, choose to keep our problems to ourselves, or skip an opportunity to get support from peers.



I return to the advice Fred Rogers imparted children on “finding the helpers.” or in BrainWise terms, to “use your Constellation of Support.” The short video addresses this when a professional shares his story about the help Fred Rogers gave him after a local tragedy. It is poignant and comforting.

