



GRASSROOTS **ADVOCACY** KIT FOR **PSYCHOLOGICAL** SCIENCE



CANADIAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION



SOCIÉTÉ
CANADIENNE
DE PSYCHOLOGIE

THE CANADIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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CALL TO **ACTION**



The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) is the national association for the science, practice and education of psychology in Canada. With approximately 7,000 members and affiliates, the CPA is Canada's largest association for psychology. As a member, you are the voice of psychology in Canada!

Current curricula in psychology provide excellent training in scientific methodology and research design, data collection and analysis, critical thinking and theoretical grounding, professional writing, knowledge translation and evaluation. Psychological research has broad and deep relevance to the success of individuals, families, economies and societies with an application to public policies and programs, economic recovery and assuring Canada's long-term prosperity. Psychological research yields measurable and concrete benefits in the workplace (e.g., how to sustain productive and successful workforces), for individual and societal well-being (e.g., how to create policies and programs that enhance childhood development, family functioning or healthy aging) and for health (e.g., how best to prevent and treat mental health problems and disorders) – to name only a few.

Unfortunately, despite the vast contribution of psychological research to societal well-being, the current funding system does not serve psychology and psychology researchers as well as it could.

This kit contains an overview of the current top science and research priority issues for the CPA and explains the challenges our members face. The kit also provides instructions for contacting your local Member of Parliament and a sample letter to send to his/her office so together, we can improve and increase support for psychological research in Canada to catch up, keep pace with and, ideally, even surpass our competitor countries.

It is now up to you, as a member of the CPA, to ensure that political decision makers understand our profession's important contributions by joining the CPA in its advocacy efforts. Given the federal government's stated commitment to science, research and health care, now is the time to reach out to your MP to raise the CPA's shared concerns with those who have the power to bring about real change.

If your place of employment is located in a different riding than your home, arrange to meet with both members. You can easily identify and locate the MP or MPs you should approach by visiting <http://parl.gc.ca> and inserting your business and residential postal codes.

KEY MESSAGES



The CPA strongly supports the implementation of all of the recommendations embodied within the Fundamental Science Review Report, produced by the panel chaired by Dr. David Naylor:

1 Funding of Fundamental / Investigator-led Research

- Phase in over four years, cumulative increases to the base funding of the federal research granting councils from the current \$3.5 billion to \$4.8 billion by 2022.

2 Funding of Equipment and Facilities

- Provide stable and predictable funds for research infrastructure.
- Ensure the availability of stable and rolling funds for the timely funding of smaller-scale equipment.
- Increase support for indirect costs associated with facilities and operations.
- Provide ongoing support for the recently established unbiased, transparent and independent Science Office.

3 Foundational Principles for a Healthy Research Ecosystem

- Improved coordination, harmonization, collaboration and sharing of best practices among the granting councils.
- Balance across all research disciplines including the social sciences and humanities, health and natural sciences.
- Support for multi-disciplinary and international funding.
- Support for indigenous researchers, diversity and research that cross-cuts disciplines.
- Improved agility and timeliness in responding to emerging issues.

KEY MESSAGES CONT'D

4 Support for Students and Early Career Scientists

- Increase the funding for graduate student and post-doctoral fellow supports by \$35 million per year for four years. Use these funds to:
 - ◆ Harmonize, upgrade and strategically focus the system of graduate student and post-doctoral fellow supports.
 - ◆ Provide funding for two years of masters training.
 - ◆ Restore the number of times one can apply for a post-doctoral fellowship to two.
 - ◆ Allow students to retain their fellowship for its duration (i.e., do not revoke funding after one's thesis defence but rather promote the use of funds to disseminate one's work).
- Increase funding for internships, streamline the funding process and provide internship opportunities with federal departments, within industry and within settings that do not have an economic focus.
- Restore funding for students to travel to and attend conferences.

5 Disseminating Research Knowledge

- Carefully consider the merits of open access publications on researchers, peer review systems and publishers.
- Carefully consider the merits of open data initiatives, ensuring that the tri-councils undertake proper consultation with researchers across numerous disciplines.
- Invest in digital research to serve the long-term access and re-use of Canadian research.
- Carefully consider the different ways that knowledge can be mobilized, how its impact can be assessed and how it needs to be directly funded as not all knowledge mobilization can be "in kind."



MEETING GUIDE

On the following pages you will find a sample letter for your MP. We invite you to personalize this letter to reflect your own situation and to include your colleagues and concerned citizens.

In addition to writing a letter, we invite you to follow up with your local MP by requesting a meeting on this issue. In many cases, MPs are more likely to be influenced by members of their riding – the more CPA members that get involved; the more likely our collective concerns are to be heard. If your MP is difficult to meet with, insist that you at least talk to them by telephone so that you can express your views directly. Note that MPs should make themselves available to their constituents, so be sure to mention that you live or work in his/her riding when you are calling to make the appointment.

Prior to meeting with your local MP, please review the enclosed meeting guide to help you prepare. Once you have concluded the meeting, please fill out the enclosed debriefing questionnaire. Your feedback will help us to continue our advocacy planning efforts.

CONTACT YOUR MP



Meeting with your MP is an opportunity to educate him/her about yourself and your concerns about the future of psychology and psychological research in Canada. Here are some tips to help you make the most of your meeting:

- 1** MPs will generally afford you only 15-30 minutes, so be brief and the point. If you are attending the meeting with two or more individuals, you should decide on a principal spokesperson to handle the main points, but all individuals should feel free to comment at any point during the meeting.
- 2** Open your meeting by thanking the MP for taking the time to meet with you.
- 3** Introduce yourself by giving your name, title and a brief overview of what you do. You should also mention that you are a member of the CPA. For example:

“ My name is Dr. Jane Doe and I am an associate professor and researcher at the University of Somewhere where my work is focused on better understanding abnormal childhood development. I am also a proud member of the Canadian Psychological Association, which is the national association for the science, practice and education of psychology in Canada. ”

- 4** Say a few words about the purpose and aim of your meeting (i.e., to outline the challenges affecting Canada's psychological researchers, to provide recommendations to address these issues and to request action that your MP can take).
- 5** Pay attention to the time you have been allotted. Your MP will appreciate your understanding that he/she has many commitments to keep.
- 6** At the end of the meeting, briefly summarize the key points discussed and reiterate what it is you want your MP to do. Make sure to add that if he/she has any questions, to contact either you personally or the CPA.
- 7** Complete the debriefing questionnaire after the meeting and return it via email to: science@cpa.ca

SAMPLE LETTER



[Date]
[Name, M.P.]
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1A 0A6

Dear [Name of MP]:

I am writing to you as a constituent and a member of the Canadian Psychological Association – Canada’s national association for the science, practice and education of psychology in Canada – to discuss federal funding of psychology research in Canada.

Psychology is diverse in its scope and the research methods it uses. It is a health, social and natural science that has broad and significant application to the well-being of Canadians and our communities by creating an understanding of people, human problems, and the many environments in which we live. Psychology is, by its very nature, inter-disciplinary and its research cross-cuts and meets the mandate of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), as well as other federal funding bodies (e.g., Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), Mitacs).

In a 2012 report of the Canadian Council of Academies, *The State of Science and Technology in Canada*, psychology and cognitive sciences was among six research fields in which Canada excelled in a global context. However, due to cuts in funding for the Tri-Council agencies over the years, psychological research and support for research has diminished profoundly. This means Canada can no longer keep pace with competitor countries.

I agree wholeheartedly with the Fundamental Science Review Report that larger investments in fundamental research are needed, and as a constituent, I would like to request the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this important issue in further detail.

I look forward to the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the importance of psychological research in Canada and the important role you can play in ensuring its continued success.

Please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,
[Signature]

DEBRIEF



Name: _____

Employer: _____

Business address: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone number: _____

Name of MP you met: _____

MP's political party: _____ Date of meeting: _____

1. Was the MP familiar with the issues affecting psychology researchers in Canada?

Yes

Somewhat

No

2. Was the candidate supportive of the recommendations?

Yes

Somewhat

No

General comments and feedback from the meeting: (Please include as much detail as possible)

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