

**BCATA 2010 Conference: “Bodymind Energy Therapies” –  
October 22- 24, Vancouver, BC**

**FINAL CONFERENCE REPORT – January 4, 2011**

**Sylvia Fockler, 2010 BCATA Conference Coordinator**

**The following report consists of two parts:**

**I. Executive Summary: List of Recommendations (to be published in abbreviated form in January 2011 “Water” edition of Pressure Release);**

**II. A longer evaluation report with critical analysis of each component of the conference planning process and program and recommendations to help with planning future conferences.**

**I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Recommendations for future conference planning: (\*Abbreviation of Final Report to the 2010-2011 BCATA Board)**

**The following discussion and recommendations are based on the information gathered from the 12-month experience of planning and promoting the 2010 Conference, anecdotal evidence from talking with other Jin Shin Do® practitioners, the Conference Registration forms summarized by Registrar, Lorna Jacobs, and the Conference Evaluation forms completed by 24 responding attendees which I prepared, distributed and summarized as Conference Coordinator. A list of recommendations has now been generated from integrating and analyzing this information.**

**Why do we need to hold BCATA conferences? Conferences as promotional processes and events:**

We, as members of the BCATA, have now completed ten years of holding annual conferences. They may have been initiated with the primary purpose of increasing attendance at the AGM, by providing a more exciting networking and educational event for members to attend. These annual conferences have also been planned and become an effective way of networking among members and educating both practitioner and student members about promoting and developing their skills in their professional practice as acupressurists. The intention of the 2010 Conference was to begin expanding its target audience of attendees and explore the potential of using the annual conference as a promotional event. When planning the 2010 Conference we proposed planning an event that would begin to fulfill some of the long term vision that the 2009-2010 Board proposed for the BCATA.

***“Every household is aware of the wide-ranging benefits of Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™ and Jin Shin Do® practitioners can support themselves solely with their practice.”***

This vision inspired providing a powerful way of educating not only BCATA members, but also other conventional and complementary health care practitioners, as well as the public, about the benefits of including Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure in a professional health care practice, and as part of a healing journey to a healthy lifestyle. In addition to its value as an educational and internal networking opportunity, we need to consider the purpose of planning and holding a conference as a promotional process and networking event to increase public awareness of the benefits of Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure. The word “process” is included here to emphasize the value of conference promotion done in advance of the actual event. Although I, as Conference Coordinator, and other members of the Conference Committee and the Board probably did our initial best to contact and network with representatives of more external organizations and our personal networks than for previous BCATA conferences, the promotional value of holding a conference was probably only partially attained in this initial attempt.

**I invite this opportunity for the current and future BCATA Board and membership to consider how to answer the following questions:**

- 1) What should the next decade, beginning with 2011, look like for our organization in terms of what can the BCATA do even better to promote acupressure, and specifically Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™ as a health care profession?**
- 2) Do annual conference events serve the promotional and educational needs of the majority of the BCATA membership?**
- 3) Why should we plan and hold conferences? Can planning and promoting a conference be a viable part of a larger much needed Public Relations and promotional strategy for educating the public about the benefits of Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™? Do conferences best serve the majority of BCATA members when held annually or biennially (alternate years)?**
- 4) What can the BCATA do even better in addition to holding conferences, in order to promote acupressure, and specifically Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™, as a professional health care modality and to educate the public about the potential benefits of practicing and receiving acupressure sessions?**

**RECOMMENDATION #1:** Determine the key purposes that a conference event and its planning and promotional processes can fulfill both for the BCATA membership and for the attendees. Ideally the selected purpose(s) will be congruent with the overall vision of the BCATA organization. These can include promoting awareness and education of Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™ as a beneficial healing modality, professional development for members, networking both among members and with non-member groups, healing opportunities for members, marketing opportunities for members, etc.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:** *The evaluation form for the next BCATA Conference should add a question that asks responding participants to rate the importance from a list of possible reasons they decided to attend, leaving a blank for any additional reasons they identify as important for them to attend the conference. A further question could ask if the conference met the participants' expectations.*

\*N.B. While holding a conference can be an opportunity to promote awareness of Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™, it should be noted that the large majority of 2010 attendees responding ( 14 BCATA members and 6 non-members) to the evaluation form indicated that they are not in favour of the content of future conferences to be strictly about Jin Shin Do® .

**RECOMMENDATION #3: ( re Conference Program Content):** The program content of future BCATA Conferences should not be limited to only Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™ specific topics. At the same time, in planning the 2010 Conference theme we endeavoured to choose a theme ( i.e. “Bodymind Energy Therapies”) that suggested both what is a significant aspect of the approach to healing that Jin Shin Do® provides in healing the human energy body that is also shared with other traditional and complementary healing modalities, (i.e. acknowledging the body, mind and spirit as all connected).

**RECOMMENDATION #4:** Ensure all conference promotional materials such as brochures, printed or electronic ads, Registration Forms, and invitations distributed by e-mail give consistent emphasis on and reference to the name: “Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure.™” This also applies to the conference folder and package of handouts for registrants, which should promote Jin Shin Do® and include both the BCATA and JSD logos. Anticipating adequate time and budget to plan the layout design and printing requirements will facilitate this in future.

**RECOMMENDATION #5:** The location of future conferences could broaden the accessibility for more members and non-members to attend by alternating between the B.C. Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island in

future years. That is, if planning a 2011 conference, it should be held on Vancouver Island, and the 2012 or 2013 conference held on the mainland.

**RECOMMENDATION #6 ( re choice of location):** Before choosing a venue and location for holding the conference event it is of primary importance to confirm the key purposes for planning and holding the conference. The intended event purpose can then determine the choice of location. The physical premises should not dictate the purpose of a programmed event or service. If the key purpose for holding a conference is to support networking among members of the BCATA and personal healing opportunities then choosing a retreat centre is ideal. If promoting awareness and public education about Jin Shin Do® and acupressure as a healing profession is the key purpose for holding a conference, along with attracting a broader audience of member and non-member practitioners, the general public and media for specific events, then a more centralized location (still could be a retreat centre) that is close to an urban centre and transportation is ideal.

**RECOMMENDATION #7:** Promoting attendance by non-BCATA members is probably most effective when done in person and by face-to-face contact instead of only by e-mail, especially when the BCATA member making the contact is also a member of the other organization. This implies that BCATA members practicing Jin Shin Do® who are also members of organizations representing professionals in the fields of TCM and acupuncture, massage therapy, shiatsu therapy, reflexology, reiki, clinical counseling, nursing, and so on, are potentially the best members to make the personal contacts to promote our BCATA conference. Even if BCATA members with dual membership are not on the conference committee, they can be delegated or identify themselves as the best people to volunteer to be the conference promoter to this other professional organization. This will involve more BCATA members in promoting an interest in Jin Shin Do® and the BCATA Conference to other professional groups, than just the BCATA Board and Conference Committee.

**RECOMMENDATION #8:** The BCATA should continue to invite the general public to attend future BCATA Conferences, for at least some of the events (e.g. workshops)..

**RECOMMENDATION #9:** Other CAM practitioners who are neither BCATA members nor members of the Jin Shin Do® Foundation should continue to be invited to attend future BCATA Conferences.

**RECOMMENDATION #10:** The BCATA should continue to advertise the BCATA Conference to the entire Jin Shin Do® Foundation membership for whom we are sent e-mail addresses by the JSDF to maintain broad awareness of the BCATA as an active professional acupressure group to

be involved with in Canada. This advertising should be done at least six months before the conference date (i.e. by mid-April for an October conference date.) to facilitate advance scheduling and travel planning. Complementary and alternative (CAM) therapists need to draw on their potential strength in numbers to effect change in local and national health care policy.

**RECOMMENDATION #11:** A more effective way of advertising with the Natural Health Practitioners of Canada might be to write an article/news item for the Connections magazine to be published in the summer. As a paid listing on the website it takes further action to click on the listing and access a fuller detailed description of the event, which few readers may be motivated to do.

**RECOMMENDATION #12:** Ensure the application to the BC College of Massage Therapy for CEC approval is submitted in April for an early June confirmation, so that the conference can be advertised in the June issue of the MTABC's Massage Matters in future. As soon as the conference theme and speakers topics are confirmed in preferably March or early April, then the Conference organizers can apply as soon as possible for CEC approval to the College of Massage Therapy of BC Chair of the Quality Management Committee to allow for a potential 6-8 week approval process. This approval for CECredits can then be advertised in the June edition of the MTABC news letter and journal, Massage Matters, in time to promote the conference to a potential 5000 RMT members.

**RECOMMENDATION# 13:** Future conference planning could consider the additional priority professional groups who would be most interested in a professional acupressure therapists' conference, especially as bodymind therapists. This suggests that acupuncturists and TCM practitioners, Medical Qi Gong practitioners/therapists, clinical counsellors, reflexologists, in addition to massage therapists (RMTs) and shiatsu therapists (RSTs and Shiatsupractors), and specialized kinesiologists would all be potentially interested in either acupressure or bodymind therapies.

**RECOMMENDATION #14:** By offering the option of attending only part of the conference program, we can encourage more members as well as non-members to attend. However, we need to make it clear that no Early Bird rates are offered for partial registration.

Of the 16 BCATA members responding to the evaluation form, 12 of them had been members for 5 to 19 years. Only four members had been members for less than five years. Eleven of these BCATA members indicated they had attended conferences "nearly every year", and four members indicated they had attended conferences "occasionally". Only

one new BCATA member was attending for the first time, and another member had attended only once before.

This response pattern suggests that there is a core group of devoted conference attendees who have been members for over five years, and that we are not successful in encouraging new or more recently joining members to attend. This implies that the conference is not accessible for new members or not considered of adequate benefit to newer members to attend.

**CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION#15:** The 2010-2011 BCATA Board needs to address what other activities and initiatives can be implemented to be of benefit to even more BCATA members than only planning conferences for a minority core group (30%) of long-time members to attend. If continuing to hold conferences, we need to determine how the conference planning and promotional process as well as the event itself can better fulfill and support the needs of more BCATA members. My conclusion, is that there needs to be far more done to promote Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™ and the acupressure profession in general in order for it to become a respected and well-known health care modality. Continuing conferences can be beneficial to even more members if planned to fulfill part of this necessary broader promotional program.

**RECOMMENDATION #16** Future e-mail communication to the BCATA and Jin Shin Do® Foundation memberships would be more efficient and most affordable by designing announcements using the templates free of charge provided by an open source software such as MAILCHIMP, instead of subscribing to Constant Contact and similar online marketing tools.

**RECOMMENDATION #17** Conference registrants should be invited to check a box on the Registration Form indicating that they can use their conference attendance for CE Credits with their professional association. Conference workshop completion certificates should be prepared by the Conference Committee in cooperation with the BCATA Registrar handling the conference registration. These completion certificates should then be distributed at the conference or mailed following the Conference to those registrants requesting proof of their attendance to satisfy CE requirements.

**RECOMMENDATION#18:** Conference promotion needs to include emphasis on the Saturday evening networking and dinner events as being an important and valuable component to encourage members to attend and build community spirit and connections with fellow practitioners. Some attendees and new members only attended the workshops this year perhaps not allowing enough time to really connect with other practitioners from near and farther out of town.

**Recommendation#19:** Future conferences may need to be held every second year, with our financial resources spent on other kinds of promotional events in the global and local community during the intervening years to raise awareness as well as potential funding.

**RECOMMENDATION #20:** The BCATA membership should consider planning and providing more promotional opportunities both before and during the conference event, in the form of community demonstrations of the Jin Shin Do® Neck and Shoulder Release and other short sessions, and scheduling a trade fair as part of the conference.

**RECOMMENDATION #21:** When designing the Registration Form anticipate and include the crucial Conference attendance/participation information that can be gathered using this instrument. (e.g. Membership status, workshops attending, partial or full attendance, early or late registration, etc.) that will be useful for future planning.

## **II. 2010 Conference Report with Recommendations for future conference planning**

**The following discussion and recommendations are based on the information gathered from the 12-month experience of planning and promoting the 2010 Conference, anecdotal evidence from talking with other Jin Shin Do® practitioners, the Conference Registration forms summarized by Registrar, Lorna Jacobs, and the Conference Evaluation forms completed by 24 responding attendees which I prepared, distributed and summarized as Conference Coordinator. A list of recommendations has now been generated from Integrating and analyzing this information.**

### **Why do we need to hold BCATA conferences? Conferences as promotional processes and events:**

We, as members of the BCATA, have now completed ten years of holding annual conferences. They may have been initiated with the primary purpose of increasing attendance at the AGM, by providing a more exciting networking and educational event for members to attend. These annual conferences have also been planned and become an effective way of networking among members and educating both practitioner and student members about promoting and developing their skills in their professional practice as acupressurists. The intention of the 2010 Conference was to begin expanding its target audience of attendees and explore the potential of using the annual conference as a promotional event. When planning the 2010 Conference we proposed planning an event that would begin to fulfill some of the long term vision that the 2009-2010 Board proposed for the BCATA.

*“Every household is aware of the wide-ranging benefits of Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™ and Jin Shin Do® practitioners can support themselves solely with their practice.”*

This vision inspired providing a powerful way of educating not only BCATA members, but also other conventional and complementary health care practitioners, as well as the public, about the benefits of including Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure in a professional health care practice, and as part of a healing journey to a healthy lifestyle. In addition to its value as an educational and internal networking opportunity, we need to consider the purpose of planning and holding a conference as a promotional process and networking event to increase public awareness of the benefits of Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure. The word “process” is included here to emphasize the value of conference promotion done in advance of the actual event for promoting Jin Shin Do® and acupressure as well as the conference. Although I, as Conference Coordinator, and other members of the Conference Committee and the Board probably did our initial best to contact and network with representatives of more

external organizations and our personal networks than for previous BCATA conferences, the promotional value of holding a conference was probably only partially attained in this initial attempt.

**I invite this opportunity for the current and future BCATA Board and membership to consider how to answer the following questions:**

- 1) What should the next decade, beginning with 2011, look like for our organization in terms of what can the BCATA do even better to promote acupressure, and specifically Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™ as a health care profession?**
- 2) Do annual conference events serve the promotional and educational needs of the majority of the BCATA membership?**
- 3) Why should we plan and hold conferences? Can planning and promoting a conference be a viable part of a larger much needed Public Relations and promotional strategy for educating the public about the benefits of Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™? Do conferences best serve the majority of BCATA members when held annually or biennially (alternate years)?**
- 4) What can the BCATA do even better in addition to holding conferences, in order to promote acupressure, and specifically Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™, as a professional health care modality and to educate the public about the potential benefits of practicing and receiving acupressure sessions?**

As a 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference the 2010 BCATA Conference planning process initiated several “Firsts”. These five initiatives included:

- 1) A conscious choice of PURPOSE(s): Planning the conference to be in congruence with the overall BCATA vision developed by the Board during its December 2009 first meeting.**
- 2) NEW GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: It was the first time the conference was on the mainland of BC, not Vancouver Island;**
- 3) BROADER TARGET AUDIENCE:**
  - a) it is the first time we have broadened the target audience of potential attendees by inviting non-members (especially Shiatsu Therapy Association of BC members) and all the members of the Jin Shin Do® Foundation for Bodymind Acupressure™ ( who have e-mail addresses);**

**b): It is the first time we connected with, networked with and bought advertising space with other major non-member organizations, (namely the Shiatsu Therapy Association of BC, the Massage Therapy Association of BC, the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors, and the Natural Health Practitioners of Canada) in the natural health and holistic health care field;**

**4) NETWORKING & PROMOTION & Information Technology used:**

**It is the first time we have sent out invitations by e-mail in addition to through the mail with the Pressure Release;**

**It is the first time we have also met in person or phoned other professional organizations to promote the BCATA Conference**

**(STABC-RSTs, NHPC, RMTs, Inspire Health, BCACC-- RCC's. )**

**5) Full and part-time attendance: Although partial conference registration was offered in previous years to BCATA members as an option, we were able to encourage more non-members to attend by promoting the option of attending only one or two workshops.**

**6) COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY:**

**7) PROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM CONTENT: Approval was applied for and obtained by one of several potential outside health professional organizations for attending the BCATA Conference workshops for Continuing Education Credits. We applied for and obtained Continuing Education Credit approval from the College of Massage Therapy of BC for attendance by Registered Massage Therapists at conference workshops.**

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**These initiatives are now discussed in terms of what we learned and what recommended improvements could be made in the future. Additional recommendations will follow made in reference to other major conference components.**

**1) EVENT PURPOSE: Planning the conference to be in congruence with the overall BCATA vision developed by the Board during its December 2009 first meeting.** This is probably one of the first times or the only time we have planned our conference to synchronize with manifesting a new vision for the BCATA! This vision for more public education was stated to be:

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As Conference Chair, I also circulated a list of other potential purposes to the Conference Committee that a conference event could fulfill for us to discuss and from which to select intentional purposes. This focus on confirming the intended purpose(s) of the conference was to enable us to plan the 2010 Conference so as to consciously anticipate and include in our event planning those activities, components or processes that could attain our desired outcomes.

**RECOMMENDATION #1: *Determine the key purposes that a conference event and its planning and promotional processes can fulfill both for the BCATA and for the attendees. Ideally the selected purpose(s) will be congruent with the overall vision of the BCATA organization.. These can include promoting awareness and education of Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™ as a beneficial healing modality, professional development for members, networking both among members and with non-member groups, healing opportunities for members, marketing opportunities for members, etc.***

Ask future Conference attendees to identify the primary reason they attended this 2010 BCATA Conference, and any previous BCATA conferences: Although the reason(s) why participants decided to attend the 2010 Conference may sometimes differ or be in addition to the main reasons or purposes the BCATA decides to hold conferences, it would be useful to ask conference participants to rate the main reasons they decided to attend this conference. This could be an additional question on a future Conference Evaluation Form.

**\*\*\*RECOMMENDATION #2: *The evaluation form for the next BCATA Conference should add a question that asks responding participants to rate the importance from a list of possible reasons they decided to attend, leaving a blank for any additional reasons they identify as important for them to attend the conference. A further question could ask if the conference met the participants' expectations.***

In planning the 2010 Conference to fulfill both educational and promotional purposes, the initial intention was to focus on promoting Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™ as a specific acupressure modality practiced by the majority of BCATA members. More details will be described below under the discussion of Conference Promotion.

\*N.B. While holding a conference can be an opportunity to promote awareness of Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™, it should be noted that the large majority of 2010 attendees responding ( 14 BCATA members and 6 non-members) to the evaluation form indicated that they are not in favour of the content of future conferences to be strictly about Jin Shin Do® .

**RECOMMENDATION #3: ( re Conference Program Content):** *The program content of future BCATA Conferences should not be limited to only Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™ specific topics. At the same time, in planning the 2010 Conference theme we endeavoured to choose a theme ( i.e. “Bodymind Energy Therapies”) that suggested both what is a significant aspect of the approach to healing that Jin Shin Do® provides in healing the human energy body that is also shared with other traditional and complementary healing modalities, (i.e. acknowledging the body, mind and spirit as all connected).*

**RECOMMENDATION #4:** *Ensure all conference promotional materials such as brochures, printed or electronic ads, Registration Forms, and invitations distributed by e-mail give consistent emphasis on and reference to the name: “Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure.™” This also applies to the conference folder and package of handouts for registrants, which should promote Jin Shin Do® and include both the BCATA and JSD logos. Anticipating adequate time and budget to plan the layout design and printing requirements will facilitate this in future.*

This was planned but the logistics of layout and printing in the last week before the conference precluded the JSD logo from being included on one side of the folder cover along with the BCATA logo on the other.

**2) LOCATION:** **It was the first time the conference was on the mainland of BC, not Vancouver Island. Did this enable more BCATA members and non-members as mainland residents to attend?**

**a) Geographical Location**

More (11 members and 3 non-members) of the evaluation form respondents indicated that the location in Vancouver was not the main reason they attended the conference. They had regularly attended conferences wherever they were located. However, there were five members and four non-members for a total of nine attendees who indicated they were attending because of the conference location being in Vancouver. This represents roughly one-third of the attendees responding were able to attend because of the conference location being on the mainland in Vancouver. Registration forms also indicated that several of the attendees who came to only one event were Lower Mainland residents, and that more attendees overall were from the Lower Mainland than Vancouver Island.

**RECOMMENDATION #5:** *The location of future conferences could broaden the accessibility for more members and non-members to attend by alternating between the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island in future years. That is, if planning a 2011 conference, it should be held on Vancouver Island, and the 2012 or 2013 conference held on the mainland.*

**b) Venue & Accommodation:**

The Vancouver School of Theology venue was chosen not only for its beautiful views, but also for its proximity to nearby accommodation options, their welcoming attitude to hosting a conference related to healing, along with being readily accessible by bus and car, and in proximity to potential attendees from both the university and Greater Vancouver community. It was away from the bustle and noise of downtown but still readily accessible. Additional meeting rooms initially offered and available could have been used for demonstration sessions for potential media coverage and a trade fair. Unfortunately, these potential pre-conference activities did not occur in 2010.

**RECOMMENDATION #6 ( re choice of location):** Before choosing a venue and location for holding the conference event it is of primary importance to confirm the key purposes for planning and holding the conference. The intended event purpose can then determine the choice of location. The physical premises should not dictate the purpose of a programmed event or service. If the key purpose for holding a conference is to support networking among members of the BCATA and personal healing opportunities then choosing a retreat centre is ideal. If promoting awareness and public education about Jin Shin Do® and acupressure as a healing profession is the key purpose for holding a conference, along with attracting a broader audience of member and non-member practitioners, the general public and media for specific events, then a more centralized location close to an urban centre and transportation is ideal.

The finding of a beautiful retreat or resort venue a long way from airport and bus or other transportation, and far away from an urban centre where other target audiences ( non-members) work and live, or which provides potential promotional media and photo opportunities lends itself to a retreat event for nurturing connection among members only, and primarily members in the nearby geographical area. If the purpose is also to promote Jin Shin Do® to a broader audience of other health practitioners and the general public, then a chosen location may need to be more accessible to a wider range of participants.

The VST Iona Building location was rated by responding participants as excellent with the following disadvantages. 1) A noisy ventilation system caused problems with the acoustics in Room 527 until we finally received instructions on how to turn it off. 2) Attendees also found the air conditioning to be too cold, requiring the wearing of extra layers or coats inside. 3) Parking permits had to be reserved

ahead of the weekend arrival to ensure a space other than a parkade 2 blocks away. These parking arrangements were noted and made by those staying on campus more easily than those not staying in campus accommodation who had not communicated directly with each facility ahead of time.

4) Unfortunately an accident while trying to adjust the height of the fixed microphone on the podium, resulted in an expensive repair of a broken wire, increasing our rental cost.

All ten BCATA members who stayed in campus accommodation at either the West Coast Suites, Carey Centre or Vancouver School of Theology rated their accommodation as excellent.

**3) BROADER TARGET AUDIENCE: It is the first time we have invited non-members( especially STABC members) and all the members of the Jin Shin Do® Foundation for Bodymind Acupressure™ (who have e-mail addresses) by sending out two or more e-mail blitzes along with a complimentary electronic copy of the BCATA Pressure Release.**

Of a total of 39 paid registrants, a total of 37 people attended the 2010 conference as a whole or as partial attendees of one or more workshops. Sixteen (43%) of these were non-members, suggesting that we succeeded in attracting a broader audience to attend.

Five of the non-members responding to the evaluation form indicated that they had heard about the Conference “by word of mouth” from “Blanche or Sylvia” and two specified that this was from “Sylvia attending the STABC Board meeting and later AGM.” Five of the non-members attending were RST members of the Shiatsu Therapy Association of BC, who also would have received two consecutive e-mail blitz announcements sent out by the STABC. ( My attending a January 2010 STABC Board Meeting as a fellow STA member, as well as attending the 2010 STABC AGM in May 2010 to specifically promote the BCATA Conference being accessible to attend in Vancouver, along with two e-mail blitz ads to all 85 STABC members, appears to have been somewhat effective in attracting attention to the BCATA Conference.)

***RECOMMENDATION #7: Promoting attendance by non-BCATA members is probably most effective when done in person and by face-to-face contact instead of only by e-mail, especially when the BCATA member making the contact is also a member of the other organization. This implies that BCATA members practicing Jin Shin Do® who are also members of organizations representing professionals in the fields of TCM and acupuncture, massage therapy, shiatsu therapy, reflexology, reiki, clinical counseling, nursing, and so on, are potentially the best members to make the personal contacts to promote our BCATA conference. Even if BCATA members with dual membership are not on the conference committee, they***

***can be delegated or identify themselves as the best people to volunteer to be the conference promoter to this other professional organization. This will involve more BCATA members in promoting an interest in Jin Shin Do® and the BCATA Conference to other professional groups, than just the BCATA Board and Conference Committee.***

- a) **Inviting the general public to attend** - All 16 BCATA members responding to the evaluation form, agreed that “Yes” it was a good idea to open the conference up to the general public. Combined with the 5 non-members also agreeing, there were 21 respondents (87.5% of all respondents) agreeing that the general public should be invited to attend the BCATA conference.

***RECOMMENDATION # 8: The BCATA should continue to invite the general public to attend future BCATA Conferences, for at least selected events (e.g. workshops).***

- b) **Inviting other CAM practitioners (non-BCATA members) to attend** – There was also almost unanimous strong agreement among all BCATA members and non-member respondents to being in favour of opening the conference to other CAM practitioners of modalities related to Jin Shin Do® and acupressure.

***RECOMMENDATION #9: Other CAM practitioners who are neither BCATA members nor members of the Jin Shin Do® Foundation should be continued to be invited to attend future BCATA Conferences.***

- c) **Inviting all Jin Shin Do® Foundation members to attend** - I received a personal comment from a JSDF member in Alberta who is also a Board member for the Natural Health Practitioners of Canada, who heard from another Alberta Jin Shin Do® member, that she was excited to hear that there was a conference being held in Vancouver related to Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™ even if she could not attend this year. This comment also included that by reaching out beyond the BCATA membership to advertise the 2010 Conference, we had created a level of awareness beyond British Columbia that there is an active professional Jin Shin Do® community in Canada to belong to. As Conference Chair, I also received a personal e-mail in response to the JSDF e-mail invitation from a Senior JSDF Teacher in the USA mid-west who would have liked to attend our conference if it had not been on the same dates of another conference he had to attend.

***RECOMMENDATION #10: The BCATA should continue to advertise the BCATA Conference to the entire Jin Shin Do® Foundation membership for whom we are sent e-mail addresses by the JSDF to maintain broad awareness of the BCATA as an active professional acupressure group to be involved with in Canada. This advertising should be done at least six***

***months before the conference date (i.e. by mid-April for an October conference date.) to facilitate advance scheduling and travel planning. Complementary and alternative (CAM) therapists need to draw on their potential strength in numbers to effect change in local and national health care policy.***

**d) It is the first time we connected with, networked with and bought actual or potential advertising space with other major non-member organizations, (namely the Shiatsu Therapy Association of BC, with the Massage Therapy Association of BC, the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors, and the Natural Health Practitioners of Canada) in the natural health and holistic health care field. Other networking with acupuncturists and TCM practitioners, reflexologists and specialized kinesiologists (CANASK) was also begun by e-mail or personal contact, but no formal advertising was done with these latter groups.**

Publication timing is the most important factor in planning print advertising for the Conference. We encountered two timing problems in the advertising planned for the 2010 Conference with other organizations.

The first was with the Natural Health Practitioners of Canada website and monthly membership blitzes of course offerings. Although we successfully submitted a BCATA conference ad by the July 1<sup>st</sup> for posting in both the July 1<sup>st</sup> and August 1<sup>st</sup> listings of event and course offerings sent out monthly to NHPC members and also posted on the NHPC website, the contract was apparently only for two months ( costing \$49), and we discovered too late that the ad did not continue after August, so we would have had to pay an additional \$49 to have the ad continue for the September and October e-mailed courses and events listings. It is doubtful that this reached enough BC health practitioners, as the ad required knowing where to go in the website to open it up for the complete ad about the conference.

***RECOMMENDATION #11: A more effective way of advertising with the NHPC might be to write an article/news item for the Connections magazine to be published in the summer. As a paid listing on the website it takes further action to click on the listing and access a fuller detailed description of the event, which few readers may be motivated to do. Contact Claire Ashton, Communications, to explore this option.***

The second timing challenge was with the Massage Therapy Association of BC who refused to advertise our conference unless it already had been approved for CECs. Since it took until July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2010 to be notified of this approval for two of the three conference workshop topics, we were too late to publish an ad in the June publication of Massage Matters. The next issue was planned for October 1<sup>st</sup>, but after designing and confirming a classified ad for this later issue, I later

heard after the Conference that the October 1<sup>st</sup> publication date was delayed, so that our ad was never published or distributed to any of the 5,000 RMTs in the province as had been anticipated. Fortunately, our advertising fee was cancelled due to this delay.

**RECOMMENDATION #12:** *Ensure the application to MTABC for CEC approval is submitted in April for an early June confirmation, so that the conference can be advertised in the June issue of Massage Matters in future. As soon as the conference theme and speakers topics are confirmed in preferably March or early April, then the Conference organizers can apply as soon as possible for CEC approval to the College of Massage Therapy of BC Chair of the Quality Management Committee to allow for a potential 6-8 week approval process. This approval for CECredits can then be advertised in the June edition of the MTABC news letter and journal, Massage Matters, in time to promote the conference to a potential 5000 RMT members.*

**e) List of contacts for planning paid advertising:**

**1. Shiatsu Therapy Association of BC** ( a bargain at \$20 per e-mail blitz, when it took hours for their webmaster to design in Constant Contact and for me to proof read several times). We paid for two such e-mail blitzes, one in July and a second one in September for a total of \$40. As a result of this and my personal contact to promote the Conference at the STABC AGM, five RST members of the STABC (not including myself) attended. Hopefully we can encourage more shiatsu therapists to attend in the future.

**Contact:** Lynn Zeleschuk, STABC Webmaster,  
e-mail: [lz\\_lifelineshiatsu@telus.net](mailto:lz_lifelineshiatsu@telus.net); phone: 604-250-2125

**2. Massage Therapy Association of BC: (Ad not published)**

[www.massagetherapy.bc.ca](http://www.massagetherapy.bc.ca)

Dave DeWitt, Communications and Logistics Manager,  
180, 1200 - W. 73rd Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V6P 6G5

[dave@massagetherapy.bc.ca](mailto:dave@massagetherapy.bc.ca) Phone: 604-873-4467, Ext:4

**Advertising Manager:** Victoria Chapman, Phone: 1-604-741-4189

e-mail: [vchapman@visitorschoice.com](mailto:vchapman@visitorschoice.com) OR [vchapman@biv.com](mailto:vchapman@biv.com)

**3. BC Association of Clinical Counsellors:** Kirk arranged for a conference ad similar to the one designed for the MTABC publication be included in a weekly or bi-weekly e-mailed newsletter sent out to all members of the BCACC. One of the respondents to the

evaluation form indicated they had heard of the conference from this ad.

Contact:

**4. Natural Health Practitioners of Canada: Edmonton, AB**

Nadine Noseworthy

Merchandise Advertising and

Social Media Coordinator

Natural Health Practitioners of Canada

[www.nhpcanada.org](http://www.nhpcanada.org)

***Recommendation# 13: Future conference planning could consider networking and advertising with additional priority professional groups who would be most interested in a professional acupressure therapists' conference, especially as bodymind therapists. This suggests that acupuncturists and TCM practitioners, Medical Qi Gong practitioners/therapists, clinical counsellors, reflexologists, in addition to massage therapists (RMTs) and shiatsu therapists (RSTs and Shiatsu practors), and specialized kinesiologists would all be potentially interested in either acupressure or bodymind therapies.***

**5) ATTENDANCE – Full and part-time: Although partial conference registration was offered in previous years to BCATA members as an option, we were able to encourage more non-members to attend this year by promoting the option of attending only one or two workshops.**

A total of 23 BCATA members (31% of 75 members) registered for the 2010 Conference, of which 21 members (28%) attended the full conference. This suggests that close to a third of the membership directly benefit from attending the conference. (See Appendix A for more Registration Form data.)

This attendance compares very favorably to the recent October 2010 National Conference of the Natural Health Practitioners of Canada held in Victoria, where approximately only 200 members (3%) attended out of a total NHPC membership of at least 6500-6800 members across Canada, with a majority in Alberta. This NHPC Conference was a far more costly and longer event with many concurrent workshops, and a post-conference workshop.

Twenty-eight percent of BCATA members attending is a much better proportion than 3% of all 6500 NHPC members. This comparison between a small and large professional associations suggests the BCATA Conference is quite successful in attracting 30% attendance from its membership. **However, this begs the question: What can the BCATA be doing for the other 72%-75% of our membership who did not attend the conference?**

The registration form data indicates that there were 26 full-time and 12 part-time registrants at the 2010 Conference, indicating about a third of attendees registered to attend part-time. This part-time attendance allows a wider range of participants to attend.

Each of the three scheduled workshops was consistently attended by 29 to 30 participants. Twenty-six (26) of these were attending the entire conference, with the additional three to four participants attending only one to three workshops, but not the entire conference (including the evening dinner and networking events).

**RECOMMENDATION #14: *By offering the option of attending only part of the conference program, we can encourage more members as well as non-members to attend. However, we need to make it clear that no Early Bird rates are offered for partial registration.***

**a) Who attended the 2010 Conference?:**

Of the 16 BCATA members responding to the evaluation form, 12 of them had been members for 5 to 19 years. Only four members had been members for less than five years. Eleven of these BCATA members indicated they had attended conferences “nearly every year”, and four members indicated they had attended conferences “occasionally”. Only one new BCATA member was attending for the first time, and another member had attended only once before.

This response pattern suggests that there is a core group of devoted conference attendees who have been members for over five years, and that we are not successful in encouraging new or more recently joining members to attend. This implies that the conference is not accessible for new members or not considered of adequate benefit to newer members to attend. Although there may be some indirect promotional benefits to all BCATA members whether or not they attend conferences, only a third of the membership actually attended the 2010 Conference, after more promotion by mail and e-mail than previous conferences. Sixty-eight (68.5%) of the members responding (11 BCATA members) indicated they attended conferences no matter where the location, with 5 more members responding that they were more likely to attend because of the 2010 location being in Vancouver.

**CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION#15:** *The 2010-2011 BCATA Board needs to address what other activities and initiatives can be implemented to be of benefit to more BCATA members than only planning conferences for a small core group of members to attend. If continuing to hold conferences, we need to determine how the conference planning process leading up to the event itself, as well as the activities and content of the event itself can better fulfill and support the needs of more BCATA members. My conclusion, is that there needs to be far more done to promote Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™ and the acupressure profession in general in order for it to become a respected and well-known health care modality.*

**6) COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY: E-mail Invitations:** It is the first time we have sent out invitations by e-mail in addition to through the mail with the Pressure Release to only BCATA members.

An attractive colourful e-mail announcement was designed by one or two of our dedicated volunteers ( Susan Imber and Wendy Schultz), but we had difficulty forwarding it to others without losing the formatting and photos. I researched the costs of using Constant Contact (which is used by the Shiatsu Therapy Association for e-mail blitzing its members) and other online e-mail marketing programs and discovered Mail Chimp is a free open source software which is more affordable for use by small businesses and non-profit organizations with smaller size mailing lists (under 300 contacts).

**RECOMMENDATION #16:** *Future e-mail communication to the BCATA and Jin Shin Do® Foundation memberships would be more efficient and most affordable by designing announcements using free of charge the templates provided by an open source software such as MAILCHIMP, instead of subscribing to Constant Contact and similar online marketing tools.*

**7) PROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM CONTENT:** We applied for and obtained Continuing Education Credit approval from the College of Massage Therapy of BC for attendance by Registered Massage Therapists at conference workshops.

The chosen conference theme and invited workshop speakers were selected on for the purpose of educating all participants about at least one theoretical aspect and applications of the bodymind energy therapy called Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™. Although the majority of the 22 evaluation form respondents who attended each of the three workshops rated each workshop as “Excellent”, the Sunday workshop presentation entitled “Acupressure as Metaphor” by Dr. Samantha Jennings earned the highest percentage (86%) of respondents rating it as “Excellent”. **This implies that more workshops of this practical and**

**theoretical ( Five Element Theory) kind of content to that can be taken away by practitioners for application in their acupuncture practice are needed and most appreciated.**

Obtaining CEC approval needs to be done as soon as possible in order to have time to publish Conference advertisements in the appropriate professional newsletters and websites. After planning to apply for CECredit approval, we were discouraged by the thought that our conference workshop topics would never be approved as they were outside the scope of practice for massage therapists in BC. When I decided to write an application letter anyway in June, we received approval by mid-July from the College of Massage Therapy for two of the three workshops to provide RMTs with approved five credits each for attendance. This was too late however to advertise in the June publication of *Massage Matters*. When we planned to advertise in the next issue expected to be published by October 1, 2010, that issue was delayed until after the October conference date. Our contract was cancelled so we did not have to pay for the unpublished ad.

**Apply for CEC approval for RMTs to : Lorelei Walker, Chair  
Quality Management Committee  
College of Massage Therapists of BC e-mail: [office@cmtbc.bc.ca](mailto:office@cmtbc.bc.ca)**

Workshop completion certificates used to be distributed to BCATA Conference attendees in the year or two following the BCATA application for occupational title with the accompanying proposal for continuing education credit and continued competency policy. We have not yet prepared or distributed such Conference workshop attendance certificates for the BCATA members attending who might use their conference attendance for CECredits for maintaining their status as certified RSTs, or NHPC members.

***RECOMMENDATION #17: Conference registrants should be invited to check a box on the Registration Form indicating that they can use their conference attendance for CECredits with their professional association. Conference workshop completion certificates should be prepared by the Conference Committee in cooperation with the BCATA Registrar handling the conference registration. These completion certificates should then be distributed at the conference or mailed following the Conference to those registrants requesting proof of their attendance to satisfy CE requirements.***

## **8) CONFERENCE as NETWORKING OPPORTUNITY:**

From conversations with some newer members from the Lower Mainland who were attending the conference for the first time, I realized that they were choosing to attend only the workshops and not attend the Saturday evening dinner and networking event. This may have been related to their other time commitments, but I questioned if it was also due to lack of familiarity with how previous BCATA conferences have provided valuable heart-warming fun and

community connection with fellow practitioners during evening dinner and networking events.

**Recommendation #18: Conference promotion needs to include emphasis on the Saturday evening networking and dinner events as being an important and valuable component to encourage members to attend and build community spirit and connections with fellow practitioners. Some attendees and new members only attended the workshops this year perhaps not allowing enough time to really connect with other practitioners from near and farther out of town.**

**9) Conference frequency as part of planning a broader Promotional Strategy:**

**Recommendation#19: Future conferences may need to be held every second year, with our financial resources spent on other kinds of promotional events in the global and local community during the intervening years to raise awareness as well as potential funding.**

This kind of broader promotion would provide much needed support to acupuncture practitioners building their practices as professionals, but also seek to serve a broader global need that would provide us with effective affiliation marketing being related to a social service or need (such as underprivileged or special needs children, youth with eating disorders, hospice care and support of the dying, PTSD and trauma resolution - providing support to military veterans or MVA victims with PTSD, heart disease and stroke - stroke recovery support.)

**10) Provide More Promotional Opportunities before and at the Conference Event:**

**RECOMMENDATION #20: The BCATA membership should consider planning and providing more promotional opportunities both before and during the conference event, in the form of community demonstrations of the Jin Shin Do® Neck and Shoulder Release and other short sessions, and scheduling a trade fair as part of the conference.**

**a) Trade Fair during or preceding Conference:** Some previous annual BCATA conferences have provided a trade fair on the first evening of the conference as part of a social welcoming event. The need for more promotional opportunities for primarily for BCATA members at the conference should be considered again. A trade fair with tables for rent by individual therapists or teachers to talk and demonstrate

what we do with other kinds of health practitioners who will be interested in finding out about what we have to offer could be a useful event to include as part of the conference.

b) Community presentations and demonstrations of Jin Shin Do® Neck and Shoulder Release could be scheduled throughout the year and throughout the province, but especially in the months leading up to the Annual BCATA Conference. Introductory private sessions as well as Neck and Shoulder Releases demonstrated in groups would provide photo opportunities ( with consent from the participants) to encourage media coverage about Jin Shin Do® Bodymind Acupressure™. Such events in the community would also be an opportunity to distribute conference brochures and talk about what we practice to a wider group of people. These kinds of presentations have been initiated by BCATA members on the North Shore in North and West Vancouver in the past year. I was planning to hold at least one of these presentations with personal demo sessions at the University of B.C and had reserved Room 309 at the Vancouver School of Theology for several potential days in September and October 2010, but we needed more practitioners to be available to make it happen in a financially viable way.

## **11) CATERING**

**If possible, it is preferable to choose a venue which can provide in-house catering. It is extra work and expense to provide an outside caterer and to rent dishes and cutlery. This is especially a nuisance if rental cutlery and dishes are missing on returning equipment to the event rental business. However, this is of secondary importance to finding a location and venue that will serve the primary purposes for holding the conference.**

## **12) CONFERENCE FINANCIAL REPORT - BUDGET REVENUE & EXPENSES: ( Estimate only for final confirmation of final figures with Treasurer)**

**By expanding the target audience beyond the BCATA membership, the 2010 Conference Committee realized there is a potential for the BCATA Conferences to be a potential fund-raiser for the association. This potential for future conferences to be more self-sufficient and less reliant on funds from the BCATA membership fees to pay for outstanding conference expense should be a major consideration for future planning.**

**By overestimating the projected cost of expenses, and underestimating the revenue to be earned from three different levels of registration ( assuming all registration fees at the early discount rate), I was successful in holding the cost of the conference itself (excluding Board member accommodation and travel expenses to within \$300 of its projected budget. By entering expenses into the budget spreadsheet as decisions to spend money were made, the projected budget was a useful management tool for decision-making. (This is based on the November 2010 Treasurer’s report of the 2010 Conference expenses and income, with some final expenses still to be confirmed.**

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**Appendix A: CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM & PROCESS:**

**RECOMMENDATION #21: *When designing the Registration Form anticipate and include the crucial Conference attendance/participation information that can be gathered using this instrument. (e.g. Membership status, workshops attending, partial or full attendance, early or late registration, etc.) that will be useful for future planning.***

**Registrar Lorna Jacobs' List of 2010 BCATA Conference Registrants**

- 1) THE FINAL NUMBER OF ATTENDEES, as a breakdown of:  
 a) BCATA members and  
 b) non-members

[Final numbers of Conference Registrants](#)

	Member	Non-Member	Total	Comment
Registrants	21	16	37	There were two no shows (39)

- 2) ATTENDANCE FOR EACH DAY OR WORKSHOP ( from completed Registration Forms): Did you have the people signing up at the door fill out a complete registration form? [Yes, I did have them fill out forms at the door.](#)

	Full Time Attendees			Part Time Attendees		
	Member	Non-Member	Total	Member	Non-Member	Total
Registrants	19	7	26	2	10	12

Event Attendees	Member	Non-Member	Total
Friday Lecture	19	11	30
Saturday Lecture	21	9	30
Saturday Dinner	21	7	28
Sunday Lecture	19	10	29