



National Suicide
Prevention Conference

All Walks of Life

Halifax, Nova Scotia

May 10-12, 2023

The premiere
Canadian event for
exchanging
knowledge on
suicide prevention,
intervention, and
postvention



CASP CANADIAN ASSOCIATION
FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

ACPS ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE POUR
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Canadian Mental
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LA PRÉVENTION DU SUICIDE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Program at a Glance	4
Welcome to the Conference	5
Schedule of Events	6
Keynote Speakers	11
Presenter Biographies	13
Presentation Descriptions	25
Floor Plan	33



PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

TUESDAY

HEALING DAY REGISTRATION

12:00pm - 1:00pm

HEALING DAY (Healing day ticket required)

1:00pm - 5:00pm

CONFERENCE AND HEALING EVENING REGISTRATION

5:00pm - 7:00pm

HEALING DAY EVENING EVENT AND GUIDED WALK

(Open to all conference attendees)

7:00pm - 9:00pm

WEDNESDAY

REGISTRATION

8:00am - 9:00am

OPENING PLENARY

9:00am - 10:30am

KEYNOTE

Professor Maree Toombs

BREAK

10:30am - 11:00am

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

11:00am - 12:30pm

LUNCH

12:30pm - 1:30pm

PLENARY

1:30pm - 3:00pm

KEYNOTE

Dr. Laura Shannonhouse

BREAK

3:00pm - 3:30pm

WEDNESDAY CONT'D

INDIGENOUS SMUDGING CEREMONY

3:30pm - 5:00pm

WELCOME RECEPTION

5:00pm - 7:00pm

THURSDAY

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

9:00am - 10:30am

BREAK

10:30am - 11:00am

PLENARY

11:00am - 12:30pm

DIGNITARY THE HONOURABLE CAROLYN BENNET

Federal Minister of Mental
Health & Addictions and the
Associate Minister of Health

KEYNOTE

Dr. Brian Mishara

LUNCH

12:30pm - 1:30pm

PLENARY

1:30pm - 3:00pm

LIFE PROMOTION

Elder Dr. Ed Connors,
Elder John Rice, & Erin Dixon

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

3:30pm - 5:00pm

THURSDAY CONT'D

MHCC - ROOTS OF HOPE 101

5:00pm - 7:00pm

NETWORKING EVENT

7:00pm - 9:00pm

FRIDAY

BREAK OUT SESSIONS

9:00am - 10:30am

BREAK

10:30am - 11:00am

PLENARY

11:00am - 12:30pm

PANEL PRESENTATION

988 Implementation in
Canada





WELCOME TO THE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION CONFERENCE

On behalf of the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP), we would like to welcome all of the attendees of the 33rd Annual National Suicide Prevention Conference in beautiful Halifax, Nova Scotia. This year's conference, "All Walks of Life", will provide a forum for diverse perspectives including researchers, front-line clinicians, people impacted by suicide, and First Peoples' teachings to share information that influence the future directions for suicide prevention, intervention and postvention.

We would also like to express our deep appreciation to all of the presenters, attendees, sponsors, and volunteers. Together, we bring hope!



Nancy Parker

Board President



Sean Krausert

Executive Director

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

TUESDAY

5:00pm - 7:00pm
LOBBY

**CONFERENCE AND EVENING HEALING
GATHERING REGISTRATION**

7:00pm - 7:05pm
COMMONS

**EVENING HEALING WELCOME
MC, Alexia Marsillo, Member of CASP's People
Impacted by Suicide Working Group**

7:05pm - 8:00pm
COMMONS

**INDIGENOUS TEACHING
Shared by Elder Lawrence Wells**

8:00pm - 8:30pm
COMMONS

**RECEPTION
Appetizers and non-alcoholic beverages**

8:30pm - 9:00pm

**GUIDED WALK OF HOPE AND HEALING
A Walk of Hope and Healing will close Healing Day**

Please join us as we walk through the Halifax Public Gardens to Victoria Park. Together as a collective community of individuals, friends, family, and colleagues we walk side-by-side, in the healing space of nature, supporting each other and in memory of those we have lost along the way.

WEDNESDAY

8:00am - 9:00am
GUILD HALL FOYER

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

9:00am - 10:30am
GUILD HALL

**PLENARY
KEYNOTE - Professor Maree Toombs**

10:30am - 11:00am
CANNERY

BREAK

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WEDNESDAY CONT'D

11:00am - 12:30pm

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

STREAM	PRESENTATION	SPEAKERS	LOCATION
Research & Trends	From Kids to Teens, How E-Mental Health Services can Support Youth at Risk of Suicide	Alisa Simon and Darren Mastropaolo	GUILD HALL EAST
Indigenous / Life Promotion	Reconciled Healing Model - Decolonizing Systems Work	Dawn Isaac, Elder Louise Lavallee, and Sonya Warga	CAMPAIGN
Occupations & Populations	Suicide Risk after Trauma: Practical Solution-Focused Intervention Strategies (workshop)	Heather Fiske	CITADEL
Occupations & Populations	Suicide and Parental Alienation: How Peer Support for Targeted Parents can save lives	Kelsey Green and Seana Jewer	CUNARD
People with Lived Experience	Leveraging Your Lived Experience as an Asset to Social Service Delivery	Leigh Bursey	GUILD HALL WEST

12:30pm - 1:30pm

LUNCH

CANNERY

1:30pm - 3:00pm

PLENARY

GUILD HALL

KEYNOTE - Dr. Laura Shannonhouse

3:00pm - 3:30pm

BREAK

GUILD HALL FOYER

3:30pm - 5:00pm

INDIGENOUS SMUDGING CEREMONY

GUILD HALL

5:00pm - 7:00pm

WELCOME RECEPTION

GUILD HALL

With appetizers, wine, and non-alcoholic beverages

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY

9:00am - 10:30am

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

STREAM	PRESENTATION	SPEAKERS	LOCATION
Research & Trends	Mitigating suicide risk during the COVID-19 pandemic via telehealth using an intensive single session of "Brief Skills for Safer Living"	Dr.Sakina Rizvi, Dr.Aleksandra Lalovic, and Dr.Yvonne Bergmans	GUILD HALL EAST
Indigenous / Life Promotion	New Life Forward: How Life Promotion has Lifted a Community Up & Through Reconciliation in the Subarctic	Amelia Madziak and Jason Klainchar	CAMPAIGN
Occupations & Populations	Why Is It OK Not To Be OK...Except For First Responders?	Dave McLennan and S. Ali "Moose" Moosvi	CITADEL
Occupations & Populations	Suicide Postvention Project for Gender Minorities	Alex Shendelman	CUNARD
People with Lived Experience	Community-based Suicide Intervention and Bereavement Initiatives	Elisa Brewer-Singh and Mara Grunau	GUILD HALL WEST

10:30am - 11:00am

BREAK

GUILD HALL FOYER

11:00am - 12:30pm

PLENARY

GUILD HALL

MHCC Presentation - Roots of Hope

KEYNOTE - Ed Mantler

KEYNOTE - Dr. Brian Mishara

DIGNITARY - The Honourable Carolyn Bennet

Federal Minister of Mental Health & Addictions and the Associate Minister of Health

12:30pm - 1:30pm

LUNCH

CANNERY

1:30pm - 3:00pm

PLENARY

GUILD HALL

KEYNOTE - Elder Dr. Ed Connors, Elder John Rice and Erin Dixon (moderator)

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY CONT'D

3:00pm - 3:30pm
GUILD HALL FOYER

BREAK

3:30pm - 5:00pm

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

STREAM	PRESENTATION	SPEAKERS	LOCATION
Research & Trends	How Can Public Health Contribute to Suicide Prevention?	Amanda Demmer	GUILD HALL EAST
Indigenous / Life Promotion	Saqijuj - A Change in Wind Direction	Claudia Maltais-Thériault, Maude-Émilie Drolet, and Alexis Laliberté Seyer, Randy Gordan	CAMPAIGN
Occupations & Populations	School and Community-Wide Approaches to School Phobia, Avoidance, and Absence: Supporting Students with Mental Health Disabilities by Increasing Protective Factors and Reducing Suicide Risk Factors	Sheryl Boswell	CITADEL
Occupations & Populations	Mental Health Stigma and Help-Seeking Among Young Black Women in Toronto, Canada: "The Bottom Line"	Donna Richards	CUNARD
People with Lived Experience	The Intersection of Substance Use and Suicide: Perspectives of Lived Experience (workshop)	Dalya Kablawi, Logan Seymour, and Dr. Hanie Edalati	GUILD HALL WEST

5:00pm - 7:00pm
CUNARD ROOM

MHCC - Roots of Hope 101
REGISTER AT:

<https://survey.alchemer-ca.com/s3/50186389/RSVP-Roots-of-Hope-101-Orientation>

7:00pm - 9:00pm
GUILD HALL

Networking event with the Canadian Suicide Prevention Coordinators Network and a performance by Tanya Davis with appetizers and non-alcoholic beverages.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY

9:00am - 10:30am

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

STREAM	PRESENTATION	SPEAKERS	LOCATION
Research & Trends	The Canadian Suicide Exposure Study: Understanding the Impact of Suicide in Canada	Rebecca Sanford	GUILD HALL EAST
Indigenous / Life Promotion	Oshkiniijig Leading the Way for Life Promotion and We Matter - #StrongerTogether	Connor Lafortune, Marshall Morrisseau, Danika Charlebois, Will Landon, Megan Metz, Gabrielle Jubinville and Tia Piché	CAMPAIGN
Occupations & Populations	Canada's first Trans Mental Health, Wellness and Suicide Prevention Toolkit	Corrie Melanson	CITADEL
PHAC Consultation	Development of National Suicide Prevention Action Plan Consultation	Public Health Agency of Canada	CUNARD
People with Lived Experience	Improving Suicide Care in Health Care Settings: The Invaluable Lessons that BC has Learned from People with Lived and Living Experience	Maria Weaver and Erin Ewart	GUILD HALL WEST

10:30am - 11:00am

BREAK

GUILD HALL FOYER

11:00am - 1:00pm

PLENARY

GUILD HALL

988 Implementation in Canada - Panel Presentation

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Professor Maree Toombs

Professor Maree Toombs is a Euralayie/Kooma woman from North-Western NSW, Australia. She is an accomplished strategic leader in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and research with national and international networks in the field of public health. Her work on aspects of social and emotional wellbeing has improved health outcomes for Indigenous peoples and led to changes in quality assurance and policy changes, trauma and suicide knowledge skills and contributed to knowledge gain otherwise unknown. Through her book, lectures, research and appointments, Professor Toombs has improved the way people culturally work with Indigenous Australians in urban, regional and remote areas. She has also provided/is providing leadership in cultural and ethical guidelines and expertise in qualitative data collection and dissemination.



Dr. Brian Mishara

Brian Mishara is the Director of the Centre for Research and Intervention on Suicide, Ethical Issues and End-of-Life Practices (CRISE), and Psychology Professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) in Montreal, Canada. He has published extensively on suicide, gerontology, ethical issues and Medical Assistance in Dying and he has testified before most Canadian committees that have considered MAiD recommendations. He is the co-founder of the Montreal suicide prevention center, Suicide Action Montréal, and the Quebec Association for Suicide Prevention. He has been President of the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP), President of the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP), and Vice-Chairperson, Trustees of Befrienders Worldwide.

Professor Mishara has received many awards and recognitions for his work and is currently the principal investigator of the evaluation of the Mental Health Commission of Canada's community suicide prevention program, "Roots of Hope" in eight Canadian sites. He chairs the IASP Special Working Group on decriminalization of suicide, consults in the development of local and national suicide prevention initiatives worldwide and conducts suicide prevention training internationally.



Ed Mantler

A highly motivated visionary and an expert at building partnerships, engaging stakeholders, and inspiring change, Ed has led innovation and improvement in healthcare for over three decades. As Senior Vice President and Chief Program Officer at the Mental Health Commission of Canada, Ed is dedicated to promoting mental health and changing the attitudes of Canadians toward mental health problems and illnesses. By collaborating with stakeholders to improve mental health services and supports, he leads the way for change. Guided by Changing Directions/Changing Lives: The Mental Health Strategy for Canada, Ed pays particular attention to reducing stigma and increasing awareness, promoting psychologically healthy workplaces and schools, improving access to quality mental health services, preventing suicide, and improving understanding of the impacts of cannabis on mental health.

As an Accreditation Surveyor and Technical Committee Co-Chair with Accreditation Canada/Health Standards Organization, Ed contributes to quality and safety in healthcare across Canada and internationally. He is a Registered Psychiatric Nurse, holds a Master of Science Administration, and is a Certified Health Executive.



KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Dr. Allison Crawford, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, with

Ms. Gina Nicoll, Educator and Person with Lived Experience
Jenny Hardy, BHSc., OT Reg. (Ont.), Director, 988 Implementation, CAMH
Stéphanie Parisien, Director Suicide Prevention, Public Health Agency of Canada
Dr. Chantalle Clarkin, RN, PhD, Talk Suicide, CAMH

988 Implementation in Canada - This symposium will consider the policy, implementation, and research and training approaches required to advance 988 in Canada. 988 is a three-digit emergency access number that will enable people living in Canada to receive urgent support for suicide-related crisis and emotional distress. As of November 30, 2023, it will be available in French and English, twenty-four hours per day, by phone and text.



Dr. Laura Shannonhouse

Laura Shannonhouse is an associate professor in the Department of Counseling and Psychological Services at Georgia State University. Her research interests center on crisis intervention and disaster response. Laura conducts community-based research to prevent suicide in aging, school, university, and counselor/psychology preparation contexts (suicide first aid), and with disaster-impacted populations in fostering meaning-making through one's faith tradition (spiritual first aid). She has provided counseling and therapy services in various clinical settings such as cancer and crisis centers, colleges, private practice, and hospitals. She has been deployed to work with disaster-impacted populations both domestically and internationally including South Africa, Mexico, post-Katrina, southeast Asian and post-earthquake Haitian refugees.



Elder Dr. Ed Connors & Elder John Rice

Elder Dr. Ed Connors is a Psychologist registered in the Province of Ontario. He is of Mohawk ancestry from Kahnawake Mohawk Territory. He has worked with First Nations communities across Canada since 1982 in both urban and rural centres.

Elder John Rice from the Anishinabe Nation is currently with the Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiyag Child & Family Services as an Elder/Knowledge Keeper. John has been a leader in community wellness for over 30 years.



DIGNITARY

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett

Federal Minister of Mental Health & Addictions and the Associate Minister of Health

Carolyn Ann Bennett PC MP (born December 20, 1950) is a Canadian physician and politician who has served as minister of mental health and addictions, and associate minister of health since October 26, 2021. A member of the Liberal Party, she has represented Toronto—St. Paul's in the House of Commons since 1997. She previously served as the minister of state for public health from 2003 to 2006, and the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations from 2015 to 2021. Bennett worked as a physician for 20 years before entering politics.



SPECIAL PERFORMANCE

Tanya Davis

Tanya Davis will be creating an original composition during the conference to share with attendees and will also be performing. Tanya Davis is a writer and interdisciplinary artist based in rural Epekwitk / Prince Edward Island. She has released four records and two books, including *How to be Alone*, a collaboration with filmmaker Andrea Dorfman. In 2020, also with Dorfman, she released a follow up video poem called *How to be at Home*, produced by the NFB as a response to the pandemic. Tanya is a past Poet Laureate of Halifax Nova Scotia and was the Artist-in-Residence at Dalhousie University's Faculty of Medicine in 2016. She collaborates frequently across artistic genre, writing for theatre and film as well as live and recorded music. Tanya was recently named the Poet Laureate of Prince Edward Island.



PRESENTERS

Alisa Simon

Alisa Simon brings more than 20 years of leadership experience in healthcare access and non-profit management to her role as Executive Vice President, E-mental Health Transformation and Chief Youth Officer at Kids Help Phone. In this role, Alisa oversees Kids Help Phone's national clinical service programs, providing strategy, leadership and guidance to more than 150 clinical staff and thousands of volunteer crisis responders across Canada. Through her focus on building innovative digital systems that break down barriers to care by changing the way care is delivered, measured and received, Alisa is driving the transformation of Canada's youth mental health landscape and creating equitable access to support for youth across the country. Under Alisa's leadership, Kids Help Phone has evolved from a phone-based helpline to a comprehensive solution that fully integrates a growing number of access points, programs and resources, achieving over 13 million interactions since 2020. Alisa also oversees knowledge translation, quality assurance and equity programs, ensuring the organization is delivering the best possible services to young people, particularly youth from equity-seeking communities. Alisa holds a Master of Public Health degree from the University of North Carolina.



Darren Mastropaolo

Darren is the Vice President, Innovation & Data and The Lang Family Foundation Chair in Innovation at Kids Help Phone. Darren joined Kids Help Phone in 2020 to lead innovation within Kids Help Phone's existing services, as well as strategy and implementation of new services. In that time, KHP has evolved its service ecosystem through a redesign of KidsHelpPhone.ca, implementation of a peer support service, an interactive navigation chatbot, and a best-in-class technology stack to support the evolving needs of Canadian youth. He also manages the data team which leverages the largest dataset on youth mental health in Canada to enhance our service offerings and inform the public on youth mental health trends and insights.

Darren holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Bucknell University. Over the past 10+ years, Darren's career focused on innovations that support young people. He began his professional journey in New York City, working on digital products in entertainment, publishing and education. He left the corporate world to feed his soul and joined DoSomething.org, and later, Crisis Text Line.



PRESENTERS

Randy Gordon

Randy has worked at NRBHSS since October 2022 as the Senior Advisor for Saqijjuq. He now acts as Project Manager for On-the-Land programming and development in the region, more specifically for communities on Ungava Coast. His involvement greatly contributes to the Saqijjuq mandate to reduce alcohol and drug consumption through cultural activities like fishing and hunting, allowing clients to reconnect to their cultural identity.



Amanda Demmer, BA, MA, PhD Candidate

Amanda Demmer has worked as a community-based researcher in the suicide prevention field for almost a decade. She holds a Masters degree in Community Psychology where she studied suicide stigma, and is now completing a PhD in Public Health. Amanda works as a community-based research & evaluation consultant in mental health/suicide prevention.



Rebecca Sanford, PhD, RCSW

Rebecca L. Sanford, is an Assistant Professor at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, British Columbia. Her research, clinical, and lived experiences inform her approach to practice and research agenda, primarily in the areas of suicide prevention, exposure to suicide, and suicide bereavement. She has provided individual and group interventions for those who have lost a loved one to suicide, and she is involved in community outreach efforts to promote awareness of suicide. She has presented nationally and internationally on a range of topics relevant to researchers, service providers, and people with lived experience.



Dr. Sakina Rizvi

Sakina is a Scientist and Psychotherapist in the Arthur Sommer Rotenberg (ASR) Suicide and Depression Studies Program at St. Michael's Hospital, and an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto. Her research program aims to characterize the neurobiology of suicide risk through the use of MRI and PET neuroimaging. Sakina's research also focuses on developing and testing novel psychotherapies for suicide risk with an emphasis on therapies that are designed to be implemented in hospital and community-based settings. She led the Storybook Project, a lived experience short story collection on the impact of suicide published in September 2021 as "What it Takes to Make it Through: Stories of Suicide Loss and Resilience".



PRESENTERS

Dr. Aleksandra Lalovic, PhD, MEd, RP

Aleksandra is a Research Psychotherapist in the ASR Program. She is involved in several studies investigating innovative psychotherapeutic approaches to help people who experience suicidal ideation and behaviour. She is a Registered Psychotherapist with the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO). Aleksandra completed her clinical training at University of Toronto's OISE Counselling Psychology program. She also holds a research doctorate in Neuroscience from McGill University, where she studied the neurobiology and genetics of depression and suicide risk.



Dr. Yvonne Bergmans, MSW, PhD

Yvonne is a Suicide Interventionist with over 20 years of experience. She is also a co-developer of Brief-SfSL and she will identify the training requirements to conduct Brief-SfSL. For 21 years she worked at the Arthur Sommer Rotenberg Chair in Suicide Studies at St. Michael's Hospital, developing a group intervention for people who have experienced suicide attempts, working with an interprofessional team to provide risk assessments, crisis intervention, education/training and research. She obtained her PhD from Dublin City University where her thesis was focused on understanding and responding to recurrent suicide attempts.



Amelia Madziak, M.P.A.

Amelia has a Community Development degree, a Masters of Public Administration and a Quality Management Certificate. Her career has spanned across several industries but is always focused on health and mental wellness promotion. Amelia is the Director of Northern Community Health Services and her role allows her to collaborate with The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Churchill Health Centre, and Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin Inc. (KIM) which is a newly formed First Nations led health entity that supports health transformation for First Nations in northern Manitoba. KIM is a Cree word for 'Northern Peoples Wellness' and building up Churchill Health Centre as a hub for safe, appropriate and quality care is a career highlight of hers.



PRESENTERS

Jason Klainchar

Jason has a degree in nursing from the University of Manitoba, as well as a Masters Degree in Public Administration with a career that has spanned almost 20 years. Her worked as a nurse at Selkirk Mental Health Centre from 2003-2016 in Forensics and Psychosocial Rehabilitation before moving into a leadership role as the Coordinator of Patient Services for the Acquired Brain Injury Program. In 2016 Jason became the Regional Director of Quality and Patient Safety with the Winnipeg Health Authority. In 2018, he became the Executive Director of the Churchill Health Centre in Churchill, Manitoba. Jason continues to advocate and champion mental health services and innovation in his current role.



Claudia Maltais-Thériault

Claudia works at Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social services as planning and programming agent regarding mental health services. She collaborates with Saqijjuq team as she strongly believes in the positive impacts that such initiative can have for Nunavimmiut.



Maude-Émilie Drolet

Maude-Émilie is a planning and programming agent for Saqijjuq. She is working on the transition of their program Nitsiq to an alternative justice program in mental health. She is also part of developing the programs On-the-land and the Mobile intervention team (MIT) in different communities. She believes that Saqijjuq has positive impacts for Nunavimmiut and is proud to be part of the team. For the past five years, she has been working with the Inuit communities of Nunavi starting as a social worker and eventually became the Head of Program for the Youth First Line Services under the direction of community services for a year.



PRESENTERS

Alexis Laliberté Seyer

Alexis is the clinical advisor for the MIT and the Nitsiq program. He worked two and a half years as a social intervener on the MIT in Puvirnituk and has also practiced in other communities on the Hudson Coast of Nunavik since 2019. He believes in the relevance of Saqjuq and observed many of its positive effects at all levels of intervention and collaboration with partners in the community.



Connor Lafortune

Connor is from Dokis First Nation on Robinson Huron Treaty Territory of 1850 in Northeastern Ontario. He is completing his final year at Nipissing University with a Double Honours Major in Indigenous Studies and Gender Equality and Social Justice with a minor in Legal Studies. In September, he will begin his Masters in Indigenous Relations at Laurentian University. Connor works primarily in Life Promotion, harm-reduction, mental health, and Indigenous education through organisations such as the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, School Mental Health Ontario, and the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Above all else, Connor is a poet, an activist, a shkaabewis (helper), and a compassionate human being.



Marshall Morrissette - He/him/they, Metis

Marshall is a First Nations, Metis advocate living in Brandon Manitoba. He is completing his Bachelor of Arts Degree to pursue law. Marshall is involved with community organizations such as Brandon Bear Clan Patrol and coordinated a youth mock patrol. He takes part in the We Matter Campaign as a National Ambassador of Hope, delivering messages of hope, culture, and strength for Indigenous youth across Canada. In 2020, Marshall attended the United Nations Drug and Crime Commission as a Youth Delegate. He now is involved with the International Youth Initiative to help develop and deliver drug prevention strategies. Marshall is currently a coordinator at the Sexual Educational Resource Center of Manitoba and continues to work on life promotion projects with Thunderbird Partnership Foundation.



PRESENTERS

Danika Charlebois - she/they

Danika is a mixed Algonquin x Settler woman born, raised, and currently living on the traditional territory of the Ojibway, Cree, and Algonquin peoples in Robinson-Huron Treaty territory (Temiskaming Shores, Ontario). Danika is a Registered Psychotherapist (Qualifying) and the Director of Partnerships and Outreach for We Matter, a national organization dedicated to supporting Indigenous youth.



Dawn Isaac

Dawn is Anishinaabe-ikwe from Sagkeeng First Nation. She holds a bachelor's degree in Human Ecology and a Masters Degree in Applied Communications. She has several years of experience in research & training with a focus on intergenerational, developmental, and organizational trauma as well as Indigenous issues in both a historical and current context. She is passionate about promoting a wide-spread understanding of trauma-informed and trauma-responsive services as a best practice approach across multiple sectors and committed to advancing Indigenous knowledge(s), resilience, healing practices, and creating safe spaces, and fostering reconciliatory relationship building. Dawn spent more than a decade working as part of an intergenerational team (grandmother-mother-granddaughter) facilitating workshops and healing sessions on intergenerational trauma and resilience.



Sonya Warga

Sonya is the Clinical Director at Marymount, where she has worked since 2016. She obtained her Masters of Marriage and Family Therapy from U of W and had planned to grow a private practice, but after joining Marymount, she discovered a passion for working with youth. Sonya is responsible for supporting the programs and clinicians who work at Marymount by troubleshooting, problem-solving, advocating, and planning the clinical framework of the organization. She believes that every interaction with youth should be therapeutic, whether it is through one-to-one meetings or maintaining a therapeutic environment in group homes. Sonya's work is focused on creating a continuity of approach to generate solidity in the organization.



PRESENTERS

Dalya Kablawi

Dalya is the Program Coordinator, Prevention & Promotion Initiatives for the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Previous presentation experience includes suicide prevention workshop delivery at the Students in Mind Conference in Montreal (2019), and the delivery of several internal training presentations at student-led peer support services (to up to 50 trainees) at McGill University (2017-2020).



Elder Louise Lavallee

Elder Louise obtained her Bachelor of Social Work and currently is employed at Marymount as their resident Elder. She has immense knowledge and experience, and has worked in the social service field for over four decades in various roles. This has led her to have experience supporting diverse populations of children, youth, families and communities, but also co-workers, leaders and politicians/policy makers. Elder Louise has exceptional knowledge of history, both written and lived and brings awareness of the impact of colonialism on the indigenous people of Canada. This is Canada's history and her knowledge and expertise fosters important dialogue in the pursuit of social justice. Elder Louise has the ability to promote healing and can support people by recognizing their courage, identifying their strengths/purpose, foster connection to the values and motivate their work. She has a wonderful sense of humor and great personality. Her energy and enthusiasm for life brings much joy as well as meaningful experiences to those she works with.



Logan Seymour

Logan is the Manager, Prevention and Promotion Initiatives, Mental Health Commission of Canada. She completed a Masters in Healthcare Quality improvement, Risk and Safety from Queen's University, where her masters project focused on frequency, cost and health outcomes of individuals with mental health as a primary concern upon presentation to Ontario hospital emergency departments.



PRESENTERS

Dr. Hanie Edalati

Dr. Edalati is the Research and Policy Analyst for Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction. She has completed her CIHR-funded postdoctoral fellowship at the CHU Sainte-Justine Research Centre at University of Montreal, and the Center for Research on Children and Families (CRCF) at McGill University and completed her PhD degree at departments of psychology and psychiatry, at the University of British Columbia. She has published over 30 academic articles and book chapters and trained more than 200 frontline workers in Canada and the United States to provide substance use and mental health interventions.



Elisa Brewer-Singh

Elisa Brewer-Singh is a passionate advocate within the field of suicide prevention, and currently serves as the Executive Director for the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council (WRSPC). After earning her Master's degree in Spiritual Care and Counselling from Wilfrid Laurier University, Elisa was asked to support the bereavement services of the WRSPC and found her passion for journeying alongside individuals bereaved by suicide. Over the past 10 years, she has facilitated and coordinated the WRSPC's suicide bereavement support groups including "Why...?" Support After Suicide Loss and Side by Side.



Mara Grunau

Mara is the Executive Director of the Centre for Suicide Prevention, a branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association. She holds a Bachelor's in Education and a Master's in Public Policy and Administration. Mara is a passionate advocate for suicide prevention, working tirelessly to amplify the voices of people impacted by suicide. Through this work, she builds empathy and awareness of their experiences to better illuminate hope and the knowledge that suicide can be prevented.



PRESENTERS

Maria Weaver

Maria is a skilled and enthusiastic leader, educator and facilitator with over 8 years of experience across sectors including higher education, non-profit, and community health. With her experience working front-line and later managing a crisis line, she is adept and compassionate in providing crisis de-escalation and suicide prevention training. Maria works on traditional territory of the Lekwungen people, currently as the Associate Director, Suicide Prevention & Life Promotion for the Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division. She is passionate about promoting individual mental health and creating supportive settings for community mental well-being. Maria also actively volunteers with a number of local community organizations — she is a Director on the board of two local Community Health Centres, and prepares and delivers meals for a local non-profit meal program.



Erin Ewart

Erin is the Associate Director, Crisis Care Reform with CMHC BC and has 10+ years of professional mental health experience. She has worked in a variety of settings including, but not limited to: government (in both in policy and as a Child and Youth Mental Health Clinician), non-profit (in outreach, and as a Registered Clinical Counsellor). She is extremely passionate about mental health promotion, and in her current role is managing the role out of BC's new Peer Assisted Care Teams (mobile crisis response teams that pair a peer support worker, with a clinician – no police involvement). Erin also identifies as a person with lived experience.



Dave McLennan

Dave is a retired police constable having served over 30 years with Peel Police in Ontario and he is the founder and president of Boots On The Ground – Peer Support For First Responders. Boots On The Ground has 155 volunteers providing 24/7 peer support to all first responders across the province of Ontario including police, fire, EMS, corrections, nurses, both sworn and civilian members including retired members. Dave has answered hundreds of calls on the peer support help line and has intervened with many callers with suicide ideation. He has seen firsthand the effects of stress and trauma and has regrettably lost too many first responder friends and colleagues to suicide. He has witnessed countless others struggle as they face the impacts of trauma, stigma, and reprisal. His continued call to serve has led to the path as Founder and President of Boots On The Ground, making suicide awareness, prevention, and intervention a priority for our anonymous peer support program run by first responders, for first responders. Boots On The Ground is passionate about creating safer communities for First Responders.



PRESENTERS

S. Ali “Moose” Moosvi

Moose retired in 2021 from the Toronto Police Service, with over 32 years of policing experience. Passionate about improving the culture for trauma responders across North America, Moose draws upon his experience as a front-line trauma responder to address issues of mental health in the workplace and help organizations across North America change culture. After enduring 14 years of undiagnosed clinical depression—resulting from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder—Moose finally broke his silence and disclosed his journey of trauma. In his words: “I can’t change my past—but I can change what I do with it!” His experience, passion, and competencies led to his selection by Dr. Dirk Huyer, Chief Coroner of Ontario, for the 2019 review panel examining nine 2018 deaths by suicide of police officers in Ontario. He was the only serving police officer on the 8-member panel; composed of mental health professionals, academics, and administrators from Across North America, specializing in police and military services.



Heather Fiske, PH.D

Heather has 40 years clinical experience as a registered psychologist with a special interest in suicide prevention, intervention and postvention. She has developed and wrote articles and a book titled, “Hope in Action” about solution-focused brief therapy in suicide intervention. She does frequent keynotes and trainings around the world on this topic and has published and presented on a solution-focused approach to preventing suicide in the wake of trauma.



Alex Shendelman

Alex is the Program Manager of the Survivor Support Program at Distress Centres of Greater Toronto. Since 2005 he has managed and provided support directly to a large, diverse group of suicide loss survivors. As part of his responsibilities, he has created innovative programming for survivors of suicide loss and created an evaluation format for their programming.



PRESENTERS

Kelsey Green, FEC., P.Eng.

Kelsey is the founder of Complex Trauma Canada, a not-for-profit organization with national membership of people who have experienced complex trauma from family and childhood trauma, institutional trauma, and/or military and violent traumas. Complex Trauma Canada strives to educate those who have experienced trauma, those working with people impacted by trauma and to raise awareness of the complex nature of psychological trauma. This includes in family contexts to identify, address and avoid traumatic engagements which could lead to a complex trauma diagnosis. Kelsey's work is informed by lived experience as well as currently completing a Post Graduate Certificate in Parental Alienation Studies from IFT Malta.



Seana Jewer

Seana Jewer is the Community Engagement Lead for Roots of Hope NS, a community suicide prevention initiative to build capacity to support those contemplating with or grieving from suicide. Seana has over 20 years of experience in community development and has worked the past four years in community suicide prevention. She has presented at the National Boys and Girls Conference (2017), Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education conference (2019) and had hosted multiple virtual webinars and panel discussions between 2021-22.



Sheryl Boswell

Sheryl Boswell is the director of Youth Mental Health Canada, a charitable, registered non-profit organization. She has an extensive background in education at all levels. As an educator, she has taught elementary, secondary, postsecondary, and adult education in Canada and Africa. Sheryl has conducted international research on school phobia best practices and challenges, conducted the first national survey on school phobia, and works with some of the leading youth mental health and suicide prevention experts and organizations internationally. Sheryl's experience as a suicide loss survivor has informed her understanding of suicide, suicide experiences, and suicide prevention. She has written five evidence, strength, and hope-based mental wellness workbooks, and a guidebook on supporting students with school phobia for families and schools. She has contributed to provincial and national change in education to support students with mental health disabilities.



PRESENTERS

Donna Richards, MSW, PhD(c) Academic Member

Donna has extensive experience working with youth, young adults and with youth-related engagement projects within governmental, non-profit, and private practice settings. Donna's research interests include youth mental health, the health of racialized women, and health equity, with a specific focus on the associations between intersectional forms of stigma, access to care, and health outcomes.



Corrie Melanson

Corrie is an experienced process facilitator, trainer, and learning designer based in Kijipuktuk (Halifax), NS. They are a white, queer, able-bodied, neurodiverse settler. Corrie is deeply puzzled by why and how we seem to value profit over people and why and how we base our belonging on who we can keep out rather than who we welcome in. She is deeply moved by how so many of us do all in our power to engage in solidarity efforts to live into the world we all want and deserve.



Leigh Bursey

Leigh is provincial housing officer, a Chartered Housing Professional through the Chartered Institute of Housing, a graduate of the Housing Professionals Mentorship Program, a board member for the Canadian Housing Renewal Association, and former Executive Director of Tiny Home Alliance Canada. He is the former three term municipal councilor, a former Vice President of the Ontario Non Profit Housing Association, a former frontline shelter worker, an international speaker and researcher on homelessness and social policy, and a best-selling author.

In his youth, Leigh was homeless and has dedicated his life to helping vulnerable people volunteers in homeless populations and has lived experience with suicide.



PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

From Kids to Teens, How E-Mental Health Services can Support Youth at Risk of Suicide.

Speakers: Alisa Simon and Darren Mastropaolo

By providing 24/7 e-mental health support, such as texting services, young people can access life changing help they need in a way that is comfortable and familiar to them. These services can also be effective in de-escalating crisis situations and providing safety planning for young people who are at risk of suicide. Kids Help Phone will demonstrate how not only teens aged 14-17 can benefit from these types of services but how younger children aged 5-13 can, with strong self-reported positive outcomes and the positive impact of their service delivery model will be demonstrated through examples of de-escalation and safety planning, both of which empower youth to take control of their wellness journey and keep themselves safe.

Kids Help Phone has established a long-standing practice of helping youth at risk of suicide. Learnings from this presentation will help anyone looking to gain insights on the experiences of youth in Canada related to suicide. In addition, this presentation will showcase how a single session approach can be tailored in age-appropriate ways to support youth reaching out about suicide, ultimately providing life changing care for our future generations

How Can Public Health Contribute to Suicide Prevention?

Speaker: Amanda Demmer

Organizations like the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the World Health Organization have recognized that suicide is a public health issue, yet, suicide is rarely approached through a public health lens. This presentation will explore what the paradigms and methodologies of public health research and public health interventions can contribute to the study and prevention of suicide in Canada. This presentation will be relevant for those conducting research on suicide and its prevention, or those planning and implementing suicide prevention initiatives, and will challenge traditional biomedical approaches to suicide in favour of innovative approaches informed by public health research and practice.

The Canadian Suicide Exposure Study: Understanding the Impact of Suicide in Canada

Speaker: Rebecca Sanford

In Canada and throughout the world, suicide receives little attention in public health, policy, and research initiatives. Where suicide exposure is the focus of attention, most research includes treatment-seeking samples of kin, narrowing our understanding of exposure and its impact to solely be synonymous with bereavement. However, recent large-scale datasets from the US, the UK, and Australia provide critically important information to further our understanding of the broad scope of suicide exposure and the needs of those impacted. The Canadian Suicide Exposure Study is the first of its kind to provide Canada-specific data examining the breadth and depth of the nature and impact of exposure to suicide. This presentation will share results from two studies drawing on the data: one focused on workplace exposure to suicide and the other focused on understanding what it means to be impacted by exposure to suicide.

PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

Mitigating suicide risk during the COVID-19 pandemic via telehealth using an intensive single session of “Brief Skills for Safer Living”

Speakers: Dr. Sakina Rizvi, Dr. Aleksandra Lalovic, and Dr. Yvonne Bergmans

Currently, services for suicide risk intervention are severely limited with some wait lists over a year. This has created a dire need for scalable suicide risk interventions across all communities. A few preliminary studies have demonstrated that single session interventions can effectively reduce risk, which represents a cost-effective approach that is associated with high treatment engagement. To address the need for evidence-based single-session interventions, Drs. Rizvi, Lalovic and Bergmans developed “Brief Skills for Safer Living” (Brief-SfSL). Brief-SfSL is an intensive 90-minute single-session individual psychotherapy that directly targets suicide risk by helping individuals understand their suicidal thoughts while incorporating psychoeducation and skills building to manage thoughts and stay safe during crises.

New Life Forward: How Life Promotion has Lifted a Community Up & Through Reconciliation in the Subarctic

Speakers: Amelia Madziak and Jason Klainchar

Life Promotion has been the foundation for men’s mental health & family wellness in the northern & remote community of Churchill, MB. This presentation will discuss how the men’s mental wellness program has catapulted a transformation of the conventional (colonized) healthcare system to a system that has balance, and not just values but leads with traditional (Indigenous) approaches to the delivery of healthcare. Examples of how the systems have coalesced will include: referring services; shared & partner funded healthcare positions; interdisciplinary rounds & huddles; micro-credentials; and dismantled jurisdictions.

Saqijjuq - A Change in Wind Direction

Speakers: Claudia Maltais-Thériault, Maude-Émilie Drolet, and Alexis Laliberté Seyer, Randy Gordon

Saqijjuq is part of the Regional Suicide Prevention Committee in Nunavik and its team take daily actions to offer support to Nunavimmiut that are cohesive with the five priorities identified in Inuuguminaq, the Regional Suicide Prevention Strategy. Three different type of services fall under Saqijjuq program: Mobile Intervention Team (MIT), Nitsiq Wellness Court and On the land team. The presentation will focus on MIT and On the Land team components. MIT is composed of a social intervener and police officer. Its primary mission is to intervene among individuals in psychosocial crisis, using de-escalation and pacification techniques to resolve the situation in and with the community with minimal recourse to institutional detention and forced hospitalization. Since its creation in 2014, MIT have been able to strengthened crisis intervention in the community and collaboration among Nunavik organizations. On the land component offer a community-based approach to interventions by bringing clients back to their cultural identity. It is recognized that connection to culture and community are protective factors for mental health and thus, is core component of suicide prevention in Nunavik. Moreover, Saqijjuq services can strengthen other protective factors for mental health such as, belief in self, sense of purpose, wanting to contribute and take care of others, mindfulness of consequences of one’s actions and sense of responsibility.

PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

Oshkiniijig Leading the Way for Life Promotion

Speakers: Connor Lafortune, Marshall Morrisseau, Danika Charlebois, Will Landon, Megan Metz, Gabrielle Jubinville and Tia Piché

The Thunderbird Partnership Foundation's Youth Action Group for Life Promotion aims to reimagine the future of Life Promotion. Together, they will share their accomplishments, challenges, and what can be done to support the work. Through their combined efforts, experiences, and expertise, the Youth Action Group will showcase the importance of creating resources by and for Indigenous youth. The discussion will focus on decolonizing spaces, strength-based approaches for healing and health, and sharing sacred gifts. Indigenous youth carry a sacred knowledge that could revolutionize Life Promotion as the future of Indigenous wellness and resilience. They arrive with the courage to speak and invite spectators to have the courage to listen. When confronting obstacles in our lives, we have always turned to our Elders for guidance. Through storytelling and knowledge transfer, we have collected the tools and strength to overcome the hardships that we may face. This toolkit was developed in response to our communities that desired to implement Life Promotion initiatives. As the first step to suicide prevention, Life Promotion aims to build on the intergenerational strength of our relations who came before us. This toolkit aims to restore Hope, Belonging, Meaning, and Purpose to our Indigenous young people. By relying on our stories and wise practices, we work to empower our communities and ensure that intergenerational resiliency can be passed on from our ancestors to the present and the future. Life Promotion encourages people to strengthen a connection to land, community, self, and spirit, equipping them to live a long prosperous life. Indigenous youth are our future.

We Matter - #StrongerTogether

We Matter is an Indigenous youth-led organization dedicated to Indigenous youth support, hope and life promotion. They create resources to facilitate important conversations on mental health, while also generating opportunities for Indigenous youth to step into their power, and see themselves represented positively. Their mission is to communicate to Indigenous youth that they matter, and support those going through a hard time. This session will discuss how sharing the stories of Indigenous youth, words of encouragement, and authentic messages of hope and resilience, can help to make a community and nation stronger.

Reconciled Healing Model- Decolonizing Systems Work

Speakers: Dawn Isaac, Elder Louise Lavallee, and Sonya Warga

Indigenous youth experience intergenerational trauma and therefore existing intervention programs are not designed to meet their unique needs. In fact, it has been shown that when used without proper cultural contexts, many interventions can exacerbate the trauma and continue the inequities experienced by Indigenous youth in accessing mental health services. Marymount has recently launched their Reconciled Healing Model that they believe will see success as a strengths-based mentorship model that is grounded in Senator Murray Sinclair's four questions: Where do I come from? Where am I going? Why am I here? Who am I? It is our hope that our model can be shared as a clinical healing framework in many other Indigenous youth-serving agencies in the community and eventually in a cross-cultural context. This presentation will provide a sharing of our journey as a mainstream organization in decolonizing healing practices and reflections on the efficacy, adaptability, and transferability of the model across organizations.

We express gratitude to Dr. Ed Connors for the term "Reconciled Healing Model" and acknowledge the roots in the concept of two-eyed seeing by Elder Albert Marshall. We also acknowledge Willie Ermine for the concept of ethical space.

PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

The Intersection of Substance Use and Suicide: Perspectives of Lived Experience (workshop)

Speakers: Dalya Kablawi, Logan Seymour, and Dr. Hanie Edalati

A summary presentation on the substance use and suicide report co-created by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Canadian Centre on Substance use and Addiction to contextualize the workshop. Through consultations with community partners and a literature search, the report identifies intervention and prevention approaches that show promise and areas for further research. Results indicate that many factors contribute to an individual's risk, including mental illness, social isolation, and trauma, and that suicide risk is linked to the type of substance, amount, and frequency of use. Moreover, suicide risk increases for people in treatment and in the 12 months after completing a support program. The objective of this workshop is to contribute to the research report on the intersection between substance use and suicide primarily using information from persons with lived and living experience or their caregivers. We hope to fill the gaps that exist in the representation of priority populations, often overlooked, by shedding light on the experiences of populations that lay at the intersection of marginalized identities. Further, this workshop as an opportunity to increase awareness and share knowledge around the structural stigma faced by those affected by both substance use and suicide as well as the benefits that may arise from the integration of substance use and suicide prevention services. A 'world café-style approach will be used to promote meaningful engagement and create opportunities for learning and discussion between participants hailing from different professional and personal backgrounds.

Community-Based Suicide Intervention and Bereavement Initiatives

Speakers: Elisa Brewer-Singh and Mara Grunau

Sharing insights, learnings, and practical suggestions on community-based suicide intervention and bereavement activities from the Centre for Suicide Prevention (CSP) and the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council (WRSPC). This presentation will explore how people with lived and living experiences have informed suicide prevention and bereavement efforts, how community engagement is fostered, and how communities can utilize this programming to build their capacity for this work. In recent years, CSP has designed and piloted Respite House, a community-based, stabilization initiative for people experiencing suicidality and/or a deterioration in their mental health. Similarly, WRSPC has been working to implement First Steps: A Self-Paced Online Learning Series for those Newly Bereaved by Suicide. Community-based suicide prevention and postvention efforts encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing between partners to break down silos and to shrink the knowledge-to-action gap.

Suicide Risk After Trauma: Practical Solution-Focused Intervention Strategies (workshop)

Speaker: Heather Fiske

The ways in which post-traumatic stress can overwhelm even well-established coping skills may push those affected to consider suicide as a solution. Using excerpts from conversations with clients, this workshop will allow participants to observe and begin to practice a solution-focused stance and solution-focused tools for reinforcing clients' reasons for living, developing individualized approaches to safety planning, and accessing and utilizing the personal resources and capacities that will be helpful in recovery from post-traumatic symptoms.

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Development of National Suicide Prevention Action Plan

Speakers: The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)

In 2019, parliamentarians voted unanimously in favour of Motion 174 (M-174), which calls on the Federal Government to establish a National Suicide Prevention Action Plan (Action Plan). The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is leading the development of the Action Plan, with a goal to better support people most affected by suicide risk, attempt and loss in Canada. This session is part of a series of engagement events that PHAC is leading over the course of this year with key stakeholders, including people with lived and living experience, Indigenous organizations, researchers, national and community-based organizations, clinicians/practitioners, provinces and territories and other federal government departments, to gather information, and determine key priorities and goals for the Action Plan. Session objectives are to provide context on the development of the National Suicide Prevention Action Plan and solicit input and feedback on possible areas of priority and action, and measures of success.

PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

Improving Suicide Care in Health Care Settings: The Invaluable Lessons That BC has Learned From People with Lived and Living Experience

Speakers: Maria Weaver and Erin Ewart

In September 2022, the Government of British Columbia announced its commitment to facilitate a system-wide transformation in how suicide care is addressed and managed in healthcare settings. Critical to the success of this Suicide Care Initiative is ensuring that thorough and thoughtful stakeholder engagement is conducted. CMHA BC believes that people with lived and living experience (PWLLE) are our most important partners in this work. As a first step in stakeholder consultation, CMHA BC hosted a first-ever of its kind event “Improving Suicide Care in BC: A Dialogue with People with Lived and Living Experience.” This event took place on September 27th, 2022 at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue in Vancouver, BC, and brought together individuals from all across the province. The purpose of this event was to create space for PWLLE to share their experiences and perspectives and engage in dialogue with managers from the five regional health authorities alongside representatives from government and non-government partners. In this presentation, they share the key themes and calls to action that emerged from this dialogue, as well as how they are being used in BC to improve suicide care. An interactive and engaging session that will inspire action in other areas of Canada. They will also touch on how they hosted this event so others can host similar dialogues to learn from their local communities.

Why Is It OK Not To Be OK...Except For First Responders?

Speakers: Dave McLennan and S. Ali “Moose” Moosvi

First responders take an oath to run towards danger and crisis while everyone else is running the other way. For these heroes, the job commits them to persistent, repeated exposure to trauma leaving them to believe this is what they “signed up for” and that it’s not ok to show any kind of “weakness” should the toll of it all take hold. They often fear they will no longer be a trusted part of the team if they openly share any mental health challenges and as a result, will hide or deny their experiences, further deepening any psychological injury and suffer in silence. While the stigma around mental health in the first responder community has seen some improvements in recent years through wellness initiatives and internal supports being made available, members still refuse to seek help from their workplaces for fear of being ostracized and for fear of any reprisal. Many end up struggling with addiction and gambling, face relationship issues, PTSD or worse, think about ending their life, all while feeling as though there is nowhere to turn. In 2018, there were nine suicides among serving and retired members of the Ontario Provincial Police, which was thought to be unprecedented. The heightened concerns of a policing community left to grieve prompted a review of the officer’s deaths led by members selected by Chief Coroner of Ontario, Dirk Huyer. The panelists were chosen for their expertise and perspective as mental health professionals, first responders, educators, and researchers with a high level of understanding around suicide and suicide prevention. They will look at some of the main recommendations within this report entitled “Staying Visible, Staying Connected For Life”, and what we can learn from them. The motto for Boots On The Ground is “we don’t turn anyone away”, which is most often how members are left to feel by their own organizations, and often by those closest to them. Ali Moosvi, a retired police officer will deliver his moving story about how he has grown from his own experience with suicidal ideation while leaning on external peer support systems like Boots on the Ground when he was in crisis. Ali was one of the expert panelists for the Chief Coroner’s report and has now become a champion and much sought after speaker on suicide prevention as an advocate to “end the silence, change culture and eliminating stigma”.

Suicide Risk After Trauma: Practical Solution-Focused Intervention Strategies

Speaker: Heather Fiske

The ways in which post-traumatic stress can overwhelm even well-established coping skills may push those affected to consider suicide as a solution. Using excerpts from conversations with clients, this workshop will allow participants to observe and begin to practice a solution-focused stance and solution-focused tools for reinforcing clients’ reasons for living, developing individualized approaches to safety planning, and accessing and utilizing the personal resources and capacities that will be helpful in recovery from post-traumatic symptoms.

PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

Suicide Postvention Project for Gender Minorities

Speaker: Alex Shendelman

There are several complications associated with exposure to a suicide loss and it is difficult to determine the exact number of survivors of suicide loss in the LGBTQ2S+ community due to limited report data in Canada. In 2022, DCOGT started a suicide loss program dedicated to survivors from the LGBTQ2S+ community. Community experts point to the need to include LGBTQ2S+ peers, professionals, those with lived experience and allies in those suicide loss groups in order to effectively stabilize LGBTQ2S+ individuals after a suicide loss and to encourage their recovery. Their program addresses both of those issues as it is dedicated to suicide loss survivors from the LGBTQ2S+ community and is facilitated by members of that community.

Canada's First Trans Mental Health, Wellness and Suicide Prevention Toolkit

Speaker: Corrie Melanson

Thanks to a generous grant from the Canadian Women's Foundation, SPECTRUM Waterloo partnered with Wisdom2Action to develop a first of its kind Trans Mental Health, Wellness and Suicide Prevention Toolkit. This toolkit synthesizes pertinent knowledge and research on trans mental health and suicidality in Canada, alongside concrete tools and resources that trans people, friends and families of trans people, and service providers who work with trans communities can put to use. Developed following engagement with local communities in Waterloo region, these resources are grounded in local context but applicable to a wide variety of audiences and stakeholders.

School and Community-Wide Approaches to School Phobia, Avoidance, and Absence: Supporting Students with Mental Health Disabilities by Increasing Protective Factors and Reducing Suicide Risk Factors

Speaker: Sheryl Boswell

Attending school regularly is a vital factor in school success for students. Mental wellness protective supports and factors dramatically decrease with unsupported school phobia and chronic absenteeism and increase risk factors for a range of issues including suicide. There is often a lack of awareness, training, school-based approaches, and collaborative and integrated systems-wide solutions, combined with a lack of official guidelines, policies, and procedures for schools to follow. This workshop integrates child and youth mental health care from research to practice within societal systems, particularly education and mental health. Building and strengthening integrated systems of accommodation and care require comprehensive assessment, support, engagement, and action. Bridging gaps in knowledge and practice requires humility in addressing complex accessibility and equity issues and providing individualized plans of care and support. It will highlight the experiences of students and their families.

Roots of Hope 101:

Speaker: Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC)

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) is pleased to invite you to an introductory session on Roots of Hope. This event will provide attendees with an orientation of the Roots of Hope model, showcase how communities across Canada have successfully implemented Roots of Hope and facilitate a Q&A on next steps for how new communities can get started with the model. We encourage all community members working in the field of Suicide Prevention and Life Promotion across Canada to join our event! Roots of Hope is a community-led model, developed by the MHCC with community and industry experts, aimed to reduce the impact of suicide in their local context. The model builds on community expertise — and national and international best practices — to establish suicide prevention and life promotion interventions. **REGISTER AT:** <https://survey.alchemer-ca.com/s3/50186389/RSVP-Roots-of-Hope-101-Orientation>

PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

Mental Health Stigma and Help-Seeking Among Young Black Women in Toronto, Canada: "The Bottom Line"

Speaker: Donna Richards

Perceptions of stigma associated with mental health status are pronounced among racialized populations such as young Black adults. Due to their intersectional locations within both historical and contemporary axes of marginality and anti-Black racism, their experiences of mental health stigma are said to be three fold. Mental health challenges in Black people are characterized as a pathology and as an unequivocal sign of weakness. Thus, for young Black women, a group that is perceived to be the cornerstone of the Black family as well as the outspoken advocate, being diagnosed with mental health conditions can have profound consequences. Not surprisingly, many young Black women suffer in silence and live in isolation as they struggle with poor mental health. Stigma has been identified as a barrier to accessing mental health supports, resulting in continuous worsening of young the mental health of young Black women, which in turn impacts their outcomes in later life. This presentation will critically examine how race, gender, and immigration status, among other social categories, impact the mental health and help seeking behaviors of young Black women between the ages of 18-25 years old, living in Toronto.

Suicide and Parental Alienation: How Peer Support for Targeted Parents can save lives

Speakers: Kelsey Green and Seana Jewer

If you worked with someone from a unique population that has a 23% chance of attempting suicide at least once, would you know it? If this person was in this population, would you even recognize the signs? How would you approach this unique population and provide appropriate supports? Parental Alienation (PA) is a process whereby the undue influence of a parent causes a child to unjustifiably reject a parent. PA occurs in various severities and is simultaneously child psychological abuse and intimate partner violence (Coercive and controlling family violence). Targeted parents often experience anxiety, depression, PTSD (CPTSD), moral injuries, ambiguous loss and are at an increased risk of suicide. Many targeted parents do not even know they are being alienated or due to the trauma are unable to speak up in ways that can be heard. Further, there are very limited supports for targeted parents and those supports that exist sometimes further marginalize this parent. Targeted parents may feel isolated, alone, that no one understands what they are going through, and that there may be no hope. This presentation is informed by both current research in the field of PA and lived experience doing peer support with targeted parents. It will explore the multi-generational transmission of attachment trauma that is PA, discuss the presentation of targeted parents, identify challenges and risks they face, and how few supports are available to them. Further, discussion will include options for supporting this population that are being explored with the support of Roots of Hope NS to identify what is working and potential opportunities expanding services. Trauma-informed peer support groups, run or advised by others who have experienced PA, can help targeted parents in dealing with the trauma they have experienced and continue to experience. Key topics will include family systems, attachments, intergenerational transmission of childhood trauma, life-long impacts to the child, dealing with cyclical grief, treatment approaches, existing supports for targeted parents, and a toolkit for enhancing peer support with targeted parents. It will also cover the increased risk of suicide, potential pathways to suicide, including marginalization, moral injury, prolonged ambiguous, PTSD, leading to deaths of despair.

Leveraging Your Lived Experience as an Asset to Social Service Delivery

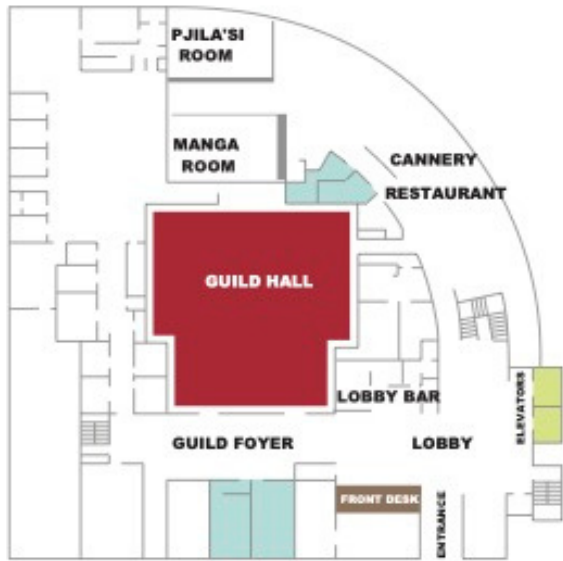
Speaker: Leigh Burse

Leigh will speak about the peculiarity of working in social services and the public eye and struggling with his own mental health. Compassion fatigue and burnout are overwhelming as budgets shrink and workforces deplete and need grows. Working with homeless people and vulnerable people in poverty, he is confronted with the realities of trauma, depression, and suicide-related thoughts almost everyday as part of his own life. He has found sharing his stories to strengthen systems and policies has been rewarding and has developed some best practices. Leigh will talk about the power of the first person experience in social service delivery while simultaneously reminding others that they aren't alone as providers of support services while quietly struggling against their own obstacles.

FLOOR PLAN

ATLANTICA

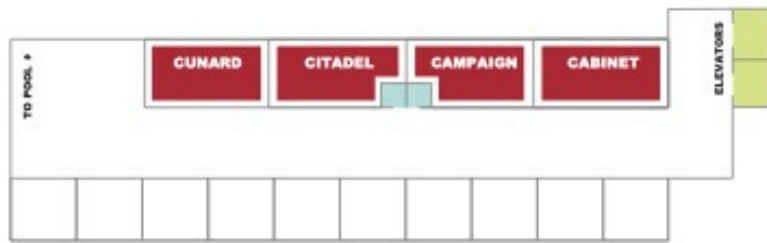
HOTEL HALIFAX



GUILD HALL LOBBY LEVEL



COMMONS ROOM LOWER LEVEL



MEETING ROOMS SECOND FLOOR

