

Suicide Awareness Conference

Zaageyweyon Midewigoning

I See A Beautiful Life
Coming at Me



Keynote Speaker

John Rice, Elder, Knowledge
Keeper, Zahgausgai/Mukwa
3rd Degree Midewiwin

**WEDNESDAY
APRIL 26, 2023**

8:15 AM REGISTRATION
9 AM CONFERENCE
CASINO RAMA



PROGRAM



8:15 TO 9	REGISTRATION
9 TO 9:15	OPENING SESSION & WELCOME
9:15 TO 11	KEYNOTE ADDRESS
11 TO 11:15	BREAK (transition to morning workshops)
11:15 TO 12:30	WORKHOPS A TO D
12:30 TO 1:45	LUNCH
1:45 TO 3	WORKSHOPS E TO H
3 TO 3:15	BREAK (transition to closing session)
3:15 to 4	CLOSING SESSION

THE SUICIDE AWARENESS CONFERENCE

is an educational conference for mental health professionals, consumers, family members, police, teachers, emergency service workers, and anyone else interested in suicide prevention.



WORKSHOPS

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Zaageyweyon Midewigoning: I See A Beautiful Life Coming at Me

John Rice

What happens when what makes you happy, no longer wants to make you happy: Feelings of disenchantment when life purpose feels burdensome. Stories from Traditional Indigenous Knowledge about re-energizing life purpose.

MORNING WORKSHOPS - A TO D

Workshop A: Devon Freeman Inquest

Shannon Crate

This workshop will be delivered by Georgina Island's First Nation Representative, Shannon Crate, who will take participants through her experience of working to create change in memory of Devon Freeman. Devon was an Indigenous youth from Georgina Island First Nation who was receiving services from Hamilton Children's Aid Society when he died by suicide. An inquest following his death resulted in 75 recommendations aimed at preventing similar tragedies and resulted in "Devon's Principle", the right of Indigenous children and youth "to return to their home communities when receiving services under the Child, Youth, and Family Services Act."

Workshop B: Understanding our fears around the conversation of suicide

Hayley Peek

Whether it be in our personal or professional lives, many of us hold fear and resistance to conversations around suicide and suicidality, in particular, how to provide support to someone who may be experiencing thoughts of suicide. Our ability to create space for connection and safety directly stems from our ability to proactively work with our fears and discomforts when it comes to speaking of suicide. In this workshop, Hayley will lead us through a raw and interactive conversation that will go beyond the signs to look for, and instead focus on identifying our fears, supportive and person-centred language and how to hold space for these vulnerable conversations. She will highlight the importance of non-judgment and self compassion in this process as she challenges us to build our confidence and comfort in engaging in difficult conversations.

Workshop C: Is it safe to talk with young children about suicide?

Julie Rodgers

How does what a young child understands about death impact their understanding of suicide and subsequent risk for suicide? This 75-minute interactive session will help answer these questions and provide an opportunity for conversations about talking with children about death and suicide. This workshop is loosely organized around excerpts from The ASK Workshop that address concerns helpers and community members have around children's understandings of death and suicide. Through small and large group discussions, participants will be encouraged to share their fears and will be supported to explore wisdom from clinical experience and empirical research to help distinguish fact from myth. Participants will leave ready to apply what they learn to their work with young children.

Workshop D: Indigenous wise practices for promoting life

Connor Lafortune & Kelly Geris

Kelly and Connor aim to reimagine the future of Life Promotion. Together, they will share their accomplishments, challenges, and what can be done to support this work. Through their combined efforts, experiences, and expertise, they will showcase the importance of creating resources and spaces by and for Indigenous people. Life Promotion encourages people to strengthen their connection to land, community, self, and spirit; while equipping them to live a long prosperous life. This discussion will focus on decolonizing spaces, strength-based approaches for health and healing, and sharing sacred gifts.

Indigenous youth carry a sacred knowledge that will revolutionize Life Promotion as the future of Indigenous wellness and resilience. Kelly and Connor arrive with the courage to speak and invite spectators to have the courage to listen. Over the past two years, Kelly and Connor have embarked on a journey through the Feather Carriers program in the hopes of better understanding what Life Promotion can mean for their communities. They look forward to sharing this knowledge with you!



WORKSHOPS

AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS - E TO H

Workshop E: Bamaadisiwin (Life), Onji-Bamaadisiwin (Changing Life), Mno-Bamaadisiwin (Good Life), B'saani-Bamaadisiwin (Life Flowing as it Should)

John Rice

This presentation will focus on changing the dialogue from one of sickness to one of wellness. It is adapted from the Anishinaabe Miikaans Teaching and will highlight the journey through life as an experiential journey where the individual achieves B'saani-Bamaadisiwin through the understanding of the relationship between the physical, mental and spiritual.

Workshop F: Decreasing Suicide Risk Factors and Removing Barriers to Care for Trans, Non-binary and Gender diverse individuals

Sarah Crawford & Jamie Campbell

This presentation will address the current suicide risk factors and the barriers to accessing care for trans, non-binary and gender diverse populations. This presentation will also provide education around best practices when working with trans, non-binary and gender diverse populations and will address common concerns and fears that health care providers have when supporting trans, non-binary and gender diverse clients.

Workshop G: The influence of trauma on grief and how this complicates the grieving process

Christina M. Harrington

Trauma is inherent in sudden death/ suicide. Participants will be introduced to emerging knowledge on the factors that constellate and increase the potential for suicidal behaviour and risk; not to look back but to inform care going forward. As providers of care/front line support, participants will learn the subtle (and not so subtle) costs of caring that are consequent of vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue as well as strategies to support colleagues and fellow 'carers' and the necessary steps to take to manage one's own well-being.

Workshop H: Understanding and responding to people who have experienced suicide related thoughts or behaviours

Yvonne Bergmans

Participants will have the opportunity to learn a modality for understanding and responding to people who have experienced suicide related thoughts or behaviours. There will be discussion on the theory behind this modality of understanding and basic concepts and skills that can be used in helping an individual feel and keep safer.

CLOSING SESSION

Georgina Island Dream Drum Singers



PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

Yvonne Bergmans (MSW, RSW, PhD)

Yvonne was the suicide interventionist at the Arthur Sommer Rotenberg Chair in Suicide Studies at St. Michael's Hospital for 21 years. Alongside clients, she developed a 20-week group intervention for people with recurrent suicide attempts. Skills for Safer Living (SfSL) which is a psychosocial/ psychoeducational intervention for people experiencing suicide related thoughts and behaviours, is currently being offered as a 4, 10 and 20 week program in communities across Ontario and Alberta including a concurrent program for caregivers and their children/youth. The 3 session safety planning intervention based on SFSL has been offered in Galway, Ireland and Alberta. Her current work includes supervision, consultation, research and training for those working with priority populations at risk of suicide.

Shannon Crate

Shannon is a proud member of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation where she has held the position of Native Child Welfare Manager and Band Representative for the past 25 years. She also teaches for FNTI and provides IADR services. She acknowledges the beautiful teachings her parents, grandparents and ancestors have given her. Her mother is a respected Elder and her father, from Nova Scotia, was well known for his dedicated work on Georgina Island. Having parents like this made it natural for her to go into the social work field.

Jaime Campbell (he/him)

Jamie is a Registered Social Worker who works as the Therapist with the North Simcoe Muskoka Trans Health Program. Jamie provides gender-affirming and trauma-informed individual and group psychotherapy to trans individuals experiencing significant mental health struggles in North Simcoe Muskoka. He also provides secondary assessments for gender-affirming surgery referrals and co-facilitates peer groups and training with Sarah Crawford.

Sarah Crawford (she/her)

Sarah is an Ontario Certified Teacher for the last 13 years and is the current Peer Advisor for the North Simcoe Muskoka Trans Health Program. She supports patients with their social transition, advocates for trans inclusion and continues to develop and facilitate programming and supports to meet the growing needs of the trans population and their families in North Simcoe Muskoka.

Kelly Geris

Kelly Geris is a registered social worker working with and in First Nation communities in south western Ontario. Kelly is a Haudenosaunee woman from the Oneida Nation of the Thames and is part of the Wolf Clan. She has undergraduate and master's level degrees in social work and is an accredited addictions counsellor. Kelly's practice centres around mental health, addictions, life promotion, family counselling, and wholistic healing. Her practice is informed and guided by Indigenous ways of knowing and being, traditional teachings, language, and ceremony. Kelly's own healing journey has inspired her to help others. Recently Kelly has been blessed to become a mother to twin sons who are her ultimate inspiration.

Christina M. Harrington

Christina holds a PhD in social work and has practiced in clinical roles for over 20 years. She began her career in community and hospital-based mental health programs and later practiced in critical care at a regional trauma centre. Christina moved into private practice in 2009 and is the owner/director of Social Work Solutions Canada. The practice offers an array of mental health services and treatment modalities and Christina is certified in several evidence-based trauma modalities. She has held numerous sessional faculty appointments providing professional training to undergraduate and graduate social work students and she has provided numerous guest lectures on varied mental health topics. She holds expertise and specialty in trauma and bereavement; is a researcher and published author in this area and has served as a peer reviewer for reputable, international journals in death, dying and bereavement. Her doctoral dissertation focused on the bereavement experiences of family members of our fallen heroes in Afghanistan. Christina values her profession and served on the provincial board of the Ontario Association of Social Workers as the Regional Director for Hamilton-Niagara for six years. Outside of work, family is very important to her, and she spends much of her time keeping up with her seven children.



PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

Connor Lafortune

Connor Lafortune 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 is Anishinaabek, Queer, and Francophone. He 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.

Hayley Peek

Hayley works as a Mental Health Consultant and Speaker, where her focus is on creating safe spaces and breaking open conversations around supporting mental well-being. She leads from a place of living experience with mental illness and recovery and weaves elements of her own story into all her work for the purpose of connecting with others and providing insights and education on how we look and speak about mental health. She's had the pleasure of working with a variety of public and private sector organizations across Canada delivering keynote presentations, educational workshops and providing peer support services.

John Rice

Zahgausgai/Mukwa Dodem, is an Ojibwa /Anishinabeninni and a 3rd Degree member of the Three Fires Midewiwin Society from Wasauksing First Nation near Parry Sound, Ontario. John is a student of the Miikaans Teaching which is an Anishinaabe teaching about the Spirit's journey through this physical realm and the mind's adjustments to physiological and experiential events. John has made significant contributions to initiatives for Mental Health and Wellness locally, regionally and nationally. Amongst his many endeavours he is also a co-founder of the Feather Carriers: Leadership for Life Training Program.

Julie Rodgers

Julie is Registered Psychotherapist in Ontario with over 12 years of progressive experience supporting children and families from diverse backgrounds in a variety of settings. Julie is currently a Professor at Seneca College in the School of Early Childhood Education and has provided therapeutic services at four children's mental health agencies across Ontario. Julie has extensive clinical experience working with military families and providing therapeutic services and consultations to children, families and professionals involved in the child welfare system. While supporting children with a lived experience of loss, abuse, neglect and trauma, Julie utilizes her compassionate and empathetic disposition to build strong relationships conducive to therapeutic change. Julie has been a facilitator of The ASK Workshop for the last 5 years and is passionate about creating suicide safer communities for children and youth.





REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Conference registration includes keynote address, choice of morning and afternoon workshops, closing session, buffet lunch and snacks.

\$125 per delegate

Registration is limited. Online registration and payment can be made at Eventbrite

www.eventbrite.ca/e/2023-suicide-awareness-conference-simcoemuskoka-tickets-572232361397?aff=ebdssbdestsearch

Please note that refunds will not be given, but substitute registrations will be taken up until April 26, 2023.

If you have any questions, please contact the conference coordinator:

Nancy Moreau Battaglia
Conference Coordinator
nmbdtati@gmail.com

Exhibit Tables

If you are registering for the conference and would like to have an exhibitor table to promote your organization, please contact the Conference Coordinator. Space is limited.



This self-financed conference is sponsored by

CMHA Barrie/Simcoe Branch
CMHA Muskoka/Parry Sound Branch
Georgian College
Nancy Moreau Battaglia (www.inthemidstofchaos.ca)
Simcoe County Suicide Awareness Council
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