

**32<sup>nd</sup> Annual OADD Conference Abstracts**  
**April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022**  
**Virtual**

**Keynote Presentation**

**Balancing Life with Humour**

Presenter: Kate Davis

*A speaker, writer, mother, comedian and actress, Kate Davis has the unique ability to find humour in any situation.*

Kate's speak will take a humourous approach to change and promoting a healthy work/life balance

**Session 1A**

**SHIFT-Holistic and Intersectional Harm Reduction Services for People with Intellectual Disabilities**

Presenters: Tina Thomason, Tony Rachwalski, Suzanne Willett, Jill Faber

Through funding provided by the Leveraging Community Planning Mechanisms to Support the Mental Health of Adults with Developmental Disabilities, Families and Caregivers During COVID-19 a group of likeminded people came together in North Eastern Ontario to try and find solutions to the complexity and lack of services for people in our community with intellectual disabilities whom are already significantly marginalized and at risk due to addictions, poverty, intergenerational trauma, gender and race.

THE SHIFT is a harm reduction resource within the developmental services sector. It is built around the person-centred, "Nothing about Us, Without Us," philosophy and is focused on non-judgement and inclusive care that is culturally sensitive, evidence-based, accessible and more than anything, individual-led and based on incremental gains.

THE SHIFT is about disrupting the cycle of hopelessness within our vulnerable populations, and the cycle of helplessness felt by everyone who tried to negotiate a system that is built around siloed services trying to treat intersecting issues. Those who genuinely want to help, to heal their community, only to find the obstacles before them are based around the idea that each person is their issues, rather than the complex and nuanced human beings we are. That begins with THE SHIFT and the biases surrounding our view of the intellectually disabled.

A panel of the people involved in this project will discuss the journey from identifying needs and gaps in services to the devolvement of the resource THE SHIFT, training modules currently being developed and the emerging community of practice.

**Session 1B**

**Clinical Justice Program: A Collaborative Pandemic Solution for the Justice System**

Presenters: Courtney Hutson, Samantha Airhart, Marnie Lye, Vicky Simos

The Clinical Justice Program (CJP), established in 2018, is a collaboration between Centre for Behaviour Health Sciences (Mackenzie Health) and Community Networks of Specialized Care-Central East (CLH

Developmental Support Services). The CJP's mission is to support complex individuals with a dual diagnosis who are involved in the criminal justice system as a victim, witness or accused to ensure they experience the justice system in an equitable manner. This in turn, will provide access to appropriate sanctions, improve intersectional collaboration, as well as reduce fiscal costs associated with prolonged court delays. The CJP encompasses three separate pillars of clinical support including The Justice Clinic, A-DBT Justice Group and the Justice App. To date qualitative and quantitative data supports the success of this program which was required to shift to a telehealth model due to the pandemic restrictions. This ensured seamless support for individuals in the community and justice system.

The participants will learn three different models of support, community collaboration and the referral process which can assist an individual with a dual diagnosis that has come in contact with the justice system. The participants will also be offered the opportunity to download a newly launched (November 2021), user friendly Justice App that can be used to build capacity within their organization to assist clients that are currently being supported in the justice system.

## **Session 1C**

### **Consulting Virtually: The Challenges, Successes and Strategies to Maintain Privacy**

Presenters: *Suzanne Ali, Gail Clarke, Jayne Stone*

Since March 2020, the shift from in-person to virtual consultation supports came with challenges. These can include working through technological issues, privacy issues, learning how to collect information and data, and teaching skills at a distance. At Regional Support Associates (RSA), Community Consultants use the biopsychosocial model to provide behavioural consultation for adults with an intellectual disability who engage in behaviour(s) that limit their quality of life. These consultants had to pivot their method of service delivery quickly in order to continue providing support. Examples of adaptations include using multiple virtual meeting platforms, recording staff team trainings, conducting observations through a camera, creating PowerPoint presentations to teach new skills, and utilizing available online video content.

Adapting to an increase in technology use meant RSA had to consider ways to ensure privacy. Examples of strategies include generating meeting links for each client versus each consultant, using secure file transfer to send confidential documents, and appropriate areas to store information.

Despite its challenges, virtual consultation came with benefits. Specifically, virtual consultation can be an appropriate option for people who need shorter, more frequent meetings and/or those who have difficulty meeting people in-person. This presentation will explore four topics on shifting from in-person to working virtually: 1) the barriers experienced, 2) creative solutions and benefits, 3) strategies to maintain privacy, and 4) planning for a hybrid model that includes in-person meetings.

### **Lunchtime Demonstration - Art Therapy**

Presenters: *Olena Darewych, Heidi Argyle*

In this creative interactive session, conference attendees will engage in action-oriented arts activities which spark one's imaginative thinking abilities, encourage storytelling, and elicit social engagement

## **Session 2A**

### **Amalgamation by Design**

Presenters: Teresa Jordan, Melinda Ferguson, TBA

From a first step of shared Executive Director in 2013 to a full amalgamation of three agencies in 2017, this presentation will share our journey and the steps that happened along our chosen path to amalgamation.

As this is an important topic for many in the sector the focus will be on the following areas of our journey:

- The initial strategic decisions that led to the eventual amalgamation, environment and considerations that caused the very early discussions.
- The process of planning and decision making that led to the amalgamation.
- The creation of a foundational document of non-negotiable pillars that the boards and management used to design the new agency and governance- for example that no family would need to travel to a different community for service, that no service would be reduced in any community, that an administrative office would be maintained in all three communities.
- The setup of the foundational board and its structure to ensure a balance of experience from the former agencies and new perspectives.
- Governance by design for the new agency
- The steps in change management about the first few years in harmonizing the operational workings into a consolidated team- eventually living into our tagline- three doors one agency.

We are very proud of our work and in the design of our new agency and wish to share that good, facilitated discussions can lead to important decisions that make the agency exactly what is desired, customized to the unique nature of the former agencies and their presence and partnerships in the community.

## **Session 2B**

### **Supported Employment Model of Service Delivery with Job Seekers with Developmental Disabilities**

Presenter: Joanna Samuels

According to the 2012 report from the Conference Board of Canada, over half (52 per cent) of working age Canadians with disabilities ages 15 to 69 are employed compared to 76 per cent of people without disabilities. With these shocking and concerning facts, as well as the realities of the tough, competitive and complicated labour market, our job seekers with developmental disabilities are often left out of the workplace. Yet, from my observations over the years working in the sector of supported employment, many of individuals in service do want to work and do want to be included in the workforce. And my approach is that anyone who wants to work deserves to get help to reach their goal to the best of their Abilities with dignity and respect. The purpose of this workshop is to present the service delivery model of Supported Employment and that we use at Reena in our employment programs both virtually and in person during Covid and beyond. This session is a train the trainers" (i.e., frontline professionals in the supported employment sector or social service/community agencies) that presents best practices and proven strategies from my work of over a decade with both job seeker and employer, as a job developer/job coach that has helped countless people with disabilities be included in the labour market. The agenda of the workshop would include a warm-up, a breakdown of the supported employment

model in theory and in practice; followed by an activity to apply the theory followed by questions and individual employment/job consultations as required.

## **Session 2C**

### **We're all on the same team- Establishing effective collaborative partnerships between service users and developmental services organizations**

Presenters: Kaylagh Vanwyck, Dzidra Hilar, Casey Reilly, Justin Scrimgeour

While the past two years have caused us to adapt, change, and find creative new approaches to service provision, it has also taught us the power of collaboration. Historically, our sector has evolved largely guided by the knowledge and direction of non-disabled service providers and government. While we may have inherited these practices from the past, we now have the chance to re-imagine a better way forward by shifting towards more empowering approaches of service delivery. To do so, we must re-imagine organizations where structures and practices no longer privilege the voice and knowledge of non-disabled service providers, but instead give credence and space to the voice, lived experience, and knowledge of people labeled with developmental disabilities too.

This session walks through the findings of a participatory action research study conducted in collaboration with service users and members of Christian Horizons Our Voices Matter advocacy group. Together, this group worked alongside a Community Psychology Masters student from Wilfrid Laurier University and was supported by the 2020 OADD Participation Scholarship. We'll share what we learned through our research on how developmental services organizations can welcome the participation and collaboration of service users as we design, implement, and evaluate services. Our session focuses specifically on key elements of such collaborations and includes a toolkit we developed of practical approaches to involving people labeled with developmental disabilities in service design. This includes different ways for service users to participate in organizations, what difference that can make, and how to do it well.

## **Session 3A**

### **Prioritizing Mental Health in Times of Isolation: Pivoting to Online Wellness Services**

Presenters: *Natalie Healy, Michelle Montague*

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and their caregivers, require timely services that support their wellness, especially as it evolves over time. Our Wellness Services are available to current and former clients, families, caregivers, professionals and the broader community to become more engaged proactively in their care.

During the pandemic, our services pivoted from in-person services to tele-health and virtual services. We prioritized the mental health and well-being of our clients and their caregivers, by developing and delivering interactive virtual events, that introduced simple strategies including mindfulness meditation and yoga, to teach people how to care for themselves during a difficult time. This interactive presentation will provide an overview of Surrey Place's Wellness Services, as well as more detailed explanations of two programs: the Mind, Body, and Soul series for care providers, and the Breathe and Blossom program for individuals with IDD.

By participating in this workshop, participants will have a better understanding of Wellness Services offered at Surrey Place, and the ways in which they meet the unique and individual needs of people with IDD and their caregivers to improve their overall health and well-being.

### **Session 3B**

#### **Downtown East Justice Centre - An Approach to Better Support Individuals with a Developmental Disability**

Presenters: *Scott Mckean, Kate Matthews, Melissa McMillan, Scott Skinner*

The Toronto-Downtown East Justice Centre Pilot launched operations in May 2021 to address the cycle of offending for chronic offenders affected by mental health, addiction, concurrent disorders, poverty, and homelessness. The pilot focuses on low to moderate level offenses committed in 51 Division of Toronto Police Service that are processed at the College Park Court House.

The Ministry of the Attorney General, the Ontario Court of Justice, the City of Toronto and Surrey Place have partnered to create capacity within the justice system to better recognize individuals with suspected or confirmed developmental disabilities and/or dual diagnosis engaged in the Justice System. A Developmental Justice Case Manager position has been created by Surrey Place and is embedded in the Downtown East Justice Centre team. The case manager works collaboratively with mental health, physical health, and addiction agencies, and supports appropriate justice outcomes by providing dedicated developmental disability service coordination for dual diagnosis Justice Centre clients, ensuring the right supports are being accessed and appropriate referrals made.

The presentation and discussion will feature early findings from the Downtown East Justice Centre Pilot, including opportunities for innovation and considerations for better supporting individuals experiencing developmental disabilities and/or dual diagnosis engaged in the Justice System.

### **Session 3C**

#### **Virtual peer support for individuals labeled with a developmental disability and their caregivers**

Presenters: *Elizabeth Irwin, Megan Hart, Lyla Fern-Weinbren*

From 2020-2021, the Options program at Family Service Toronto (FST) ran virtual peer support groups for adults labeled with developmental disabilities and separately for caregivers of this population to stay socially connected during the lockdown. Attendance ranged from 3 to 12 per session. To increase self-care and coping skills six virtual psycho-educational workshops were provided and 462 caregivers participated.

This filled a gap in knowledge but was not part of peer support. Participant feedback reported that the facilitator was supportive, and they enjoyed the weekly interaction with peers. Two peer leaders co-facilitated the adult group sessions and enjoyed engaging with peers and discussing new topics. Fourteen caregivers completed pre- and post- group surveys on personal well-being. They reported strong resilience and coping skills, high level of knowledge of resources, and high caregiver burden before and after the peer support group. A goal for both support groups was to continue meeting without a facilitator. The caregiver group continued to meet after the facilitator left; the adult peer support group requested ongoing support from FST staff. Overall, the support groups encouraged adults with developmental disabilities, as well as caregivers, to strengthen social skills and social networks,

meet new people, and create support amongst peers. Program implementation, challenges and strengths, as well as future directions of this work will be discussed.