

2020 CANSW Virtual Conference - Speaker line-up:

DAY 1 – November 18, 2020 1200 EST

Jag Gill, MD, FRCP (C)

Nephrologist, St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver BC

“Reducing Barriers to Transplant for Indigenous patients”

Dr. Gill’s research project is intended to become a new model of renal care in BC for Indigenous patients. He is working on increasing accessibility of live donor transplants for Indigenous patients. He has conducted interviews with patients and Elders, and from that feedback, is developing a new culturally competent model of care for patients, starting at the beginning of their kidney failure, through dialysis and transplant, which will include Indigenous patient liaisons, who will work with SW and patients along the way. It is expected to be a 4-5 year project which will have pilot test sites, be evaluated by Indigenous patients and providers, amended and improved and then gradually offered across BC.

DAY 1 – November 18, 2020 1530 (3:30) EST

Dorothee Chopamba, MSW, RSW

Clinical Social Worker/Psychotherapist, Adjunct Professor Factor-Inwentash, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

“Allyship: Turning Privilege into Change”

Allies are bridge builders who are willing to engage in difficult conversations to create change. How many times have you been told that you have privilege and you lost it or became defensive and the conversation turned into anger? What about trying to discuss with someone who has no sense of their own privilege and still get similar results? The presentation will expand your understanding of why allies are needed. Highlighted throughout the presentation are simple ways allies can use their privilege and influence to support people who are targets of systemic oppression. The presentation will answer some burning questions:

- Do you know what privilege you have? And why does it matter?
- Do differing social locations have the potential of reproducing oppression?

- How does unconscious bias affect your effectiveness as an ally?
- How do you use an intersectional lens to strengthen your allyship?

A key member of an interdisciplinary Community Health Centre team focusing on the optimal well-being of all patients and families and best health outcomes. With over 15 years of experience working with marginalized and vulnerable populations with mental health and other multiple needs, I have gained considerable experience and understanding that economic, social or living conditions shape our health outcome and well-being. My practice is guided by the influence of the Social Determinants of Health in building communities. My success comes from understanding that every encounter is collaboration and that every person has systems already in place within themselves to promote healing and better functioning in the world.

DAY 2 - November 19, 2020 1200 EST

Rachelle Bensoussan, M.A., CT. (She/Her)
Being Here Human

Level 1 Grief Literacy Training Workshop (Condensed)

Rachelle Bensoussan is the co-founder and managing director of Being Here, Human.

She holds a master's degree in Thanatology, is a certified Thanatologist with the Association of Death Education and Counselling and has spent the last ten years building community-based bereavement programs for hospices across Southern Ontario.

Rachelle holds a faculty appointment at McMaster University in the department of family medicine, division of palliative care. She is a longitudinal facilitator at the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine and a guest lecturer in many of McMaster's undergraduate programs. Rachelle is also a faculty member at Western University in the department of Thanatology.

Rachelle is a queer-identified woman of North-African & Middle Eastern descent and is a fierce believer that grief is our birthright.

DAY 2 - November 19, 2020 1400 (2:00) EST

Heather O-Neale, MSW, RSW

“Canadian Healthcare and Racism: How the long and buried history impacts people of color today”

Heather O’Neale, MSW, RSW, has worked in the social services field in Manitoba for over 16 years in the areas of crisis intervention, adult and adolescent psychiatry, non-profit community counseling and community development.

Today, Heather is a private practice therapist working with adults and couples with an emphasis on trauma, anxiety, depression, and relational issues. She is also an instructor at the University of Manitoba, teaching Counselling Skills, Counselling Theories, Working with Families, and Understanding Family Violence.

Heather is multiethnic and multicultural, which provides her with a unique experiencing of culture and ethnicity and a strong interest in promoting discussion in these areas.

Heather is a mom and partner within a blended, multiethnic family and she universally believes that laughter is a necessary component of healing.

DAY 3 - November 20, 2020 1200 EST

Mitch Bourbonniere, M.S.W., M.S.M., C.M.H.W. (C/A)

“Understanding Addictions and Mental Health through an Indigenous Lens”

Mitch Bourbonniere volunteers with Mama Bear Clan, Got Bannock, and Drag the Red. Mama Bear Clan walks the neighbourhood of North Point Douglas and Winnipeg’s Main Street spreading warmth, cheer, and love through greeting Winnipeg’s homeless brothers and sisters with hugs, conversation, and donations of clothing and food.

Got Bannock serves the same community with twice a month outdoor gatherings where people in our village are fed, loved, and looked after. Drag the Red spends countless hours on Winnipeg’s Red River searching for missing people. Mitch has joined others in adorning Winnipeg’s bridges with red cloth in the cold of winter to remember missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Mitch also helped start a men’s healing group out of the North Point Douglas Women’s Centre.

Mitch works with Winnipeg’s most vulnerable people who suffer with homelessness, post-traumatic stress, addiction, mental health issues, domestic violence, gang involvement, and sexual exploitation through the Ojijiita Pimatiswin Kinamatwin (OPK), Whistling Winds Action Therapy programs and the Manitoba Youth Justice system. He visits the institutions and supports people as they leave prison and gang life.

Mitch developed a program called Lateral Empathy where with groups of young volunteers, donations of clothing, food, furniture, and household goods are picked up and delivered to those in need. They also volunteer at the First Nations pavilion at Folklorama, the Teddy Bears picnic, and many other worthy events. This group of young people also volunteer at Indigenous ceremonies all across southern Manitoba during Sundance season.

On September 7, 2014 Mitch diffused a situation by which a young man had drawn a handgun on another young man in a playground filled with children. On December 4, 2016 Mitch swam out into the not yet frozen waters of the river to help a girl out who had made a suicide attempt. Mitch was recognized in the Manitoba Legislature for this, as well as receiving the Royal Canadian Humane Association's Bronze Medal for Bravery. Mitch was recently awarded the Governor General's Meritorious Service Medal and the Winnipeg Police Service's Honoured Citizen Award in recognition of outstanding support and commitment to public safety.

Mitch is a pipe carrier and a 28 year Sundancer. He provides Elder services to Urban Circle, Rossbrook House, Metis Child and Family Services, North Point Douglas Women's Centre, Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services, Animikii Ozoson Child and Family Services, CEDA Pathways, Ndinawe Youth Centre, and many other organizations.

Mitch has a master's degree in Social Work and teaches at the universities of Manitoba, Winnipeg, and St Boniface. Mitch is a social worker in the Louis Riel School Division.

DAY 3 - November 20, 2020 1400 (2:00) EST

Donna Alexander, MSW, RSW

"Racial Trauma and Implications for Clinical Practice"

Donna Alexander is a Social Worker with a specialisation in addiction and mental health. She currently serves on the Equity & Inclusion Council at the Department of Psychiatry and is also an Adjunct Lecturer at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto.

Donna currently serves as Vice Chair of Black Mental Health Canada and serves as an Advisor on the Pathways to Care Project for Black youth. She previously served as Vice President of Black Health Alliance and was a member of the Black Experiences in Health Care Initiative at Sinai Health Systems.

She facilitates training for staff at community-based agencies on factors relating to concurrent disorders and cultural safety in clinical practice.

She holds a Master of Social work from the University of Toronto and currently works at the Centre for Addiction & Mental Health.