

Opening the Door to Mental Health

Symposium 2023



Speakers and
Planning Team Bios



OPEN DOOR WORKSHOP

Speakers



Dr. Evan Adams

Evan Tesla II Adams is a Coast Salish actor & physician from the Tla'amin First Nation near Powell River, BC, Canada.

Evan Tesla II Adams is a Coast Salish actor & physician from the Tla'amin First Nation near Powell River, BC, Canada.

Evan completed a Medical Doctorate from the University of Calgary in 2002, & a residency in the Aboriginal Family Practice program at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver, BC. Dr. Adams has a Masters of Public Health (2009) from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD. He was the first-ever Aboriginal Health Physician Advisor in the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, BC Ministry of Health (2007-2012). He was the Deputy Provincial Health Officer for BC from 2012 to 2014. He then served as the Chief Medical Officer of the First Nations Health Authority (2014-2020), and was on exchange with First Nations & Inuit Health Branch, Indigenous Services Canada, as the Deputy Chief Medical Officer of Public Health under Dr. Tom Wong. He is returning to the First Nation Health Authority as Chief Medical Officer in March.



Tanis Burnett, CVRP

Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant

Tanis is in her final year of a Master's degree in Counselling Psychology at City University in Vancouver, and has recently begun her clinical internship. She also works as a Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant in Kelowna, BC and is grateful to live, work, and play on the traditional and ancestral territory of the Syilx Okanagan People. Tanis is passionate about supporting the mental health of individuals who face multiple barriers to work after a significant injury or diagnosis. She has a keen interest in working with veterans and law enforcement personnel, as her Dad was a member of the RCMP for 30 years. Being a transracial adoptee and struggling with her own identity growing up, she also hopes to support youth from this community in the future. In her free time, Tanis enjoys golfing and going for walks and hikes with her dog, Joey.

Delhia and Latash Nahanee and Family,
Chinook Song Catchers



The Chinook SongCatchers are from the Squamish and Nisga'a Nations. Maurice is from the Squamish Nation and his wife Delhia is Nisga'a. Respect for their culture is shown in the authenticity of cultural performances and visual art. As a member of the Squamish Nation, he has a lifelong passion for all aspects of culture - which includes, art, singing and dancing, hunting, fishing, ceremonies and protocol. His parents and extended family members are strong role models. Latash continues their tradition of always striving for excellence. Delhia was also raised with the traditions of her people. They have two daughters - Amanda and Marissa. The Chinook SongCatchers have worked as professional performing artists for over 25 years. This performance group offers Squamish and Nisga'a cultural presentations such as public speaking, singing and dancing. Their presentations are informative and entertaining. As a family group and as individuals they have performed for international audiences in Vancouver and overseas in Japan, Taiwan, South America, Africa and Europe. They also train and mentor youth in performing arts.



Jay McDermit

Jay is a former USMNT World Cup Soccer player and Premier League & MLS Captain. He specializes in Teamwork & Leadership, as well as running the RISExSHINE Development program, focused on empowering people to be the best versions of themselves. He also runs the RISExSHINE Charity Foundation which raises money to help deserving people from a wide range of communities to join in on their programs "

David Didluck, Regional Director
Reconciliation and Partnerships, Pacific
Region



For nearly 25 years, David has worked consistently to eliminate socio-economic gaps facing Indigenous communities and build stronger Crown-Aboriginal relationships across Ontario and British Columbia. He spent five years working with Vancouver Island and coastal First Nations as a lands and self-government Negotiator for the Federal Treaty Negotiation Office of the former Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. David has spent 12 years working for the Province of Ontario – as Assistant Deputy Minister, Aboriginal Relations and Ministry Partnerships, and as Assistant Deputy Minister, Negotiations and Reconciliation – and helped create the province’s first stand-alone ministry dedicated to Indigenous reconciliation. David also worked for the Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure as Director, Partnerships and Consultation, and with the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General as Director, Corporate Policy and Tribunal Relations, and then as Director of Aboriginal Justice.

David previously worked with Indigenous Services Canada: firstly as Associate Director General, Regional Operations, Regional Infrastructure Delivery Branch, and as Associate Regional Director General, Ontario Region. David holds a Masters of Arts from the University of British Columbia, an Honours Bachelors of Arts from the University of Toronto, and conflict resolution accreditations from the Justice Institute of BC.

David now works with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in support of the Reconciliation agenda in response to the Government of Canada commitments on reconciliation.

Dr. Mary Donohue
CEO of Digital Wellness Center



Dr. Mary is named by Fortune Magazine as one of the “10 Businesswomen to Watch in 2023” for her innovative approach to wellness, mentoring, and change management, is CEO of the Digital Wellness Center and a three-time bestselling author in the US and Canada.

Dr. Mary creates products for people who are driven to work – maybe too much at times. They may be burdened by lack of sleep, worry, and slapdash nutrition and may feel exhausted or even burnt out. They may or may not know they need help, but they do know they’re nearing an edge and don’t know how to slow down.

The Digital Wellness Center (patent pending) is the solution. Established in 2021, the DWC was given a 2023 Marketplace Champion Award. The DWC’s novel technology gamifies mood mapping to wellness content using microbreaks. The result is what we call the “good day response.” The DWC’s passion is to create 32% more good days to make the world healthier and less stressed.

Yvette-Monique Gray
Co-Executive Lead, BC Federal Council
Building Black Leaders Initiative and Regional
Director General, PSPC Pacific Region



Yvette-Monique Gray began her public service career as a Customs Inspector at the Edmonton International Airport, she moved through a wide variety of operational and management positions with the former Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, ranging from Chief of Air Cargo Operations at the Vancouver International Airport (VIA) to Manager of Revenue Collections at the Vancouver Tax Services Office, before becoming an Executive with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) in 2006. As an Executive, Yvette has held a number of operational and corporate positions at the CBSA and was a long standing Regional Director of Intelligence and Enforcement Division, a role that allowed her to work with border services organizations all over the world. Her specialty is navigating change and leading specialized teams in highly operational and public-facing environments, and she is the recipient of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal for her work in this domain. Yvette joined Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) in 2021 as the Regional Director General for the Pacific Region, overseeing office accommodation, real estate, procurement, and delivery of major projects on behalf of federal government departments. A passionate advocate for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Yvette is the Executive Co-Champion for the BC Building Black Leaders program, an initiative developed on behalf of the BC Federal Council.



Jessica Grass, RP

Psychological Health and Safety Specialist with
MyWorkplaceHealth

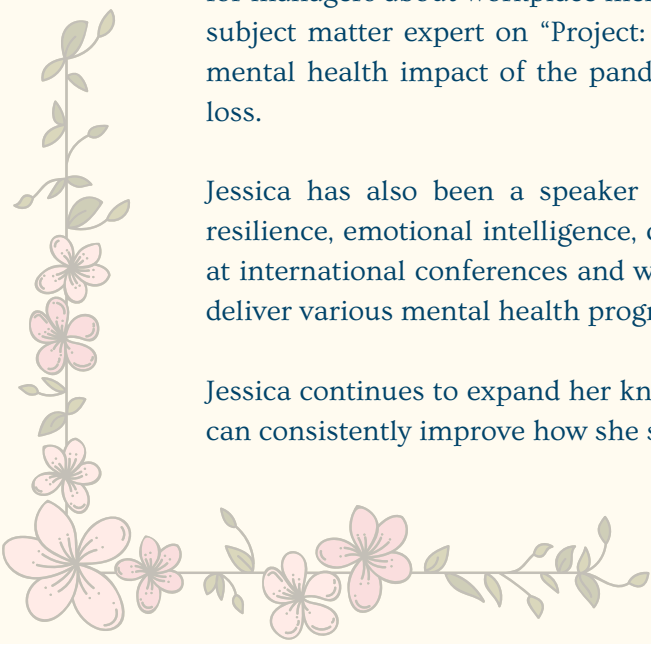
Jessica is an accomplished therapist, educator, facilitator, and innovator who focuses on deconstructing knowledge related to mental wellness at home, in the community and in the workplace so that it can be applied to improving people's everyday lives.

Prior to becoming a consultant in the mental health space and psychotherapist, Jessica worked in the communication, marketing and education fields. Jessica's work in those fields focused on learning how to communicate effectively so that important knowledge would be absorbed. Soon she realized that her desire for effective and efficient knowledge uptake in others was often hindered by the impact of one's mental wellness. Jessica noticed how one's mental wellness affected one's ability to achieve their goals and it was then she pursued a degree in counselling psychology.

With her education and mental health subject matter expertise, Jessica thrives on making mental health knowledge understood and accessible to all which has resulted in her work on a variety of impactful projects. Working alongside the team at Canada Life's Workplace Strategies for Mental Health division, Jessica helped to create a series that helps people have supportive conversations with family or friends that might be exhibiting concerning behaviour. Jessica also served as the co-author, and subject matter expert for IncludeMe™, a gamified scenario-based training program for managers about workplace mental health & psychological safety. Most recently, Jessica was the subject matter expert on "Project: Kids, Let's Be Superheroes" – a children's book addressing the mental health impact of the pandemic on children covering topics including stress, anxiety, and loss.

Jessica has also been a speaker and facilitator on a variety of mental health topics such as resilience, emotional intelligence, communication skills, anxiety and parenting. She has presented at international conferences and worked with employee assistance providers such as LifeWorks to deliver various mental health programs.

Jessica continues to expand her knowledge base and skills in all areas of mental health so that she can consistently improve how she support others in their life.



Marilyn Hargreaves

Triology® Wellness

Marilyn retired in 2016, after a 30-year career with Fisheries and Oceans Canada in many roles including biologist, coordinator, and senior manager, to pursue her passion of assisting individuals to live more vibrant, healthy and joyful lives. She is no stranger to the challenges of balancing work, family and community with my own physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing, and have navigated both burnout and depression during my high paced, stressful career and hectic family life.



In part, this struggle led her to a lifelong passion of studying and practicing alternate healing modalities, supporting colleagues during my federal career and now in clinical practice. Marilyn is a certified clinical and transpersonal hypnotherapist, with training and experience in counselling, coaching, herbalism, and various shamanic and other spiritual practices. She specializes in supporting individuals to understand and transform the beliefs and programs rooted in family, culture and trauma that drive unwanted and unhealthy attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. She calls her personal philosophy Trilogy®, the alignment of our physical, emotional and mental “beingness” with our Soul’s purpose and gifts. She is proud to have co-authored “Wisdom of Souls,” for the benefit of the Michael Newton Institute, which is a collection of case studies that illustrate the wisdom these individuals received through connecting to their higher or soul guidance.



Mark Henick

Mental Health Advocate and Strategist

Mark TEDx talk, "Why We Choose Suicide," is among the most watched in the world. He has dedicated his life from an early age to opening minds and creating change when it comes to mental health. His talks are informed by his direct experience and explore his diverse and unique perspective as someone who has been a patient, professional, policy influencer, and public figure.

Mark released his first book, *So-Called Normal: A Memoir of Family, Depression, and Resilience*, in 2021. Mark is also the host and executive producer of two podcasts, *So-Called Normal* and *Living Well*, where he has spoken with hundreds of experts, celebrities, and public figures about mental health. Previously, Mark served as the youngest ever board director for the Mental Health Commission of Canada and the youngest ever president of a provincial Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) division. He has worked as a frontline clinician, program manager, and as National Director of Strategic Initiatives for CMHA. Presently, Henick runs a boutique mental health media consulting firm and is a high-demand international keynote speaker on recovery, resilience, and connection.

Mark holds a Master of Science in child development and a Bachelor of Arts with honours in the interdisciplinary study of psychology and philosophy. He is currently completing graduate certificates in applied neuroscience at King’s College London and cognitive psychology at the University of Cambridge.

Roxane Lee

Co-Executive Lead, BC Federal Council
Building Black Leaders Initiative and
A/Director General responsible for
Passports, Citizen Services Branch



Roxane oversees the Passport program for the W-T Region, providing leadership to Passport service recovery mobilization and passport transformation initiatives. She is committed to ensuring that efficient operations and workload management practices and strategies are successfully embedded in the program, in addition to providing executive guidance to CSB Operations. Prior to this, Roxane was the Executive Director of CSB Business Expertise. In this position, she had responsibility for the delivery of advice, guidance, training, and quality management, along with accountability for information management and productivity reporting, regional responses to service improvement, and strategic business planning. Roxane's previous Executive positions include CSB Area Director, Lower Mainland East area of BC, with responsibility for seven Service Canada Centres and the Surrey Passport Office, as well as Director of Business Expertise, with the Integrity Services Branch. Before becoming an Executive, Roxane was the Service Manager for Lower Mainland Program Delivery (Vancouver). Roxane also has experience working in Human Resources, Corporate Services and Communications.

Roxane holds a Bachelor of Applied Arts (Honors) degree in Broadcast Journalism from Ryerson Polytechnic University, a certificate in Public Management from the University of Victoria, and has completed the Canadian Securities Course



Corey Jackson

Acting Regional Director, Policy and
Economic Analysis for Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Corey Jackson is the Acting Regional Director, Policy and Economic Analysis for Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), as well as Co-Chair of the BCFC Community of Interest on Mental Health and the DFO Pacific Region Executive Champion for Mental Health. Corey graduated from the University of Victoria with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science (2001), and a Masters of Public Administration degree in 2004. Corey began his career in the public service with Health Canada, where he helped establish the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Corey joined DFO, Pacific Region in 2007 where he has held a number of roles, including Regional Manager, Aquaculture Management Branch; A/Director, Aquaculture Management Division; and A/Director, Aboriginal Programs Division. Corey has helped advance a number of key priorities for DFO, including renewal of the Pacific Salmon Treaty, the Wild Salmon Policy and the development of recovery measures for Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW). Corey was born and raised in Campbell River, B.C. and lives in North Vancouver with his wife and two children. He maintains a strong interest in mental health and well-being.



Denise MacGillivray

Director General for the Environmental Health and Pesticides Directorate within Health Canada's Regulatory Operations and Enforcement Branch (ROEB).

Denise oversees three different national programs responsible for protecting the health of Canadians, and the environment – including from risks posed by environmental factors and pesticides.

Denise has spent the majority of her public service career in the scientific and regulatory fields of Health Canada. She began her career as a scientific evaluator and Section Head at the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA). She has subsequently held various management positions of increasing responsibility across the Department.

Prior to joining Health Canada in 2004, Denise worked for as a research associate and project manager in a biopharmaceutical company in Vancouver, BC. Denise holds a Bachelor of Science (Biomedical Toxicology) from the University of Guelph and a Masters of Science (Pharmacology and Therapeutics) from the University of British Columbia.



Jonathan Morris

CEO – Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division

“Jonathan comes back to the Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division as CEO after almost two years in the public service working for the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, where he played a key role in helping build this new Ministry from the ground up, eventually leading the Policy and Legislation Branch as Senior Director. In this role, Jonathan was responsible for providing advice on a range of complex policy and legislative initiatives, while leading several transformational mental health and addictions programs.

In his past role at the Canadian Mental Health Association, Jonathan provided leadership for provincial mental health and substance use operations through the Association's provincial office and the branch network across British Columbia. His work focused on addressing systemic disparities between physical and mental health, campus mental health, the criminal justice system, systems transformation, policy and government relations.

Jonathan has a long research and practice history in suicide prevention, has trained as a counsellor, and has held sessional teaching appointments at the University of Victoria and Douglas College in Child and Youth Care.

Dr. John Ogrodniczuk
Professor of Psychiatry



Dr. John Ogrodniczuk is a Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the UBC Psychotherapy Program, one of North America's largest medically based psychotherapy training programs. His research program focuses on a variety of psychotherapies and patient populations, with a particular focus on personality disorders and men's mental health. Dr. Ogrodniczuk has held several grants to support his research, which has led to over 300 scientific publications. In addition to his research, Dr. Ogrodniczuk is involved with teaching medical students and psychiatry residents, serves as a mental health consultant for various organizations, and maintains a psychotherapy practice. He is Past-President of the North American chapter of the International Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR), and a recipient of the Distinguished Research Career Award from SPR. Dr. Ogrodniczuk is the Founder of HeadsUpGuys, a leading global resource for supporting men with depression.



Gurdeep Pandher

Gurdeep Pandher is a Yukon-based, Bhangra artist and educator. He creates performance pieces that bring together people from all backgrounds while promoting inclusivity. He is also best known for bringing joy, hope and positivity during the pandemic through his online dance classes, videos and uplifting messages. Videos of Gurdeep dancing Bhangra in frigid cold temperatures at $-45^{\circ}\text{C}/-49^{\circ}\text{F}$, and on frozen lakes and rivers of Canada's North gained worldwide recognition. He lives in a small cabin without running water in the wilderness of the Yukon. Gurdeep's sessions are a joyful way to introduce exercise, the land of Punjab and the culture of the Punjabi traditional folk dance - "Bhangra." For more information, please visit Gurdeep.ca

MacKenzie Pudwell

Learning Specialist, Canadian Centre of
Diversity and Inclusion. she, her, hers



MacKenzie is currently the Learning Program Specialist at CCDI Consulting. She is responsible for managing the Open Enrollment Certificate Program and supports curriculum development on IDEA topics. MacKenzie also uses her lived experience and education to facilitate the topics of gender and LGBTQ2S+ inclusion. She is extremely passionate about inclusive events and spaces, allyship, and investment in lifelong learning on IDEA topics. She loves sharing her knowledge and learning from the many folks she meets along the way in this inclusive journey. When not working, you can find MacKenzie volunteering, baking, or in the mountains, come rain or shine.




Michelle Robinson

Wee sag'm gymk (Sunrise)

Wee sag'm gymk (sunrise), Ganhada (Raven Clan), was adopted Wil'gwi nesga nex (Breaching Killer Whale), Gisputwada (Killer Whale Clan). Wee sag'm gymk is from the Gitxaala Nation, most people know her as Michelle Robinson. She is mother to 5 amazing grown adult children and has 15 grandsons and one new granddaughter. Michelle spent half her life in her community. She worked with her Nation for more than 2 decades (School, Nursing Station, and Band Office). Michelle had the honor to work as an Executive Assistant to many Band Administrators and Assistant to Chief and Council. At times, she was asked to Act as Band Administrator and Health Director by Chief and Council. Michelle currently works in Community Development, the Community Initiatives Unit at Indigenous Services Canada, BC Region. Often she gets to travel to different ancestral territories and meet with current Chief, Council and Band Administrators.

Michelle learned a lot from her Symgigyet (Hereditary Chiefs) and Sigidmhan'aa (Matriarchs). When she started working at ISC, one Sm'ooygit (Chief) said to her, "At every table you are at, share what you know. If they're not listening at that table, share it at the next. Change starts one person at a time and within."



David Russell
National Coordinator of Residential Schools
at Indigenous Services Canada



Throughout his public service career, David has been actively involved in wellness and mental health topics with most his of 25 years spent responding to the legacy of the residential school system. In partnership with Health Canada and the Indian Residential School Survivors Society in 2003, David helped develop and implement a national mental health supports program for survivors and their families. He has implemented various initiatives to promote team well-being including vicarious trauma supports for staff and staff-led wellness committees. Between May 2019 and June 2021, David served as the co-management champion for the BC ISC/CIRNAC Wellness Committee.

David is from Nova Scotia and studied at Carleton University where he met his wife of 30+ years. They moved to the West Coast in 1994 and had four kids. They now live in Sechelt (with one teenager and two Saint Bernards).



Dr. Joti Samra, R. Psych
CEO & Founder of My Work place Health

Dr. Joti Samra, is a national thought leader on issues relating to psychological health, wellness and resilience. She is the CEO & Founder of MyWorkplaceHealth, a full-suite national workplace consulting firm and the Psychological Health & Safety (PH&S) Clinic, a virtual counselling and resilience/leadership coaching practice.

Dr. Samra is a highly-regarded expert in psychological health and safety (PH&S). Over the past two decades, she has been involved in numerous national initiatives that have contributed to policy change in Canada, and is a Founding & Ongoing Member of the CSA Technical Committee that developed the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace (CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ9700-803/2013). This Standard is the first of its kind in the world, and has shaped policy development for workplace PH&S at the international ISO level.

Dr. Samra is the lead Research Scientist who created Guarding Minds at Work: A Workplace Guide to Psychological Health & Safety, in which the psychosocial factor frame adopted by the Standard was developed. She is also the developer of the Psychologically Safe Leader Assessment, an assessment and action planning resource that aligns leaders' skills with the requirements of the Standard. She is also the former President of the BC Psychological Association and past Chair of the BC Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards Committee



Alexandra Samuel

Author

Remote Inc: How To Thrive At Work...
Wherever You Are"

Alexandra began her career in technology as the research director for the Governance in the Digital Economy program, leading a Toronto-based research program for a global consortium of government leaders from her home office in Vancouver. As the VP Social Media for customer intelligence software company Vision Critical, Alexandra led a social media analytics pilot program while working from home so she could homeschool her autistic son. And as the co-founder of Social Signal, Alexandra built one of the world's first social media agencies while working out of her home with her husband and their first hires. She holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Harvard University, where her dissertation was the first comprehensive study of hacktivism (politically motivated computer hacking). While at Harvard, Alexandra researched the impact of technology on social capital for Robert Putnam's groundbreaking book, *Bowling Alone*."



Niha Shahzad

Anti-Racism Ambassadors Network

Niha is a Policy Analyst at Natural Resources Canada, working on Canada's energy and environmental issues. She is also a trained Mental Health Peer Supporter at NRCan and is part of the Mental Health and Wellness Ambassadors Network. She was diagnosed with General Anxiety Disorder late in life. As a result she is committed to always learning new healthy techniques, and gives special attention to the mental health of her colleagues, family and friends. Niha is also part of the Federal Speakers' Bureau, delivering a talk on Behavioural Insights which focuses on how to design policies around biases to enhance equity, diversity and inclusion, and provides solutions to reduce biases in the overall policy cycle.

Niha is also the host of the Anti-Racism Ambassadors Network's podcast, IDEAA-nomics. During evenings and weekends, Niha is also a Research Director for a non-profit called the Canadian Centre for Women's Empowerment, focused on empowering economic abuse survivors. She has a Master's degree in English from Queen's University and a Master's in Public Policy from the Munk School of the University of Toronto. Prior to completing her MPP, Niha spent over four years in marketing and communications for companies such as Alterna Savings and TENA's long-term care services.



Per Sekhon

Learning Design Specialist and Associate Faculty member, Canada School of Public Service

Per Sekhon is a Learning Design Specialist and Associate Faculty member at the Canada School of Public Service where she develops, designs, and facilitates learning on topics such as resiliency, leadership, and human centered workplaces. Based in Victoria, BC, Per is a registered social worker and started her federal public service career 20 years ago of which the past 14 have been spent at the School. Prior to joining the government Per held a variety of roles in counselling and career development in the non-profit and education sector.

An alumni of both Simon Fraser University (BA 96) and University of Victoria (BSW 2000), Per values lifelong learning and is certified in Insights Discovery, 360 feedback, Dare to Lead, 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace, Intercultural Facilitation, and most recently 200hr Yoga teacher training. Per enjoys working with public servants in enhancing their professional practice and purpose.



Theresa Thomas MCP RCC
In Power Counselling & Services

Theresa Thomas is an educator, counsellor, mentor, and creator. Theresa has an MCP in Counselling Psychology from Adler University and is a Registered Clinical Counsellor with the BCACC. For 7 years post-graduate Theresa worked on the front lines with local non-profits to provide accessible and quality therapeutics for those with barriers to support. Theresa is committed to helping people achieve freedom from systemic and societal oppression in every capacity. Theresa works with those who have anxiety, depression, experienced trauma, including violence, sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse, neglect, and abandonment. Theresa addresses the distresses that come from navigating shame, marginalization, discrimination, disassociation, and lack of self-worth. Through one-to-one therapy, group counselling, educational workshops, community training, and new counsellor supervision Theresa has sought any opportunity to facilitate healing. In 2020 Theresa started her own therapeutic practice; In-Power Counselling & Services, which continues the work she's done in healing and empowerment. In-Power Counselling & Services provides individual, relational and group counseling, as well as education and enrichment in the form of workshops, trainings, and creating unique psychotherapy tools to destigmatize mental health and wellness. Theresa is also a clinical supervisor for new and developing therapists.



Lee Soyemi
Federal Black Employee Caucus

With over 13 years of experience in the federal government, Lee has experience in managing IT systems, improving and updating existing technologies, designing web applications, administering databases, as well as business and data analysis. Lee joined PWGSC in 2019 and recently moved over to DND just over a year ago.



Renee Umezuki
Co-Chair Community of Interest on Mental
Health, Regional Director and Senior Trade
Commissioner, Global Affairs Canada

Renee started working for Global Affairs Canada 28 years ago as a new recruit, beginning as a Trade Commissioner in Ottawa, with brief stints in the Eastern Europe and Japan divisions, followed by a temporary duty assignment in Jakarta and a posting to Tokyo, where she was responsible for the agriculture, food and fish sectors. She then moved to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) British Columbia Regional Office, where she continued to work in the area of trade promotion for a number of years, before switching her focus to rural development as Regional Manager for the Rural Secretariat. After her role with AAFC, Renee joined Global Affairs Canada's Pacific Regional Office as Deputy Director (2016-2019), before being appointed Director in December 2019. Renee holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from the University of British Columbia.



Amanda Vistman

Senior Conflict Management Practitioner

Amanda Vistman joined the Government of Canada in 2005 with the Correctional Service of Canada. She started her career in CSC working with the offender population, primarily delivering programs and treatment to federally incarcerated women with mental health issues. Amanda went on to work in Informal Conflict Management with CSC for 7 years before coming to Justice in 2019. She has a BA in Sociology and Justice & Law Enforcement from the University of Winnipeg and has completed the Conflict Resolution: Mediation/Third-Party Intervention Certificate and Associate Certificate in Leadership and Conflict Resolution Certificate at the Justice Institute of BC. Amanda recently completed her coaching certification through Erickson Coaching International. In addition to formal education, Amanda has been trained in peace making circles, restorative justice and transformational team building. She is also a certified Emotional Intelligence Coach and is certified to facilitate Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator workshops. Amanda has extensive experience and a passion for developing and facilitating training.



Planning Team

Open Door 2023 Micro-Mission Team



Helin Candar

Helin Candar is the new Wellness Administrator for the DFO Pacific Wellness team. She has an educational background in Biopsychology and is excited to put her knowledge and passion for mental health, diversity, and inclusion to work. As a relatively new member to the Federal Public Service, her goals are to provide a fresh perspective on ongoing issues and to always be learning from her amazing colleagues. Outside of her work with Pacific Wellness, Helin enjoys knitting, rock climbing, and cuddling with her black cat, Poe.”



Joanne Charette

Joanne works for Transport Canada's Indigenous Relations and Navigation Protection Program as an Indigenous Program Policy Officer. She has been with Transport for over 30 years. Joanne believes strongly in Indigenous Traditional and Holistic Medicine.

Joanne is proud of her traditional roots and believes that the use of plants and animals for treatments is the cornerstone of all modern medicine, with one exception: Indigenous Traditional Medicine, which incorporates the spiritual component that brings it to the next level. These symposiums are excellent for continuing education in order to heal one's health and soul because learning is a crucial component of healing.



Rod Cunningham

Rod is Woodlands Cree, originally from Northern Alberta. He has been working with Service Canada for over 29 years and is currently a Senior Development Program Officer with the Indigenous Programs Unit in Vancouver. Rod also serves as the CEIU's National Human Rights and Race Relations Committee's First Nations/Inuit/Metis representative since 2008.

I enjoy sharing my knowledge and experience with staff and managers who may not be as familiar with the important cultural differences and nuances that are essential to building effective relationships with the communities we serve. I am especially supportive of the recruitment of Indigenous peoples into the federal public service - Indigenous team members directly contribute to improved overall Aboriginal awareness in the workplace.



Martine Deault

Martine is a Program Consultant with the Program Operations Branch, and has been working for Employment and Social Development Canada since 2015. Since taking her first Psychology course in University, she developed a strong interest and motivation to self-educate on the topics of behavioral psychology, cognitive therapy, mindfulness, holistic nutrition, yoga and meditation to assist her on her own healing journey through childhood trauma. Martine is a member of the Indigenous Employee Circle, a volunteer mentor with the BeaYOUtiful Foundation, part-time Gymnastics Coach and amateur athlete who strongly believes in the power of being kind and spreading awareness about the importance of Mental Health



Carole
Eros

Carole is the Mental Health and Wellness Coordinator for the British Columbia Federal Council and the lead organizer for this event. Carole has worked for Fisheries and Oceans Canada in Pacific Region for 21 years in various resource management and marine planning roles. In September 2019 she made a career shift to workplace wellness. Carole has personal experience in, and knowledge of, mental health. She is passionate about fostering mental health and wellness in the workplace and taking as many steps as possible to eliminate stigmas. Personally Carole loves (and needs) to move and can't get enough of yoga, exercise, music, animals, nature and first and foremost, hugs from her teenage son.



Michele
Fogal

Michele is a communications advisor for DFO, supporting the Pacific Wellness Team, and an Ambassador and Trainer with the Positive Space Initiative. Prior to joining DFO, Michele worked as an LGBTQ2+ diversity and inclusion educator, providing workshops, consultation and strategies to facilitate cultural evolution beyond tolerance, through acceptance, and into celebration of the divine wealth that diversity offers. She is an experienced conference speaker, a queer cisgender woman, a parent and a storyteller. Michele's pronouns are she/her.



Jennifer Grace

Jennifer Grace graduated with an M.Sc. in psychology from the University of Surrey in the UK. She joined the Correctional Service of Canada in 2010. She has since worked as a member of various mental health teams within the CSC before taking an assignment within the departments Office of Informal Conflict Resolution. She has had the opportunity to take on leadership roles allowing her to support mental health professionals in their provision of services. She has a passion for employee wellness and for creating and maintaining respectful work environments which led her to taking on the role of coordinator for the Council's Community of Interest on Mental Health. When not advocating for mental health she can be found riding her bicycle through beautiful trails around BC.



Lindsay Harkness

Lindsay joined Women and Gender Equality Canada in early 2022. Before moving back to the West Coast and joining the Public Service, Lindsay worked overseas for the United Nations in Iraq, Somalia, Palestinian Territories, Liberia, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Sudan. Her experience in conflict and post-conflict contexts has fueled her passion around the importance of mental health and wellness in the workplace. She is looking forward to supporting the 5th annual Opening the Door to Mental Health Symposium and in her spare time, can be found doing yoga or boxing.





Ange Hill

Ange is the Consultation and Engagement Coordinator for the Consultation Secretariat at Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and has worked in DFO for 25 years. For close to twenty-eight years, Ange has lived with and managed depression which has virtually effected all aspects of her life. After a major motorcycle accident which resulted in a brain injury and memory issues, she now suffers from anxiety as well. For Ange, a mental health illness brings with it the fear of stigma and worry about being judged which can be harder to deal with than the illness itself. This year's Open Door Mental Health Event theme is Resilience and Recovery. She strongly believes events like Open Door allow for a safe place for open conversations about mental health and shed light on an important issue facing people of all ages and from all walks of life. Ange is proud to be a part of this important event that will add to a heightened awareness and fostering resilience and recovery for public servants across Canada.



Erica Leung

Erica has worked for the Government of Canada and Health Authority for over 17 years in various capacities. She is passionate about mental health and wellness. Erica works as a Registered Clinical Counsellor at her private practice and has co-chaired and participated in several Wellness Committees. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminology and pursued further studies to obtain a master's in counselling due to her interest in continuous learning and personal journey of self-growth. In her new acting role, she will be supporting and implementing programs for BIPOC employees which she is very excited about! She is a strong believer that each person is the engine of their own change and hopes to create a safe space for everyone.

Elisabeth Martin



She is also a board member of the Anti-Racism Ambassador Network (ARAN). This grassroots volunteer network made of public servants acts as a community mobilizer and connector to collect, house and disseminate information and resources on anti-racism activities for all to use. It amplifies the work done by Black, Indigenous and other racialized colleagues to dismantle systemic racism with an intersectional lens.

Liz organized the first national collaborative, grassroots, and Black-led speed mentoring/coaching events dedicated to non-executive federal Black public servants. She led as well several events dedicated to the mental health of federal Black public servants.

Liz is a jurist by training and an advocate at heart. Her three favorite words are “why?” and “why not?” Her mantra is “Purpose over popularity”. She challenges status quo and believes in the power of grassroots movements.



Teresa Martin

Currently an HR Specialist Advisor with Public Services & Procurement Canada Pacific, Teresa is also a Co-Chair with the National Managers' Community (NMC) for BC/Yukon.

For 2021 and 2022, Teresa worked as the BC Yukon Regional Lead for the NMC, connecting managers in the region with national initiatives and supporting grassroots collaboration here in the region.

In her 14 years with the Federal Public Service, Teresa has worked in a variety of positions from Issues Management to Change Management to Research Librarian. Before coming to the government, she worked at Simon Fraser University's Faculty of Education, as well as in a variety of private and publicly traded companies. She has also been self-employed.

Teresa holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, is a Certified Prosci™ Change Management Practitioner and a Certified Erickson Solution Focused Coach.

Teri O'Donnell



Teri has worked for Correctional Services Canada for 17 years in several different capacities. She is the most at home in nature, camping and hiking with her partner and dogs. Teri lost a beloved family member to suicide and to honor his legacy she has become passionate about suicide and mental health awareness.



Ed Panis

Edward or “Ed” to his colleagues has been with DFO Communications team since 2018, as a Jr. Communications adviser. Away from the office, you can find Ed with his 2 young sons and wife roaming the city or on the golf course enjoying a relaxing 18.

Alicia
Setter



Alicia is a Parole Officer within the Correctional Service of Canada and has worked for the service for 6 years. Alicia is still trying to find harmony between her work life and home life, and this year's topics spoke to her directly. For self-care Alicia likes to read a novel, go to the gym, listen to music, and spend time with her pets.



Danae Slater

Danae Slater is the BC Wellness Coordinator and Employee Co-Chair of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee for Indigenous Services Canada, BC Region and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Treaties and Aboriginal Government Negotiations West. Over her 17 years of employment with the federal government, Danae has also worked at the Canada Border Services Agency (Customs and Immigration), Transport Canada (Communications) and Indigenous Services Canada, BC Region (Social and Education Programs).

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