

OPENING THE DOOR TO *Mental Health*



SYMPOSIUM

FEBRUARY 27-28 2024

Nurturing Humanity in the Workplace:
Fostering a Culture of Kindness, Respect and
Empathy

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1. Welcome to the 6th Annual Opening the Door to Mental Health Symposium!!

Thank you for taking part in this year's Open Door Symposium! It is hard to believe this is the sixth year of this event! I have been reflecting a lot on the symposium and this year's theme – “Nurturing Humanity in the Workplace: *Fostering a Culture of Kindness, Respect and Empathy*”.

Once again a tremendous amount of thought went into setting the theme. In part, it was inspired by Pierre Battah, who literally wrote the book - *Humanity at Work* (and is also our Day 2 keynote speaker!). It is also inspired by the complexity and the challenges we all face—both individually and collectively, at work and our personal lives—and how important it is to ground ourselves in that idea of being *people first*.

With that in mind, we wanted this year's symposium to focus on humanity and, in particular, our inherent need to feel a sense of belonging — to be valued — and to highlight the many benefits of a kinder, more respectful and more compassionate workplace. We are more than just our work, our task list and deadlines.

We bring our whole selves to work as parents, friends, spouses, children and so on, and are each affected by the many aspects of our lives beyond work. What happens in our personal lives will inevitably have an impact on our professional lives and vice versa. People are complex and are often dealing with difficulties in their lives that can't be seen on the outside (the tip of the iceberg analogy).

For a long time, discussions regarding personal issues in the workplace were seen as taboo. In some workplaces, this is still the case. However, we have come a long way in terms of understanding and reflecting the important relationship between our work and home lives. While not yet mainstream, we now talk about mental health, racism, diversity and inclusion, menopause and other gender-specific health concerns, and others are becoming more and more common AND, we need more of this! We need to continue to prioritize the needs of the humans who are delivering on the demands of the workplace. How we consider employee mental health and wellbeing in setting policies, hiring practices, personal and professional development, workplans and more.

“IF GRACE WALKED IN THE DOOR RIGHT NOW WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE?”

Despite an increase in the profile and resources devoted to mental health, the approach to employee wellness continues to be largely reactive. We need to move to a more proactive culture. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have become much more conscious of the need to look after ourselves and those around us and to be proactive about our physical health. Unfortunately, we are less adept at proactively addressing our own mental health, as well as the mental health of those around us. By creating a workplace culture that values and embraces the human aspects, we can do so much more to prevent mental health challenges where possible, and respond appropriately and empathetically to support employees when they do arise.

The focus of this year’s symposium is on providing information, perspectives, actions and tools to help make this shift.

In conversation with our keynote speaker, Dale Allen, while planning the theme, her words really struck a cord with me and sum up how we can approach any kind of situation at work or in life: **“IF GRACE WALKED IN THE DOOR RIGHT NOW WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE?”**

Once again, to emphasize (it never gets old), that while we all need to work on the big organizational issues that impact our mental health (culture, workload, racism, discrimination, and many others), the wheels of organizational change turn slowly. Looking after ourselves is paramount. Each of us are unique—we may share similar challenges but our needs differ. Remember that only you know what’s best for you. **BE. YOUR. OWN. ADVOCATE.**



I don't know what I would do without the Planning Team and these two superstars, Jennifer Grace, Co-Chair of the Mental Health COI and C. Danae Slater, Wellness Coordinator for ISC, BC Region and CIRNAC TAG NW Branch.



This event has grown every year and with that growth, has come more work! Having said that, I am always so grateful for the planning team that comes together to help plan the event on their own time, in addition to their “day job.” I could not have planned and carried out this event without them. I am also in awe of the speakers each year and are honoured to create space for all these amazing people to come together and share their incredible knowledge, insight and perspectives. Most of all, I am grateful that you have all taken time to register and participate in this symposium. Whether this is your first time taking part in Open Door or your sixth, this event is nothing without your participation and engagement. So THANK YOU!

Yours in wellness,

Carole Eros

Mental Health and Wellness Coordinator, British Columbia Federal Council
(Carole.Eros@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

A Final Note: As this symposium continues to evolve and grow, I recognize the importance of reflecting on the past, acknowledging and honouring the contributions that have come before. This symposium, originally titled “Open Door for Leaders in Mental Health” was first created and delivered by Meghan Chen under the leadership of Allison Webb and Christian Hansen, the former Manager and Mental Health Community of Interest Co-Chairs respectively. Their dedication to raising mental health in the workplace forged a path for others like us to continue their efforts.



Music is Healing

Music is healing. The music you will hear throughout this event was mixed with contributions from our speakers and members of the planning team. Everyone was asked to contribute their top three songs currently on repeat. It is intended to spark joy and movement. We hope you enjoy it. You can find the full playlist on:



[Spotify](#)



[YouTube](#)



PLEASE NOTE

In light of the topic of this symposium, there may be some content or discussion that can generate emotions and deep self-reflection. Some participants may find some of the subject matter upsetting and/or traumatizing. In particular, a presentation on Day 2 focuses on the topic and lived experience of suicide. Emotions related to the topic of mental health are normal and should be somewhat expected. If you are feeling the need to share information about yourself that you have not before, it may not be safe to share in a symposium setting. Personal disclosure for the first time should occur within a planned approach, with safe parameters and adequate supports and resources. It is very important for you to know that this learning environment is not set up to support first time or spontaneous personal disclosure about mental health problems you may be experiencing.

Please take care of yourselves during this symposium. If you need to step away or leave a session, you should feel comfortable to do so. If you are not comfortable returning, that is okay because it means you are taking care of yourself. Most sessions will be recorded. Please reach out to a trusted family member, friend, colleague or professional should you feel the need or desire to do so. Some additional resources are listed in Section 7, including the general Employee Assistance Program available through your departments, as well as the new suicide crisis line 9-8-8 which you can call from anywhere in Canada if you or someone you know is thinking about suicide.

2. Land Acknowledgement

We are grateful for the

Traditional Knowledge Keepers

**as well as those who have gone
before us.....**

The participants, speakers and organizers of the 6th Annual Opening the Door to Mental Health Symposium 2024 acknowledge that everyone involved spans many Lands/Territories and Treaty areas. We are grateful for the Traditional Knowledge of the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who are joining with us these two days, as well as those who have gone before us who motivate us.

Our theme, "Nurturing Humanity in the Workplace," speaks volumes about learning through a respectful lens. Recognizing and practicing the cultural protocol of land acknowledgement demonstrates respect and is a fundamental component towards reconciliation and one of the Calls to Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

We highly urge you to learn more about the Land/Territory on which you'll be participating during our 2024 symposium. Information on how to do this is provided in Section 7 – Resources.

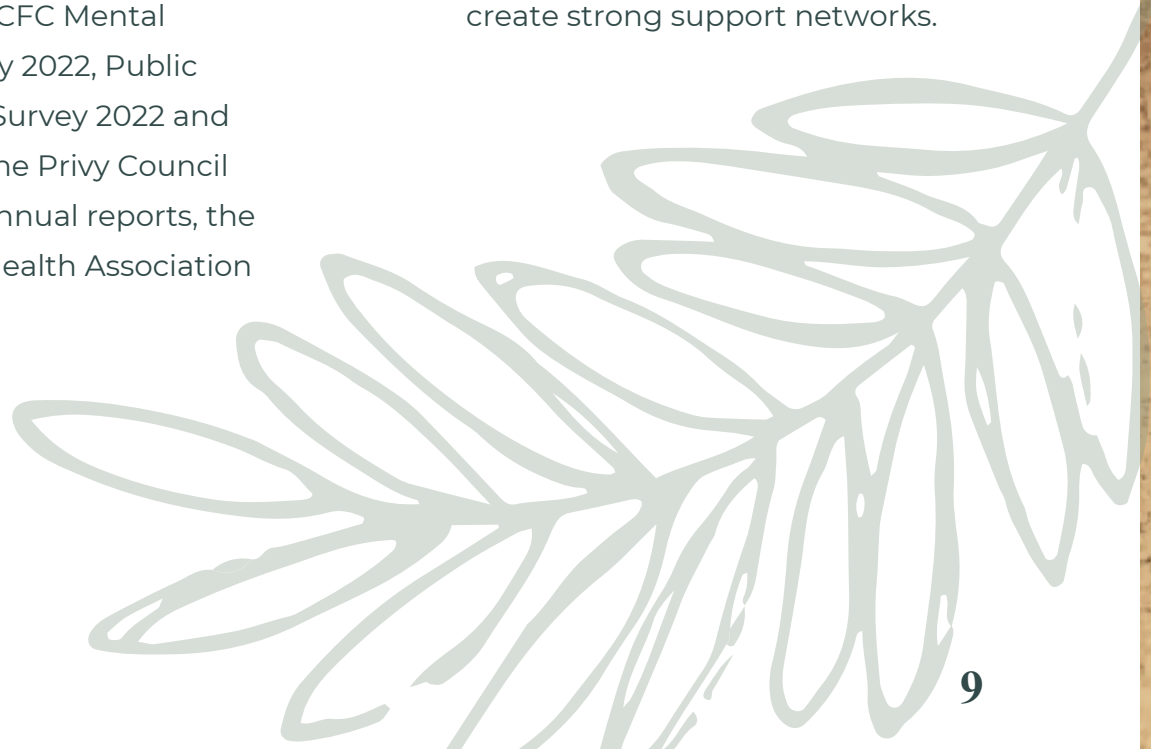
3. INTRODUCTION




Open Door is two day virtual symposium on mental health and wellness organized by the Community of Interest on Mental Health and sponsored by the British Columbia Federal Council (BCFC). The BCFC works to encourage horizontal collaboration by supporting 49 council members in 50 departments and 16 communities of interest, networks, and committees. Council members advance their goals around people management, Reconciliation, and overall Public Service excellence through regular information exchange and collaboration. The council has four key horizontal initiatives: Building Black Leaders, Mental Health, Strengthening Public Service Institutions Initiative (SPSII) and the Indigenous Intern Leadership Program (IILP). Council members and champions offer working-level public servants the infrastructure to build a more engaged federal family in the region by leveraging the passion and innovation of employees across departments via the communities of interest. More information on the Council can be found on GCXchange [HERE](#).

Nearly four years after the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically changed our workplaces (and our lives), many are still struggling to find their footing. Departmental leadership is grappling with a host of conflicting demands including the need to continue to deliver on key priorities in a complex and ever-changing environment. At the same time, mental health continues to be a significant concern. Many of our colleagues and friends are experiencing burnout and managing physical and/or other mental health challenges. Outside of work, many are struggling with family demands, increased cost of living and other stressors. These challenges are reflected in many recent surveys and reports which highlighted issues around burnout, fatigue, stress, psychological safety and other important issues (e.g., [The APEX 2022-2023](#), BCFC Mental Health Pulse Survey 2022, Public Service Employee Survey 2022 and 2023, the Clerk of the Privy Council reports, Ombuds annual reports, the Canadian Mental Health Association and more).

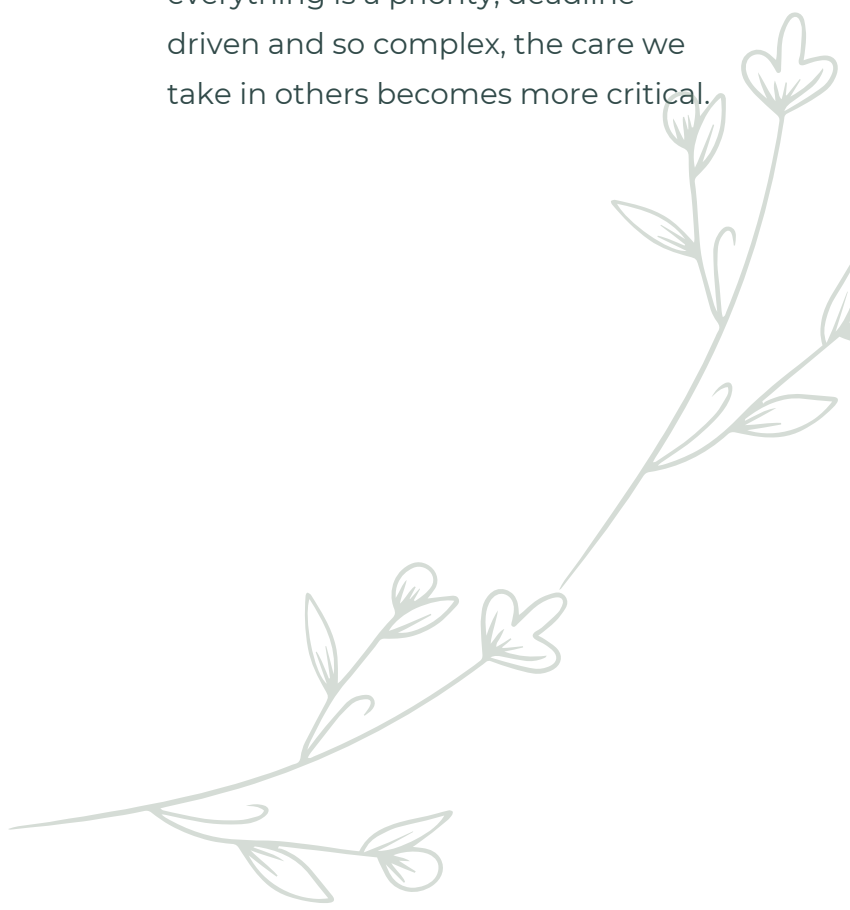
At the same time we are making strides in shifting our workplace cultures for the better. Many departments have developed their own wellness programming and have dedicated capacity to support employee mental health and wellness. We are talking about mental health more than ever, including previously “off limits” topics such as suicidality. Many employees and supervisors are open to learning more, talking about their biases and thinking and acting in new ways to incorporate approaches that help ALL employees feel seen across genders, race, culture, age, neurodivergence, language proficiencies and more. Mental health is now an open topic in many workplaces and these conversations promote awareness and education of mental health, normalize the conversation, reduce stigma and create strong support networks.





There is no better time to focus this symposium on the people with whom we work with and with whom we supervise. The theme this year, Nurturing Humanity in the Workplace: Fostering a Culture of Kindness, Respect and Empathy, provides expert advice, differing perspectives, and strategies to build a workplace foundation and culture of kindness, acceptance, respect and empathy. We all need a sense of safety and community to realize our potential as human beings and to in turn thrive in the workplace. How success is measured in our workplaces is evolving but is primarily task and performance focussed with significant gaps in human-centric values and considerations. It is critical now more than ever to shift the predominant culture of production and urgency, where everything is a priority and deadline-driven, to the care we take with others. Where people and their complexities are acknowledged and prioritized.

Creating a compassionate culture has been linked with lower employee emotional exhaustion (one of the elements of burnout), lower employee absenteeism from work, employee retention and satisfaction, cohesion within teams, innovation, and increased productivity. Essentially, when we care for people, we excel in the way we respond to operational needs. In a time when everything is a priority, deadline-driven and so complex, the care we take in others becomes more critical.



THE PROGRAM

Shifting organizational cultures and addressing systemic organizational issues takes dedicated, sustained commitment yet is imperative. Both days include content on the importance and benefits of a kinder, respectful more compassionate workplace. Essentially, WHY do we need to change our workplaces, HOW do we foster and inspire that change... and lastly WHAT tangible actions are there to move the dial forward.

Day One will include discussions on a mix of individual empowerment and organizational responsibility. Elder Francois Prince will bless and open the symposium with prayers, a beautiful eagle story and drumming. Dale Allan in her keynote address will deliver a powerful message on the need for conscious leadership and non-harm, and exploring the dilemma of the 'efficiency model' of working and living and its impact on employees. A panel discussion will follow on the root causes of mental health concerns in the workplace, how to influence change, and actionable steps to be taken in setting environments where people can perform at their best.

Day Two will open with a keynote address by Pierre Battah, who "literally" wrote the book on Humanity at Work, Leading for Better Relationships and Results. Pierre's inspiring messages will be followed by a powerful and informative lived experience message on suicidality and how we can be more proactive in our workplaces to help people access supports and resources before crises occur. A panel discussion will follow continuing to explore how we can shift our workplace cultures from prioritizing tasks, deliverables and deadlines to restoring human-first approaches (empathy and compassion) back into our workplaces. An Indigenous focused wellness discussion will follow centered around the medicine wheel will close out the day.

Shifting organizational culture takes dedicated sustained commitment from all levels of an organization. When we consider the human in how we design our workplans, values, policies and approaches, we can't go wrong and can shift the culture to becoming productive, resilient, inclusive and equitable workplaces for all.

4. PARTNERSHIPS

We are proud this event has been planned in collaboration with a multi-departmental/multi-regional planning team and in partnership with The Canadian Mental Health Association, The Anti-Racism Ambassadors' Network (ARAN), and the National Managers' Community. We are excited to be bringing this event in both English and French for the first time, in collaboration with Fisheries and Oceans' National Mental Health Team and Public Services and Procurement Canada's Mental Health and Diversity and Inclusion Program. We hope to continue to expand our partnerships and collaborations as much as possible. If you would like to get involved in a future Open Door reach out to Carole Eros. Please have a look at Acknowledgements in Section 6 and the separate Bio Book for a full picture of the magnitude of community planning this symposium inspires.

Together we are stronger.



BC Community of Interest on Mental Health



National Managers' Community



Canadian Mental Health Association
British Columbia
Mental health for all



The background of the page is a close-up photograph of pine needles and cones, rendered in a muted, desaturated green color. A solid, medium-green rectangular box is centered on the page, containing the text. The text is written in a black, elegant cursive script. The overall aesthetic is natural and serene.

*5. Session
Descriptions*



DAY 1

Opening Prayers and Storytelling – Francois Prince

****Please have a stone with you****



Francois (Guy) Prince will be blessing this event by sharing his Prayer for Gatherings (see below) and The Eagle Feather Story. Elder Prince of The Dakelh People and a lifelong resident of Nak'azdli Whut'en, a non-treaty First Nation located adjacent to Fort St. James, BC. Francois is an educator, storyteller, and fluent speaker of The Dakelh Language. Francois is very involved in teaching the culture within his community and is also committed to helping us all learn to live well and properly with each other and Mother Earth. Mussi (thank you) for hearing his story. The Eagle Feather Story is about learning to live your life with honesty and integrity. Indigenous stories are part of an ancient oral tradition and are used by elders and teachers to instruct their own young ones. The values in this wonderful story and teachings are more relevant now than ever. A copy of this story will be made available as part of the symposium resources on the [Open Door Website](#) after the event.

Francois's prayer is in English and the Nak'azdli Dakelh dialect:



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Ilhuts'odulh hoba tenazdutili

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Nezulcho, soocho neoozilhts'ai.

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doochaza ilhunats'ozdil, nebulh dunene 'ink'ez dulcho yinka dilhts'ai

ᑦᑦ ᑦᑦ. ᑦᑦ ᐃᑦ ᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ, ᑦᑦᑦᑦ ᑦᑦᑦᑦ ᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ.
neba cha. wheni buba yaztilhduk, ghuntila ts'iyane neoozolhts'ai.

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ndai la ghuni be whutnih netso da' neba huye yailhduk uzdilhti'

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whe ndoya whudizulh 'ink'ez ghuntila 'andit niyilhne neghuni

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beneults'it. igha la nusde hilhtus whe oya l'ehudilh. alha yinka

Great Spirit, Listen well to us

We gather to put words forward for the good of our people and Mother earth and doing so, we speak for the feelings of all who would listen and take heed.

We sanction the wisdom of words our elders spoke, past and present. They have spoken and hopefully these words will be implanted into the minds of our present generations of all people to encourage them toward the survival that is so necessary. Great Spirit, you have truly given us the responsibility to protect what you have created to sustain life on this earth.

You have shown us to respect the forests, rivers, lakes, mountains and all plants and wildlife so important to all people.

Great Spirit, we ask that you give us and all who speak the sanctity of wisdom from the past for encouragement to go forward into the future.

We believe that all people on earth will go further into the turmoils of the future bravely if they listen now.

Great Spirit, grant us the wisdom to impart the concerns of the past to make a better future. We say Thank You.

Francois Prince

Keynote Address - The Rushing Paradox: Rest and Re-Sourcing in Response to a Demanding World

Dale Allen, Leadership, Life & Well-being Coach; Diversity and Inclusion Coach; Non-violent Communication Practitioner; Facilitator; Yogini

In this interactive session, Dale will infuse the principles of conscious leadership and non-harm, to explore the dilemma of the 'efficiency model' of working and living. We will explore the "rushing paradox": what it is creating and why-- and how to get out of the grips of the Rushing Paradox and back into humanity while contributing to (the) work/our livelihoods. In our journey we will touch on how to BE -- in this busy (work) life without sacrificing our mental, physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual well-being. Yup! We will look at authenticity, boundaries, belonging and contribution - These 4 aspects of ourselves that support us in recalibrating as we are navigating our demanding, amazing world.

Métis Jig with Madelaine McCallum

Jigging is an upbeat fun social dance with roots of European and Indigenous dance styles. You will learn Metis dance steps that will be sequenced through choreography and you won't even know you are getting a workout! Madelaine will be teaching dances such as The Red Jig, Belt and Broom dances and the Orange Blossom Special to share her knowledge and to provide access to those who are interested in these styles of dance but may not know how to go about making contact with Metis Dancing. She will not be sharing the protocols that come with these dances, however, if one wants to deepen their level of knowledge and feels a strong connection to either of these styles, she is more than happy to support those interested.



Panel: Putting Humanity at Work First – How to Influence Change

The statistics related to employee wellness are daunting. Common mental health indicators reported via the 2022 Mental Health Pulse Survey, administered annually by the British Columbia Federal Council, indicate high levels of depression, anxiety, suicidality and burnout among employees in the western regions. In addition, burnout rates are elevated across federal public service, including executives. For example, the APEX 2022-2023 report showed 75% of executives struggle with burnout, 53% intend to leave, and 47% describe most days as stressful. These statistics also align with trends reported by other sources over the last several years including the Public Service Employee Survey 2022 and 2023, the Clerk of the Privy Council reports, the Canadian Mental Health Association and more. In general employees are overwhelmed, stressed and finding it difficult to balance their workloads and personal lives. They are aware of the need to look after themselves and prioritize selfcare but they are looking to their employers to address ongoing systemic organizational issues. Common areas of concern include a task-focused workplace culture, gaps in people management skills, and limiting mindsets and bias (ongoing harassment and bullying, and discrimination).

One of the most impactful things an organization can do is to go beyond individual-focused workplace wellness programs (e.g., stress and resilience training, mindfulness, time management training, relaxation classes) and address mental health issues like stress and burnout as systemic problems.

At the same time strides in shifting workplace cultures for the better are being made. Mental health, including suicidality, is now an open topic in many workplaces. Many employees and supervisors are open to learning more and asking what they can do differently. These conversations, and promoting awareness and education of mental health issues are normalizing the conversation, reducing stigma and creating strong support networks and advocates. Further, some departments have dedicated capacity and resources to employee mental health and wellness.

This panel discussion will focus on humanity based approaches to supporting employees in the workplace with the common goal of setting environments where people can perform at their best. Panelists will discuss from their perspectives **WHY** does this matter...**HOW** do we inspire change...lastly **WHAT** tangible actions can be taken.

- Jonny Morris, CEO, Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division, (Moderator)
- Alexis Ford-Ellis, Director, Indigenous Wellness Resource Center
- Dr Joti Samra, R. Psych, CEO & Founder of MyWorkplaceHealth
- Chantal Schryer, Ombuds, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Michael Ainger, National Manager for Employee Wellness, Corrections Services Canada



A Holistic View on Wellness: Being vs. Doing - The Art of Slowing Down

Taylor Aplas, Executive Coach, Meditation Guide, Associate Clinical Counsellor
and
Trilby Gouch, Holistic Nutritionist & Movement Guide

In this fireside chat, Taylor and Trilby will speak to the power of nervous system regulation and its impact on many pillars of personal wellbeing, including mental and emotional health, mindfulness, nutrition, movement, and more. Taylor and Trilby will discuss the art of slowing down, and how aligning your intention, attention, and action can have a profound influence on your happiness and health.

Closing Meditation and Gongs with Taylor Aplas and Paul Bissonnette

healing

At the end of both Day 1 and 2, Taylor will be leading us through a beautiful meditation to close out each day, allowing us the time and space to reflect on and ground into all that we've learned. Along with the meditation, Paul will engulf us with the beautiful sounds of the gongs to create a sense of well-being, healing, and peace.





DAY 2

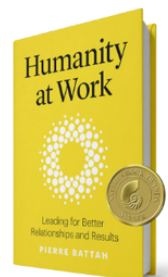
Keynote Address – Bringing Your Humanity to Work

Pierre Battah, Best Selling Author and Workplace Leadership Specialist

Emerging from the challenging events of the recent past, individuals, employers, clients, and our communities are better served when we all contribute to healthy workplaces.

Healthy workplaces minimize distractions and disruptions, deliver quality results, and build productive and sustainable relationships. They navigate change, innovate, and problem-solve more effectively, and they create safe and favourable conditions for inclusion.

This keynote will help individuals bring their humanity to work with habits and practices that enhance their well-being, effectiveness, and their ability to be better colleagues. It will also help people contribute positively to their workplace to deliver sustainable results for their employers and their clients. Pierre, will also share practical workplace tips and lessons from Pierre's award-winning book *Humanity at Work, Leading for Better Relationships and Results*.



Suicidality in the Public Service: Individual Responsibility; Collective Impact

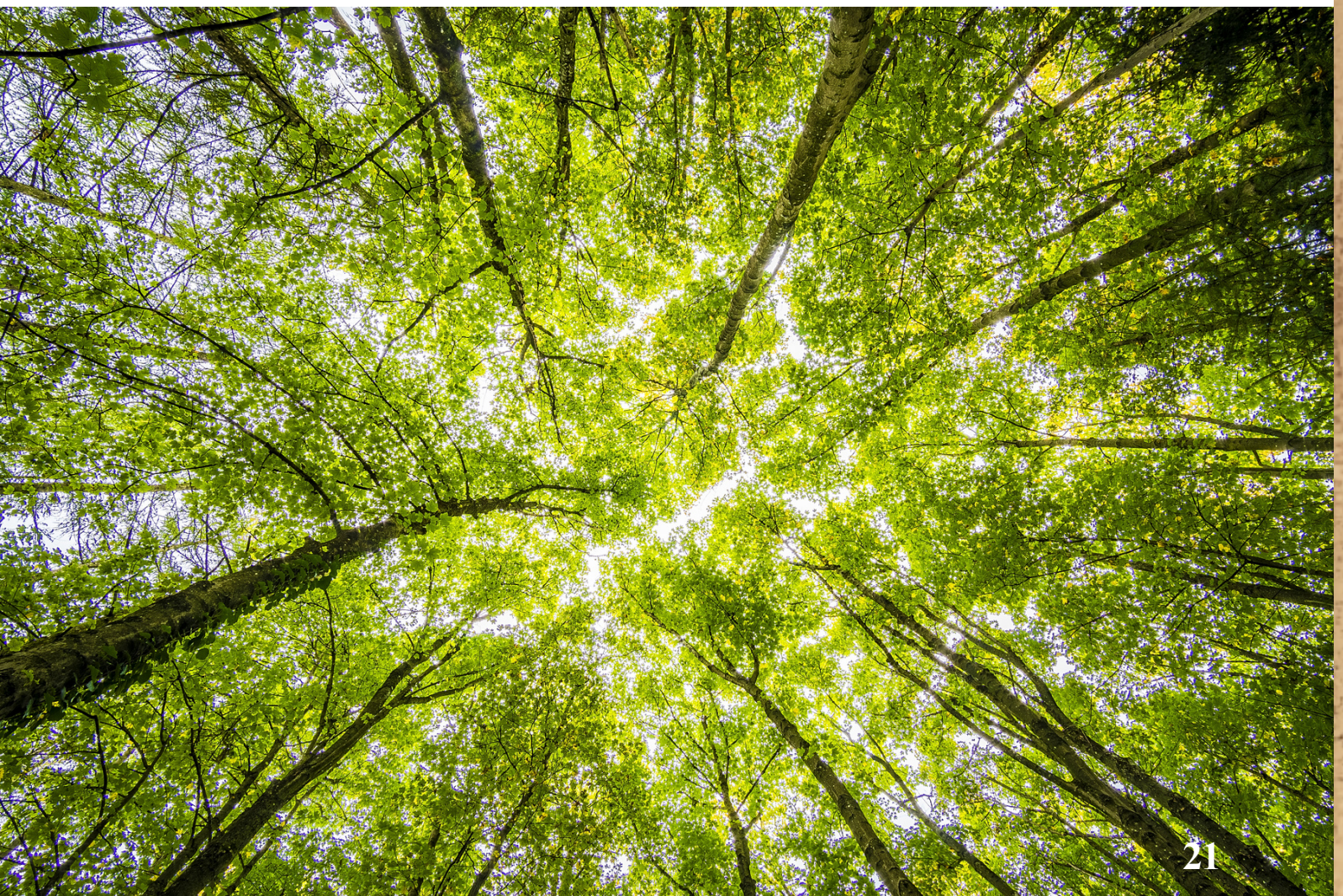
Karen Sokol, Regional Field Coordinator, Prairies & NWT, Joint Learning Program

Please note - Karen's talk will include subject matters that some audience members may find upsetting and/or traumatizing – this will include references to themes on suicide. A reminder that access to the Employee Assistance Program is available through your departments, or you can call 9-8-8 from anywhere in Canada if you or someone you know is thinking about suicide. You are encouraged to look out for one another and foster an atmosphere of sensitivity and mutual respect. Some additional resources are provided in Section 7.

This session will explore issues relating to mental health in the public service, including suicide awareness. Karen will share her personal experiences with mental health crises, including the loss of co-workers and family members to suicide. She has integrated those experiences into her professional role within the public service and made it her personal goal to work to create greater awareness of mental health as a whole, within the workplace. Karen will explore new approaches to elevating awareness of mental health issues within the public service through dialogue within teams and the proactive development of practices and tools to help people access supports and resources - before crises occur. Mental health issues can impact people at every level of the public service. A caring and diverse public service requires more than a reactive response to a sometimes invisible health problem that does not discriminate based on position titles or roles. Participants will learn how to open up a dialogue about these sensitive issues so they can collectively work to help others who are struggling to deal with mental health concerns in the workplace and beyond.

Afrobeats Dis-Dance with Allison and Kevin Lunianga

Join in on this exciting break activity and get ready to “Dis-Dance” with Kevin Lunianga and his sister, Allison Lunianga! This interactive afrobeat dance session, in celebration of Black History Month, will provide participants with fun and easy to learn dance moves that may be used in multiple genres of music/dance. We encourage participants to dress comfortably and get ready to sweat! This activity will be bilingual and feature music from across the continent of Africa.



PANEL: Restoring the Human in our Workplace Culture – Leaving the Perfect Behind

- Amanda Vistman, Senior Informal Conflict Management Practitioner, Ombud and Informal Resolution Services Office, Department of Justice Canada (Moderator)
- Dr Lisa Gunderson, Anti-Racism and Equity Educator, Owner of One Love Consulting
- Ikponwsa “I.K.” Ero, Speaker, Executive Coach, and Former United Nations Independent Expert to the Human Rights Council
- Allan Dorff, Director, Coastal & Central Tax Services Office for the Canada Revenue Agency in the Western Region.
- Dr Bill Howatt, Founder and President of Howatt Human Resources Consulting. Behavioural scientist passionate about creating psychologically safe, inclusive, and thriving workplace cultures.

A critical element that determines if employees will use their voice in workplaces is the presence of psychological safety. Basically one’s ability to feel safe acknowledging failure, offering feedback, sharing ideas, and telling the truth about difficult situations without fear of retaliation. A psychologically safe workplace, among many things, includes a sense of belonging and feeling that we matter to others. While self-care is imperative, organizations tend to focus too much on this single strategy. We need to be better at taking care of each other. Creating a compassionate workplace, is not only morally imperative, but it is also grounded in science and is strategically advantageous for organizations. Compassionate workplaces have been linked with lower employee emotional exhaustion (one of the elements of burnout), lower employee absenteeism, employee retention and job satisfaction, team cohesion, innovation, and employee performance (by boosting motivation). Studies also show that a leaders’ focus on the collective well-being of their employees is a strong predictor of employee job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, loyalty and trust in the organization, and retention.

With all the benefits, and impactful productivity losses,

why is establishing a culture of empathy, compassion,

respect and sympathy so hard to achieve?

The concept of a human-first approach and culture seems to be down on the priority list buried under all the tasks, deliverables and deadlines that exist in our workplaces. In addition, individual employees feel powerless in advocating for themselves and/or their colleagues and look to leaders to demonstrate and action change. Embodying mentally healthy practices at all levels is the first step.

Those who receive compassion from their colleagues or their manager will tend to replicate it.

This panel discussion follows organically from Karen Sokol's talk centered around building proactive employee-first measures into our practices to create the foundation for a more compassionate and empathetic workplace culture. It is often said of our work environments - "What gets measured, gets done". When we create proactive, employee centered practices, "measuring the immeasurable" becomes crucial, as it allows organizations to identify and address issues that are otherwise invisible. Acknowledging and actively supporting these human elements of the workplace are fundamental in fostering healthier and more productive work environments.

Discussion will touch on what is getting in the way of establishing compassion and empathy as a standard in the workplace and how we can look at and do things differently. Empathy and compassion in the workplace may not come naturally for many and in the past was unwelcome and considered inappropriate for the workplace. Emotions are often considered a barrier to achieving that perfect employee status – the one who responds and delivers on projects without fuss and gets promoted. Fostering change needs time and dedication. We need to consistently work at it to build humanity practices into our daily business – policies, mandates, hiring processes etc. No one, including leaders are responsible for changing cultures on their own.

Indigenous A Wellness Perspective

Alexis Ford-Ellis, Director, Indigenous Wellness Resource Center and Michèle Elliott, Director of the Indigenous Talent Resource Centre (ITRC) and of the Indigenous Career Navigators Program (ICNP)

The Medicine Wheel reflects colors, phases in a life cycle, symbols, clans and animal spirits as life representation. A healing and teaching medicine wheel is always moving. Its colors are interchangeable and interactive within the wheel. A clients healing can occur in any quadrant or phase of their life. One's healing can be physical, psychological, spiritual, or emotional. Whatever area is being affected will affect each and every area of a person's well-being [wellness]. By extension a community will also be affected by its peoples healing. Each medicine wheel is as unique as an Elder and their Indigenous [Aboriginal] culture and values being taught. The medicine wheel is not a replacement for necessary medical or therapeutic interventions, it is a process that augments wholistic healing.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The number of people to thank could take up this whole booklet! It takes a village to put together an event like this and many came out in spades. This was truly an inter-departmental effort. Many, many thanks to the event Planning Team that volunteered endless hours of their time, creativity and knowledge. Each year their dedication and willingness to help is inspirational. The Planning Team included members from Corrections Services Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Shared Services Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, Public Services and Procurement Canada, Service Canada and the Canada School. Please take the time to read the bios in the separate event Bio Book. They are all superheroes.

Much appreciation and gratitude towards our speakers who openly shared their lived experiences and knowledge, to Cam Furmedge for helping develop the youtube version of the Open Door Playlist, and to Jamie Ng who once again contributed her design suggestions to the event booklet along with members of the Planning Team.



THANK
YOU



7. Resources

The resources listed here are a limited selection and not a complete list

If you are in distress, **text WELLNESS to 741741 at any time**. If it is an emergency, call 911 or go to your local emergency department.

Canada's 988 suicide crisis helpline - People across the country can receive support via phone or text 24 hours a day. Callers will receive bilingual, trauma-informed culturally appropriate support from trained responders. While the service is designed to respond to those at risk of suicide, no one will be turned away. For example, those seeking to access other mental health supports, may be directed to other services in their area.

Crisis Services Canada - Call 1-833-456-4566 | Text 45645. Crisis Services Canada (CSC) is a national network of existing distress, crisis and suicide prevention line services.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) - The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to you and your immediate family members 24 hours a day, 7 days a week whether you are in distress, or need some mental health support

- By phone: 1-800-268-7708, or 1-800-567-5803 (digital service available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing)
- By chat: [Access the EAP chat](#)

Hope for Wellness

- By phone: 1855-242-3310 (toll-free)
- By chat: [Hope for Wellness Chat](#)

Available to all Indigenous peoples across Canada who need immediate crisis intervention. Experienced and culturally sensitive help line counsellors can help if you want to talk or are distressed. Telephone and online counselling are available in English and French. On request, telephone counselling is also available in Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut.

Trans Lifeline - 1-877-330-6366

Trans Lifeline's Hotline is a peer support phone service run by trans people for our trans and questioning peers. Call us if you need someone trans to talk to, even if you're not in crisis or if you're not sure you're trans. Need help support a trans loved one? Our Family & Friends Line provides peer support for friends, partners, family members and professionals supporting trans loved ones and community members. To access this service, call our main hotline and ask for our Family & Friends Line.

211 Health and Social Services - Canada's primary source of information for government and community-based, non-clinical health and social services, 211 connects people with the appropriate information and services to enhance Canada's social infrastructure and enable people to fully engage in their communities. 211 is confidential. You will not have to give your name or personal details.

Psychology Today - Diverse Therapist Search Function - [Psychology Today](#) has a search function that allows clients to search by issues, gender, age, ethnicity served, sexuality, language and faith, facilitating the selection process for a mental health professional that suits their needs and context.

Unofficial List of Black Therapists in Canada. Compiled by BEAT from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). Users are advised to check for new information using public sources as time goes by.

Tools for your toolbox

LifeSpeak (password canada) - Build better health with practicum strategies from world-leading experts. Watch videos, read blog posts, interact with our experts – and learn at your own pace. Your journey starts here.

Not Myself Today - Not Myself Today® is an evidence-based, practical solution to help employers transform mental health at work. This workplace mental health initiative helps companies build greater awareness, reduce stigma, and foster safe and supportive cultures. Through attention-getting material, turnkey activities and our tools and resources, we break down barriers and make mental health engaging and accessible to all employees.

MindShift® CBT – Anxiety Canada (App) - Is anxiety getting in the way of your life? MindShift® CBT uses scientifically proven strategies based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to help you learn to relax and be mindful, develop more effective ways of thinking, and use active steps to take charge of your anxiety. A new feature, the Community forum, now enables you to find and offer peer-to-peer support.

Hope by CAMH App - Hope by CAMH is a free smartphone app that provides suicide prevention information, tools and crisis resources to support and guide individuals when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide. One of the key features of this app is the ability for individuals to create a personalized suicide safety plan, which can be done in consultation with their healthcare professional, loved one, or someone who they have a trusting relationship with. The safety plan can be accessed at any time – and it can be updated as situations change.

Head's Up Guys - An online, anonymous resource specifically for men, and their families, to prevent the continued erosion of men's mental health and deaths by suicide.

Community Mental Wellness Association of Canada - A platform that connects those with mental illness to their family members and other people with shared mental health concerns via culturally appropriate counseling services, education and training referrals provided within a caring community environment. With the help of volunteers and in collaboration with other organizations, we strive towards our objective of reducing the social stigma associated with mental illness as part of an early intervention and prevention strategy. We believe that offering peer support services and providing regular therapy programs has an impact in the community and empowers individuals to take control of their lives and better manage their mental health. Click on the titles to check out the resources

The Joint Learning Program - The JLP provides a unique opportunity for unionized public servants and their managers in the Core Public Administration to come together to build a healthier, more productive workplace. The JLP is mandated to improve workplace relationships and deepen understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Union and the Employer in the workplace. Participants can choose to take part in one of seven different in-person workshops OR one of five different online virtual sessions. Each workshop is led by two volunteer facilitators working collaboratively together, who represent both the Union and management. Visit the [JLP website](#) for more information.

The National Managers' Community - A horizontal network created in 2000 to support Public Service managers. [NMC Website/ Site Web de la CNG](#)
[Canadian Mental Health Association \(CHMA\)](#) - provides advocacy and resources that help to prevent mental health problems and illnesses, support recovery and resilience specifically tailored to and in partnership with communities across Canada.

Mental Health Commission of Canada offers accessible training programs that support mental health in communities and workplaces including suicide prevention, stigma and discrimination, access to high-quality, culturally appropriate mental health services, workplace psychological health and safety, substance use health. Use the Mental Health Continuum to do a self-check - [Continuum Self-Check - Opening Minds \(theworkingmind.ca\)](#).

Land Acknowledgement Resources

Whether you know it or not, you live and work on Indigenous territory. But what exactly does this mean? You've probably heard someone acknowledge traditional Indigenous territory, but you may not have known why. If you want to learn how to acknowledge it as well, but don't know how, here are some links to this important information:

A land acknowledgement recognizes the essential and enduring connection between the First Nation and their traditional, ancestral and unceded lands. Since Indigenous ancestral lands were taken without agreement or treaty, land acknowledgements are one way to recognize and show respect for their ancient and continued connection to these traditional lands. There are many ways to express or write a land acknowledgement. What is most important is that you sincerely express why acknowledgement matters when speaking or writing the words. The kwikwəłəm First Nation provides two options as templates here - [Land Acknowledgement for the kwikwəłəm \(Kwkwetlem First Nation\)](#)

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) has details on land acknowledgements including a map that shows the geographic location of the main community of each British Columbia First Nation.

<https://www.cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1605796533652/1605796625692>

Learning Insights: Acknowledging Indigenous Traditional Territory - CSPS

Stories of the Land: Acknowledging Treat 7 Territory

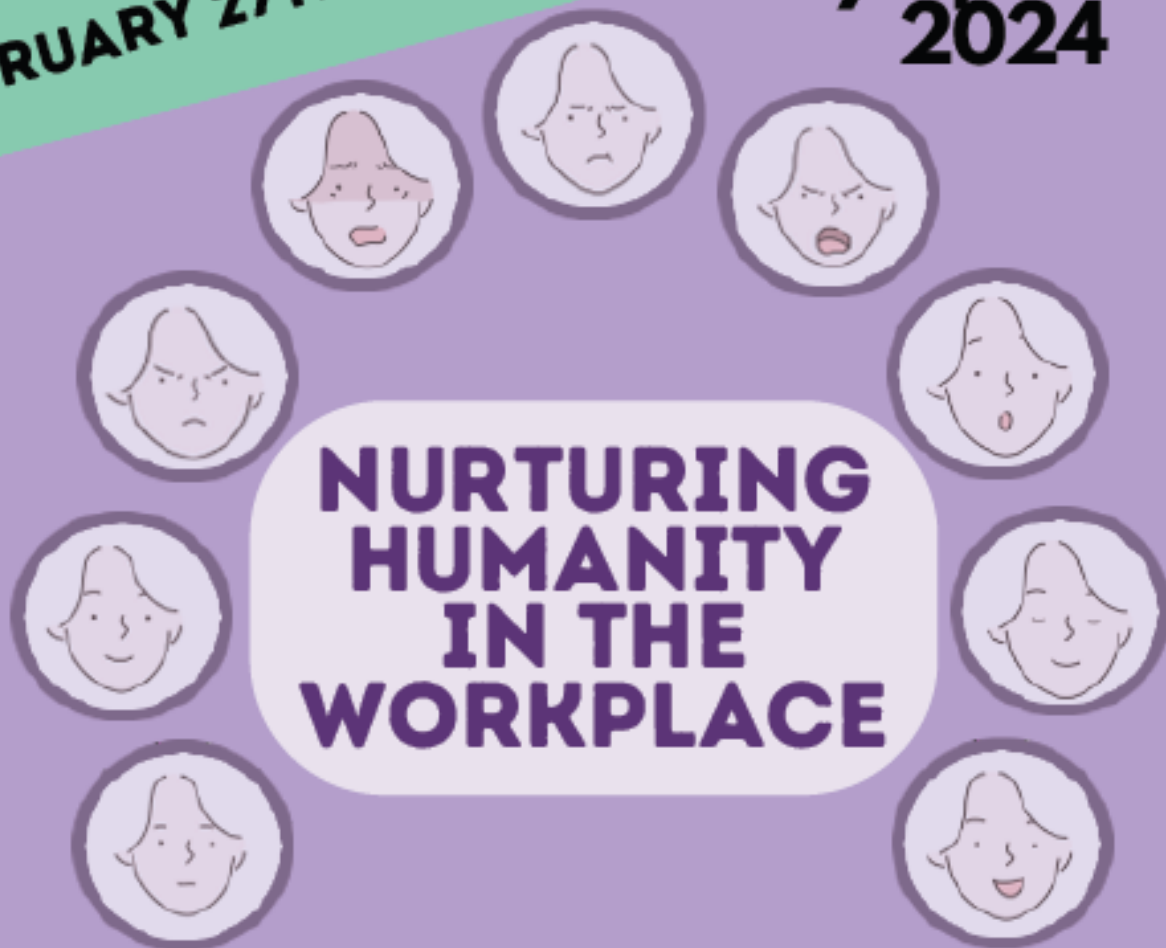
First Peoples' Map of BC Province of BC Guide to the pronunciation of Indigenous communities and organizations.

Native Land: Territories, languages and treaties map

Local School districts and/or municipalities are also a good resource.

SAVE THE DATE!
FEBRUARY 27TH & 28TH

**Open Door
Mental Health
Symposium
2024**



**NURTURING
HUMANITY
IN THE
WORKPLACE**

**FOSTERING A CULTURE OF
KINDNESS, RESPECT & EMPATHY**



Opening the Door to Mental Health Symposium 2024

Featured Events



Day 1

8:30AM - 2:00PM PST

The Rushing Paradox
Keynote: Dale Allen

Métis Jig - Health Break
Madelaine McCallum

Putting Humanity at Work First:
How to Influence Change
Panel Discussion

The Art of Slowing Down
Trilby Gouch and Taylor Aplas

Bring your Humanity to Work
Keynote: Pierre Battah

Suicidality in the Public Service
Karen Sokol

Afrobeats Dis-Dance - Health Break
Allison & Kevin Lunianga

Restoring the Human in our Workplace
Culture - Leaving the Perfect Behind
Panel Discussion

Indigenous A Wellness Perspective
Alexis Ford Ellis & Michelle Elliott

Both days will
close with a
Meditation &
Gongs

Day 2

8:30AM - 2:45PM PST

[REGISTER NOW](#) >

OPEN DOOR **2024** MENTAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM

Fostering a Culture of Kindness, Respect & Empathy



Dale Allen

Day 1
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

"The Rushing Paradox"

Leadership, Life &
Well-being Coach

Non-violent
Communication
Practitioner



Pierre Battah

Day 2
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

***"Bringing your Humanity
to Work"***

Workplace
Leadership
Specialist

Best Selling Author
of *"Humanity at
Work"*



FEBRUARY 27-28, 2024



8:30 AM - 2:30 PM (PST)