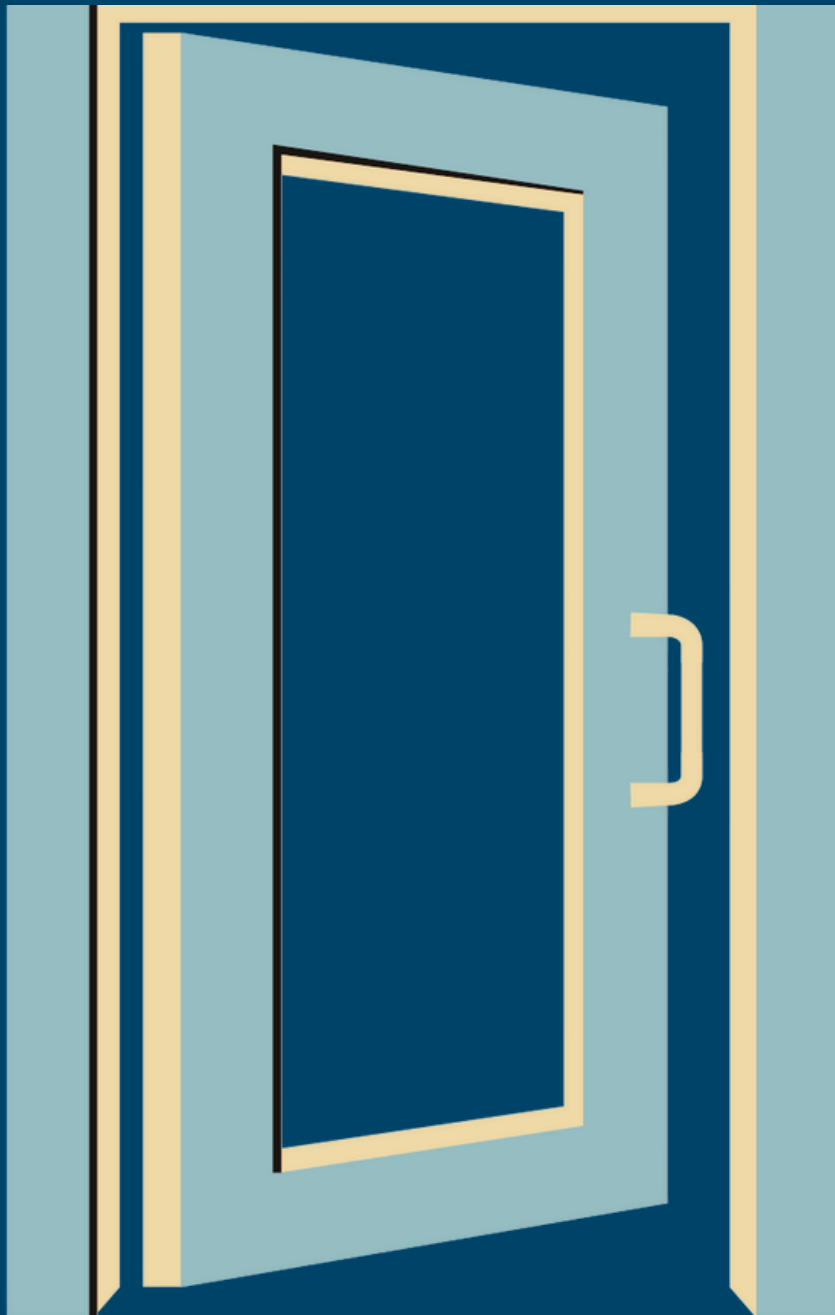


# Opening the Door to Mental Health Symposium 2022

Presenter and Event Organizer  
Biographies



# Presenters



Mario Baril, Ombud for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being, ISED

*Moderator - Panel on Workload and Burnout*

Mario Baril has been the Ombud for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada since October 2018. During his career in the Government of Canada, Mario has held several executive positions, including Chief of Staff in the Treasury Board Secretariat, Director of Strategic and Business Communications at Public Services and Procurement Canada, and Executive Director for the Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada (APEX). Mario demonstrates a profound interest in a committed, diversified, agile and productive public service. He brings extensive experience in developing strategic partnerships and initiatives to foster a healthy workplace. Mario is a member on the Advisory Board of the Centre of Expertise on Mental Health in the Workplace, at the Treasury Board Secretariat, and a member of the Interdepartmental Committee on Mental Health Performance Measurement. In his spare time, Mario practices many outdoor sports, including downhill skiing, swimming, canoeing, cycling and mountain climbing, especially at Mont-Tremblant in the Laurentians. His passion for travel has brought him to several countries, along with his wife Danielle, and his two sons, Alexandre and Samuel, allowing him to encounter amazing people and diverse cultures from around the world.

Bohang Benedix, BSc (Honours), MA, RCC, Mental health clinician

*Speaker - Panel on Healing for Mental Health: An Inter-Cultural Perspective*



Bohang comes from a South African and Canadian background, born in Canada and raised in Lesotho. She started a career in mental health and counseling 21 years ago, with the last 10 years spent working in BC, Canada. At present, she runs a private practice clinic in the Lower Mainland working with a diverse population made up of Black, Indigenous and POC as clients. As an African-Canadian therapist, she is well versed with the anti-Black racism and the inter-generational and racial trauma of Black people in North America. As a counselor who trained and practised in South Africa and Canada (coast to coast), she is intimately familiar with the impact of systemic anti-Black racism and colonisation on the mental health of African/Black people, as well as other racialized groups. Currently, Bohang lives in Africa Boroa (South Africa) amongst the Pedi people who's tribe is a Bantu people like Bohang's tribe. Previously, Bohang resided in the Fraser Valley (lower mainland) of BC.



Aaron Billesberger, Regional Field Coordinator Joint Learning Program (JLP) BC-Yukon Region

*Speaker - Panel on Dealing with Mental Health injuries and Brain Trauma*

Aaron is a mental health advocate and speaker on mental health with the Federal Speaker's Bureau. He is a member of the BCFC Community of Interest on Mental Health and Regional Co-Chair for the National Managers' Community BC-Yukon Region. During his 21 years as a frontline worker and manager with the Correctional Service of Canada, he experienced and recovered from two mental health injuries related to exposure to both traumatic and cumulative stress events. He is currently in his fifth year as a Regional Field Coordinator with the Joint Learning Program; a program focused on promoting learning, understanding, and building relationships across the Public Service.

Melanie Brousseau, Conflict Management Practitioner,  
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

*Moderator - Panel on Mental Health injuries and Brain Trauma:  
Experiences and Accommodation Needs*



Mélanie is a bilingual Senior Conflict Resolution Practitioner within Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. She has a passion for helping people communicate, resolve conflicts, and nurture a healthy workplace. Whether she is providing informal conflict resolution services or training, she enjoys empowering people to address misunderstandings, and not fear conflict. In addition to her extensive training in conflict resolution and communication, Mélanie holds a Bachelor's degree, a Master's degree, and a Doctorate (PhD) in Clinical Psychology. Her educational background helps her advocate for mental wellbeing in the workplace, and examine the larger impact of unresolved conflicts. Mélanie has held numerous positions within the Federal government. Her various work experiences provide her with a deep understanding of the operational realities and contexts that employees and management may face in dealing with personal health challenges in an environment of competing priorities.



Dr. Genieve Burley, Chiropractor in Vancouver, BC, Chair of BC  
Women's Health Foundation Gala Committed

*Moderator - Panel on The Belly Brain and Mind-Gut Connection: How to Fuel a  
Healthy Mind*

Dr. Burley is a chiropractor in Vancouver, BC. She has spent the past 17 years working in the fitness industry and studying movement as it relates to aging and mental health. Dr. Burley is the chair of BC Women's Health Foundation Gala Committee, focusing on women's mental health. This year, BC Women's is doing research on how women are disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Dr. Burley is passionate about exercise, nature, travel, music, good hugs and keeping our environment and oceans clean. She lives with her husband and two daughters (and a small zoo of rescue dogs and a cat name Terry Fox!).

Elaine Chong, Director, Health Program Integrity and Control,  
Migration Health, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

*Master of Ceremony and Moderator - Closing Plenary*



Elaine is accountable for delivery of the Interim Federal Health Program, oversight of the international Panel Physician Network, integrity for health programs, and implementation of a new claims administration contract. Previously, Elaine was at Health Canada, as the Director of Specialty Pharmaceuticals, leading engagement, policy development and strategic advice for a national strategy for high-cost drugs for rare diseases. She was also part of the special secretariat to the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare. Prior to joining the federal public service, Elaine spent over 10 years as a Director in the Pharmaceutical Services Division with the Ministry of Health, Government of British Columbia, providing advanced clinical input and leadership into policy and practice change initiatives in the areas of clinical evaluation of medication use, drug benefits delivery, and specialty program strategy/management. Elaine holds a Doctorate in Pharmacy from the University of British Columbia and is a Fellow of the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists.



Angela Cooke, Associate Deputy Minister of Housing,  
Construction Standards, Multiculturalism & Anti-Racism,  
Province of BC

*Opening Remarks in the Morning Plenary*

Angela recently relocated to British Columbia as the Vice President, Operations for BC Housing. Shortly after her arrival Angela faced the restraints of a world with COVID-19. Angela was required to execute a provincial pandemic response not only on behalf of the Ministry, Housing & Municipal Affairs, but also to the Ministry of Health; Ministry of Attorney General; Ministry of Children, Families and Development; and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. Angela is no stranger to the Ontario Housing Sector.

Rod Cunningham, Senior Development Program Officer,  
Indigenous Programs Unit, Service Canada

*Moderator - Opening Prayers and Performance*



Rod is Woodlands Cree, originally from Northern Alberta and has been working with Service Canada for over 29 years. Rod also serves as the CEIU's National Human Rights and Race Relations Committee's First Nations/Inuit/Metis representative since 2008. He enjoys sharing his 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. Rod is 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.



Janelle Curtis, PhD in Conservation Ecology

*Speaker - Panel on Dealing with Mental Health Injuries and Brain Trauma:*

Janelle has been working with Fisheries and Oceans Canada as a research scientist since June 2007. Her research now centers on identifying vulnerable marine ecosystems in international waters. In July 2016, Janelle fell approximately 20m off a ridge then tumbled another 80m or so on steep scree in Strathcona Park on Vancouver Island. She sustained a broken ankle, two fractured knees, and a broken hand and an extremely severe diffuse axonal injury, which is one type of traumatic brain injury. She remained in a coma for two weeks and experienced post-traumatic amnesia for three months. It is Janelle's hope that sharing her story will inspire all to be mindful of invisible injuries, not make assumptions about other's disabilities, communicate often and be kind to each other". Please feel free to reach out to her if you have any questions or comments about traumatic brain injuries and returning to work - [Janelle.Curtis@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:Janelle.Curtis@dfo-mpo.gc.ca).



## David Didluck, Regional Director, Reconciliation and Partnerships, Fisheries and Oceans, Pacific Region

*Closing Remarks in the Afternoon Plenary*



For nearly 25 years, David has worked consistently to eliminate socio-economic gaps facing Indigenous communities and to 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 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.



## Jennifer Feeney-Svab, Centre of Expertise on Mental Health

*Speaker – Panel on Workload and Burnout*

Jennifer Feeney-Svab, joined OCHRO as the Director for the Mental Health and Wellness in February 2021. Jennifer is a people-oriented person who most recently worked at ESDC as the Director of Strategic Policy in the Office for Disability Issues. She has spent several years working in the field of evaluation and performance measurement at Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada and also has experience working at the Treasury Board Secretariat within the Priorities and Planning and Social and Cultural Sector. She possesses an MBA from the University of Ottawa with a focus on health administration and a Bachelor of Applied Health Science from University of Waterloo. She is committed to advancing mental health in the federal public service.

## Byron Flekke, St’at’imc, from the community of Xaxli’p. a public servant with Statistics Canada

*Speaker – Panel on Does Indian Have Feelings?*



My name is Byron Flekke. I’m St’at’imc, from the community of Xaxli’p. I’m an Indian and a public servant. I’m living in Kwantlen territory, people today know it as Langley. There is no treaty here so I often refer to it as occupied Kwantlen territory, trying to stir up some conversations. I grew up in foster care, like so many of us, and survived a world that wasn’t built for us but in some senses was built on and against us. I have written this short biography to reflect the theme of Recovery and Resilience. We already survived, our existence is a demonstration of resilience. Our resurgence is recovery. I look forward to exploring the topic of Trauma Informed Communication with you, especially as it relates to Indigenous employees. And I look forward to hearing what that title means to attendees.



## Blair Hammond, Director, Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Pacific Region

*Speaker - Panel on Workload and Burnout*

Blair and his team of approximately 100 are responsible for implementing the government's ambitious nature agenda in British Columbia. This includes providing federal leadership on (terrestrial) species at risk, migratory birds, national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries (terrestrial and marine) and providing federal wildlife advice into impact assessment processes. Blair has worked in government for over 21 years, all of it with CWS. Prior to joining government, he worked with the non-government sector and in academia. When not working to conserve nature, he enjoys myriad outdoor activities; being a gourmand; reading; and spending time with friends and family.

## Marie-Andrée Hould, Event and Marketing Manager

*Moderator - Panel on Healing for Mental Health: An Inter-Cultural Perspective*

Marie-Andrée graduated in 2019 at the University of Ottawa as MSW. She is bilingual Registered Social Worker. She worked in various organization such as community centers, schoolboards, women shelters and governmental departments. She also has a passion for social research on various topics such as perinatal health, climate justice, violence against women, motherhood and social media. On a personal note, Marie-Andree is an outdoorsy person who enjoys hiking with her dog, chasing sunsets and relaxing by the water.



## Christy Hutchison - Meditation Facilitator

*Morning Meditation Break*

Christy is a certified Mindfulness Meditation facilitator. She brings over 30-year of experience as a resource teacher and consultant in Special Education. After working in complex and highly stressful situations for decades, Christy was struck by chronic levels of stress. On her road to recovery, she found Mindfulness Meditation. Christy's journey led her to receive certifications in Applied Mindfulness Meditation Specialist through the University of Toronto as well as a certification with Mindfulness without Borders. Christy is passionate to be sharing her ever-growing knowledge of and journey into the practices and neuroscience of Mindfulness and Mindful Meditation.



WorkingWell  
workingw

## Lee Hyndman, Western-Territorial Region Indigenous Employees' Circle

*Speaker - Panel on Healing for Mental Health: An Inter-Cultural Perspective*

Lee is a Service Manager with Employment & Social Development Canada in the W-T Region and a W-T representative of ESDC's Indigenous Employees' Circle. Lee is anishinaabekwe and member of the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation from Neyaashiinigmiing, Ontario. She is keen to help advance the Government of Canada's goal in becoming a more inclusive and welcoming employer for First Nations, Inuit, and Metis employees from coast to coast.





## Corey Jackson, Co-Chair of the BCFC Community of Interest on Mental Health

*Master of Ceremony*

Corey is the Acting Regional Director, Policy and Economic Analysis for Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 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 and A/Director, Aquaculture Management Division; and A/Director, Aboriginal Programs Division. Corey has helped advance a number of key priorities, including renewal of the Pacific Salmon Treaty, the Wild Salmon Policy and the development of recovery measures for Southern Resident Killer Whales. 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.

## Dr. Ashkan Jalili, D.C., DACNB, FACFN, FABBIR

*Speaker - Panel on Dealing with Mental Health Injuries and Brain Trauma*



Dr. Ash is a BC-Licensed chiropractor and a neuro-rehab-based chiropractic doctor, with over 17 years of Post-Doctorate Clinical Neuroscience education (Not recognized in Canada) and over 300 hours of Post-Doctorate Education in Functional Medicine/Metabolic Medicine. He has been in private practice since 2002 and he served as an instructor for the Chiropractic Board Exam Reviews for 7 years in the areas of Neurology, Orthopedics, Radiology, Chiropractic Science, and Philosophy as well as Neuromuscular Diagnosis. He served as faculty at the Cleveland Chiropractic College in Japan, served as a past president of the California Chiropractic Association-Westside District and worked as a Corporate Wellness consultant to different MD/DC clinics. Dr. Ash combines the traditional chiropractic approach with state-of-the-art technology, active neurological rehabilitation to maximize Mind-body restoration and healing. He is a member of the Canadian Chiropractic Association, American Chiropractic Association, and California Chiropractic Association. Dr. Ash is currently the Canadian Brain Performance and Equinox Integrative Wellness Center Clinic Director and Associate Professor of Clinical Neurology at Carrick Institute of Neurology in the US. He was a frequent lecturer for some of California's Fortune 500 Companies in the areas of health, wellness, and healthy living with his trademark Corporate Wellness Inclusion of multiple providers to attend the employees on-site, resulting in massive financial savings for the companies and increase the productivity of the employees.

## Michelle Johnston - Workplace Wellness Specialist

*Speaker - Panel on The Belly Brain and Mind-Gut Connection:  
How to Fuel a Healthy Mind*

Michelle Johnston is a Holistic Nutritionist and Workplace Wellness Specialist. In 2004 she founded her company, WorkingWell, as a way to assist employees in gaining access to essential health-related information that would benefit them professionally and personally. Michelle has a wealth of knowledge in many areas related to workplace wellness and personal well-being. She is passionate nutrition, stress management, mindfulness, sleeping well and helping others to cultivate a healthy mindset. In her spare time, Michelle can be found at her cottage near Orillia, Ontario with her husband Ken and their dog Whiskey or in the kitchen cooking up new recipes for her family to enjoy.





# Ts'i:m, Grand Chief Doug Kelly

*Morning Keynote Address*

Ts'i:m is a grandfather to six healthy, beautiful, and intelligent granddaughters and two handsome and bright grandsons. Married to Sherry for twenty-six years – together they raised a blended family of five daughters and one son. Doug and Sherry reside on the Soowahlie reserve in Chilliwack, B.C. In December 2020, Doug retired from elected politics after serving twenty years as an elected Tribal Chief for the Stó:lō Tribal Council. For 12-years, Grand Chief served the STC as President. After 12.5 years, he also stepped down from the BC First Nations Health Council. Doug served the FNHC as the Chair from June 2010 to July 2019. As the Chair of the First Nations Health Council (FNHC), he led the tripartite negotiations that resulted in the creation of the First Nations Health Authority. The FNHC is responsible for overseeing the new First Nations health governance structure and the implementation of the Tripartite First Nations Health Plan.



Grand Chief has also served as Soowahlie Chief for eight years. He also served on the First Nations Summit Political Executive for four years. He served as the founding Chair of the BC First Nations Fisheries Council for two years. Doug was a founding member of the BC Treaty Commission for one year. Grand Chief has 13 years of experience in senior management positions, including senior leadership roles with the First Nations Chiefs' Health Committee, Stó:lō Nation, and Stó:lō Tribal Council. Doug also led the development of Stó:lō Health, Child Welfare, and other programs including fisheries and economic development.

## Krista Leis – Mobility + Fitness Instructor

*Stretch Break*



Krista is a fully certified Pilates instructor and Functional Range Conditioning Mobility Specialist (FRCms) and valued member of the WorkingWell Corporate Wellness team where she delivers virtual and in-person mobility classes for employee groups across Canada. She has a passion for biomechanics and helping people achieve their full potential, whether a professional athlete, weekend warrior, parent, grandparent or a dancer. Movement is medicine, and moving better in your day to day life is what her unique combination of Pilates and mobility training can help you find. She trains all ages and walks of life in a safe and functional way. Krista is also a professional dancer and actor, working mostly in theatre.

## Catherine Luelo – Deputy Minister at the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat and the Chief Information Officer of Canada

*Looking Forward: Prioritizing Mental Health in the Workplace*



Prior to her appointment as CIO in July 2021, Catherine was the Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer at Air Canada, where she was responsible for the Information Technology systems that support and enable Air Canada's global business. In this role, she additionally led innovation in the artificial intelligence space while managing the security and reliability of Air Canada's worldwide systems in an operational landscape that substantially shifted during the global pandemic. Catherine holds an MBA from Athabasca University in Alberta and a BSc from the University of Alberta. She has also served as a Board Member for Creative Destruction Labs, as well as serving as Chair for Health Canada's Industry Advisory Roundtable on COVID-19 Testing, Screening, Tracing and Data Management. Catherine is a proud mother of two children and is a fierce advocate for mental health. In March 2020, she was appointed to the Board of Directors for the Center for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) Foundation and participates regularly as a panelist and speaker on Mental Health in the workplace.





## Eve Nadeau - Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's Associate Ombudsman for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being

*Speaker - Panel on Workload and Burnout:*

Eve Nadeau has been the Associate Ombudsman at Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada since 2018. A social worker and criminologist by training, as part of her career in the Public Service, Eve has been the manager of the Informal Conflict Resolution Service, Values and Ethics programs, and the Harassment Prevention program, after 8 years of conducting mediations and group interventions on a variety of issues aimed at restoring relationships in the workplace with Public Services and Procurement Canada. Today, the objective of her continuing role is to raise organizational awareness about mental health and organizational well-being and identifying ways to effectively resolve various issues, including workload management.

## Chinook SongCatchers Delhia, Latash Nahanee and family

*Opening Prayers and Performance*



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.



## Gurdeep Pandher

*Bhangra Dance Instruction Session*

Gurdeep was born into a farming family, in a simple and ordinary village called Siahari in Punjab. After moving away to Whitehorse (Yukon) Canada, Gurdeep has continued to pursue a diverse variety of creative projects since his early childhood days in the village. As a part of Punjabi-Sikh culture, Gurdeep was born into the world of Bhangra. In his youth, at the age of 17, he began taking professional Bhangra classes in Ludhiana, Punjab. This allowed him to learn to dance from the heart and adopt dance as a part of his lifestyle. Since his days in Punjab, his love for dance has continued to grow and evolve. By the age of 23, he became a published author of two books. In Punjabi, Gurdeep's first book is titled *Mitti De Ghar*. His second book, entitled *Among the Stars*, is based on the life of Kalpana Chawla, the first woman of Indian origin to go to space. Although Gurdeep has spent an ample amount of time travelling across the globe to the many corners of the world, the Yukon is where he calls home. Apart from his village in Punjab, it is the place where he has lived most of his life and he considers himself to be a proud Yukoner. In his free time, Gurdeep enjoys sharing a laugh with his fellow Yukoners at coffee shops or in the streets of the many unique Yukon communities.

## Insiya Rasiwala-Finn, Ayurvedic Practitioner, Yoga Instructor

*Speaker - Panel on Healing for Mental Health: An Inter-Cultural Perspective*

Insiya Rasiwala-Finn grew up in Bombay, India with Yoga and Ayurveda shaping her life at an early age, in ways she wasn't even aware of until she returned to yoga after dropping out of a corporate career to rediscover her calling to inspire, teach and connect to our truth. She is passionate about offering a modern interpretation to Yoga and Ayurveda while still honoring the traditional teachings from India. Her unique perspective offers inspiration, poetry, healing and fresh insights to this ever evolving practice, whether she is working one on one with clients; or in a group setting. She has written on wellness and travel for the Globe and Mail newspaper and Asia Spa magazine, presented at Yoga Festivals globally including Bali Spirit + Wanderlust, as well as been featured on the pages of Yoga Journal magazine.



## Rebecca Reid, Regional Director General Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Pacific Region and National Mental Health Champion

*Speaker - Opening Plenary*

Rebecca started her career in 1990, as a Fish Quality Specialist (Inspector) with the Inspection Branch of Fisheries and Oceans and in 2015 became the Regional Director General. When Inspection Branch became part of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Rebecca joined DFO's aboriginal fisheries program, and worked variously as AFS program officer, manager and treaty negotiator. She then moved to Port Hardy in her first Executive position, in the newly formed Central Coast Area. After moving back to Vancouver several years later, she held a number of Executive-level positions, including Regional Director Policy and Economics, Regional Director Treaty and Aboriginal Policy, Regional Director for the Oceans, Habitat and Salmonid Enhancement programs, and Regional Director Fisheries Management. Rebecca lives in Vancouver with her husband and two daughters, and has spent the last 2 years adjusting to COVID's ever shifting landscape, and focusing on health and wellness.

## Ayesha Sackey, Clinical Services Manager at Burnaby Mental Health and Addiction, Provincial Health Services Authority

*Speaker - Panel on Workload and Burnout*



"Ayesha Sackey is a Black African, British and Canadian. She works as a Clinical Services Manager at Red Fish Healing Centre, Provincial Health Services Authority. She completed her Bachelor's in Social Work at Goldsmiths University in London before going on to complete her Master's in Social Work at Dalhousie University. She has worked at various health authorities in London, the Richmond Mental Team, and the Burnaby Mental Health and Addiction Centre in Canada. Ayesha was an adjunct Professor teaching Advanced Mental Health at UBC and is member of Canadian Health Leaders. Other notable roles include being a board member of the BC association of Social Workers, a liaison for the Mental Health and Alliance group, and a Liaison for the Multicultural and Racism Committee, where Ayesha has led initiatives developing an anti-racist toolkit and providing education to BC Social Workers and Palliative Care staff. More recently in recognition of Black History Month, she presented a workshop on COVID-19 and Resilience. She also has a private practice where she utilizes various therapeutic approaches. Ayesha has a reputation for consultancy, leadership and counselling."



## Mikelle Sasakamoose, Senior Policy Advisor to the Director on Reconciliation, Indigenous Relations, Transport Canada

*Moderator - Panel on Does Indian Have Feelings?*

Mikelle Sasakamoose is a member of the Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation. She is also Secwepemc and Syilx, and was born and raised on her reserve at Tk'emlups te Secwepemc. She has been a federal public servant working in Indigenous relations for the past 13 years in the Western Region and Northern Territories. Mikelle is the co-chair of the Pacific Aboriginal Network (PAN), a network of Indigenous federal public servants representing 19 different departments and agencies in the Pacific Region. Mikelle is also a departmental representative on the whole of government Indigenous Issues and Interests Committee working group, as well as volunteer Indigenous awareness training facilitator. Outside of the federal public service, Mikelle writes Gladue Reports, which are pre-sentencing reports for Indigenous offenders, and is a director on the Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society board. Mikelle spends every other second of her time cheering her 3 daughters on at the soccer field.

## Michelle Sheppard, Registered Dietitian

*Speaker - Panel on The Belly Brain and Mind-Gut Connection: How to Fuel a Healthy Mind*



Michelle is a Registered Dietitian and owner of Westcoast Nutrition in beautiful BC. Her focus is on helping clients achieve sustainable health change through modern approaches on what to eat, practical skill building to maintain change, and repairing the relationship with food and body. Michelle has a diverse clinical background including oncology nutrition with BC Cancer, high acuity inpatients with Fraser Health, and post secondary teaching at Langara College that has shaped the big picture approach she now takes with clients and corporate partners to achieve their health goals.



## Kristina Sheridan, Occupational Therapist, JR Rehab Services

*Speaker - Panel on Dealing with Mental Health Injuries and Brain Trauma*

Kristina Sheridan is a registered Occupational Therapist in the Province of British Columbia. In 2009, she received a Bachelor of Science Degree from Memorial University and a Master's in Occupational Therapy in 2013. Since then, Kristina has been a registered member, in good standing, with the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists as well as the College of Occupational Therapists (COTBC). She is on the Patient Relations, standards, and ethics committee for COTBC. Kristina's primary focus of practice is assessment and treatment of mental health and brain injury. In her practice, she provides case management services, treatment for brain injury, mental illness, driving anxiety, chronic pain, exposure therapy and disability management. She is certified for a variety of assessments ranging from Cognitive Functional Capacity Evaluation to disability management). Kristina has a strong focus on return-to-work planning, job site visits, physical and cognitive job demands analysis. Prior to her current position, she worked at St. Paul's Hospital where her area of expertise was treatment experience: acute care, cardiac care, geriatric consult outreach and the cardiovascular intensive care unit.



## Nadine Spence, Executive Director Indigenous Affairs, Parks Canada

*Speaker - Panel on Does Indian Have Feelings?*



Nadine Spence, Kliš'aht'a, is an Ahousesht First Nation member, part of the larger Nuu-chah-nulth Tribe on the West Coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Since 2001, Nadine has worked for Parks Canada in a variety of capacities and in various functional areas in both field operations and national policy development. In her current role as Executive Director, Indigenous Affairs, she is responsible for leading national policies and programs related to Parks Canada's relationship with Indigenous partners. Her passion lies in advancing conservation in ways in which supports the advancement of Indigenous knowledge systems and Indigenous leadership in the field of conversation and protected areas management, including the indivisibility that exists between nature and culture. As an Indigenous voice in the Public Service, she has the privilege to build bridges between cultures and people, assisting in finding common interests and shared priorities, and to advance relationships, policies, and operations that benefit from this increased depth of understanding. She currently resides in Colwood, British Columbia with her two sons, Caleb and Brenner. In their time off from school and work, the family enjoys hiking in cultural and natural places, reading, travelling, and stand-up paddle boarding.



## Angela Stulberg, Western-Territorial Region Indigenous Employees' Circle

*Speaker - Panel on Healing for Mental Health: An Inter-Cultural Perspective*

Angela is a First Nations Cree woman from Starblanket Cree Nation. She works as a Payment Service Officer with the Regina Call Centre, Service Canada though is currently working from home. Mental health and wellness is so important to her. Like many others I have family, friends and herself that have all been diagnosed with mental health conditions. Personally, she has overcome Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Addiction, and an Eating Disorder. Her life has not been an easy one, she has dealt with death and grief her father and sister, childhood trauma from various forms of abuse, and a marriage that was not healthy due to domestic violence and addiction. Today, she commits to her recovery and healing daily through prayer, meditation, contact with her Creator (God) and meeting with others that are on her journey as well. Angela sought out healing traditionally with elders through sweats and ceremonies, as well as has gotten the help from psychologists and counsellors in the past. Presently, she helps others through service work in her area of southern Saskatchewan and have women that she helps to seek recovery from their active addictions. Angela believes that her open an honest sharing of her lived experience it helps light the way for others.

## Allison Webb, Regional Director, Environmental Services and Contaminated Sites Management, Public Services and Procurement Canada, Pacific Region

*Speaker - Panel on Workload and Burnout*



Allison is the Regional Director for Environmental Services and Contaminated Sites Management at Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) and Mental Health Champion for her Region. Allison started her career in Ottawa and worked in 7 departments before joining PSPC. She has held a variety of Executive roles that have brought her to many parts of the globe like Chile and Australia. Allison holds a MA in Canadian Studies from Carleton University, a BA from Mt Allison University and a partial degree in Fisheries and Aquaculture from Vancouver Island University. Having been born with wanderlust in her heart, Allison is always up for travel and is happiest when she's planning her next big trip. She can also be found at her cabin hiking or snowshoeing. She also tries to keep active running, standup paddle boarding and rounds out her interests with cooking and following the arts.





## Emily Tait, Capital Administrator, Indigenous Services Canada, BC Region

*Speaker - Panel on Does Indians Have Feelings?*

Adiiyoox Emily Tait was born into the House of Axdii Wil Luu-gooda & Ksim Xsaan of the Gitwilt'uuts'kwhl Aks clan from the Ganada (Raven & Frog tribe) of the Git-Lisims\Nisga'a Nation. (Adiiyoox is her Matriarch Nisga'a name). Her families are rooted in the Nisga'a communities of Gitlaɣt'aamiks & Laɣgalts'ap. Emily is the eldest child of Addie & Tommy Tait and eldest grandchild of Olive & Cedric Scodane. Sim'algaɣ, the Nisga'a language, was her first language growing up. Her parents and family mainly lived in Gitlaɣt'aamiks with her adopted maternal grandparents: Jemima & Paul Mercer. A custom of the Nisga'a if a family member cannot have children of their own. Emily attended Indian Day School in Old Aiyansh up until Grade 8 - when she moved to North Delta, where she was part of Canada's Indian Boarding Home program and attended high school. Adiiyoox has 4 sons - 2 of her own, Keane Wal'aks and Zachary An'moogam Dilɣ, and 2 adopted, Nick T'imk'yo'ohl Hayatskw and Kraig Adigwil Saɣootkw. When Emily's eldest son was born, she promised herself to break the cycle of abuse that was inflicted to her parents during their times at Residential School. Adiiyoox made every effort to pass on the traditional knowledge that was taught to her growing up. Emily became a grandmother in 2014 with the birth of her son Zachary's daughter. Adiiyoox is now residing in Gitlaɣt'aamiks, with her 2 sons, daughter-in-law and 2 granddaughters, where they all make Sim'algaɣ and Nisga'a Culture part of their everyday lives. Adiiyoox Emily started working for the Federal Government in 2006 at the Federal Court of Canada, Vancouver office. She then moved to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 2007. Adiiyoox Emily enjoys making regalia, beading, and watching Law & Order.

## Chanelle Tye, Equity & Inclusion Educator & Coach

*Speaker - Systemic and Anti-Black Racism Workshop: Black Don't Crack: The Pressure of White Institutions on Black Mental Health*

Chanelle Tye is an equity and inclusion facilitator, educator, and coach who specializes in the areas of anti-racism and LGBTQ2SIA+ inclusion. Her use of humour and interactive participant engagement ensure safe learning environments for novices and experts in social justice issues. She brings a deep knowledge of the dynamics of power and privilege within educational, corporate, and institutional contexts. Chanelle has a Master of Education in Equity Studies from Simon Fraser University with a focus on improving outcomes for organizational equity, diversity, and inclusion training.



## Michael Van Nen, British Columbia-Yukon Regional Field Coordinator, Joint Learning Program

*Lived Experience Speaker*

Michael has spent the past 13 years in the Public Service in Union Executive and middle management roles with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), and since January 2020, has been in the role of Regional Field Coordinator (Union) for the Joint Learning Program (JLP). Michael enjoys volunteering time in his community singing and serving on the Board of Directors for the Vancouver Men's Chorus, the longest serving men's chorus in Canada. Michael also is performing artist who participates in the art of Drag, which has led to Michael being featured in his very first commercial for TurboTax! Michael will be co-hosting the Rupaul's Drag Race: UK vs. The World finale at Glitch Arcade Bar on March 8th at 7pm! Tickets on Eventbrite. Enquire for details!

# Event Organizers

Carolyn Arthur - Senior Inclusive Business Advisor,  
Procurement Assistance Canada



Carolyn is a volunteer leader in the Federal Black Employee Caucus and Diversity Networks at PSPC and with the Federal Black Employee Caucus, BC Chapter. In her day job Carolyn is a Senior Inclusive Business Advisor at Procurement Assistance Canada (PAC), a branch of Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC). Carolyn enjoys educating and empowering clients and suppliers in the buying process. She is a committed partner in the development of procurement solutions that assist in closing socio-economic gaps and eliminating systemic barriers facing First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples, Black business owners and other equity seeking groups in the Canadian business community

Meghan Chen - Coordinator for the Community of Interest on  
Mental Health & Program Advisor, Reconciliation and Partnerships  
Branch, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Meghan's day job is with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, in the Reconciliation Branch, having previously worked on international fisheries policy and fisheries management, at Innovation, Science and Economic Development as a regional advisor. By no means a lifer, she has still been around government long enough for people to start saying "Do it for the 'gram pension!" She completed her Bachelor of Science in Biology, and Environment, Sustainability and Society with a focus on biogeochemistry and global systems at Dalhousie University in Halifax, NS. She has spent her public service career in the mental health advocacy space, and has experienced personally and first-hand mental illness in many of the different parts of life. Meghan is very passionate about travel and food, and if you see her gazing off into the distance or talking to herself, she's dreaming about where her next trip will be and how much she's going to eat there.



Dana Cook- Senior Program Development Officer with  
Indigenous Program Delivery

Dana has worked for the Federal government for 15 years. Dana has always been interested in mental health and have a degree from the University of Manitoba with a major in Psychology. Dana is a Not Myself Today (NMT) Ambassador. This initiative helps organizations build greater awareness and understanding of mental health, reduce stigma and foster safe and supportive work cultures. Dana's volunteer role as a NMT Ambassador is what led her to the opportunity to work with the Open Door Micromission Team.



Pam Cypher - Project Manager, Western and Territories  
Region - Mental Health Initiative for Employment and Social  
Development Canada



## Mireille Cyr, Manager of the Canadian Innovation Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace.



Mireille is currently on interchange assignment from the Mental Health Commission of Canada, where she has the role of Manager of Business Development, Mental Health First Aid and Opening Minds. For over five years, she has been increasing her knowledge in the area of mental health and wellness, which has allowed her to better understand the importance of having a psychologically safe workplace in order to have a well and productive workforce and community. Her twenty-five year career has been varied having worked as a frontline physiotherapist and as a case manager, which then lead to a path in health care management. Mireille played a leadership role in managing the successful delivery of an accreditation program across Canada, assisting organisations to utilise standards and best practices to provide the safest and highest quality healthcare to Canadians. Mireille has a Bachelor of Science degree in Physiotherapy and a Master's degree in Health Administration. Mireille enjoys traveling, skiing and hiking with her partner and is most proud of her two young adult children.

## Martine Deault – Program Consultant, Program Operations of Employment & Social Development Canada



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

## Jewell DeLair – Project Assistant for the Pacific Region Employment Equity and Diversity Committee

Jewell has been in the public service for 5 years with Correctional Service Canada. She began her career working as the Health Services Assistant at Fraser Valley Institution for women. She is currently acting as the Project Assistant for the Pacific Region Employment Equity and Diversity Committee.



## Carole Eros – Mental Health and Wellness Coordinator for the British Columbia Federal Council

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. You will not see Carole much at the event as she will be busy behind the scenes.





## Michele Fogal, Communications Advisor Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Pacific Region

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.



## Michael Giannuzzi - Payment Services Officer with Employment Insurance

Michael has worked with Employment and Social Development Canada since December of 2020. He is thrilled to be employed in the Federal Government and to be part of such a supportive and caring work culture. Michael has always been greatly interested in the promotion of mental health awareness and education to friends, family, colleagues and all others around him. He is thankful for the opportunity to contribute to the 4th annual Open Door Workshop for Leaders in Mental Health.



## Jennifer Grace - A/ Senior Conflict Management & Values and Ethics Consultant. Correctional Service of Canada, Member of various mental health teams within the CSC

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. 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. She has been involved in initiatives at the regional level that focus on employee wellness. When not advocating for mental health she can be found riding her bicycle through beautiful trails around BC.



## Daria Hammond - Psychology Student at University of British Columbia

Daria Hammond is a third-year psychology student at the University of British Columbia. She joined the Open Door team as a volunteer and has since helped to organize the Mental Health Injury and Brain Trauma Panel. Daria is passionate about the field of mental health and hopes to one day pursue her PhD in Clinical Psychology.





## Ange Hill- Consultation and Engagement Coordinator, Consultation Secretariat, Fisheries and Oceans Canada



MAnge 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.

## Siciida Ibrahim - Business Expertise Advisor with Employment Insurance

Siciida Ibrahim is a mental health advocate living in Edmonton, Alberta. Siciida is employed with Employment & Social Development Canada (ESDC) as a Business Expertise Advisor and is a "Not Myself Today" Ambassador that works to transform the way we talk about mental health in the work place. She completed her undergraduate Psychology degree at the University of Alberta and is currently completing her Masters in Counselling psychology. Siciida's background in psychology, health research and community development has fueled her passion in culturally competent mental health advocacy work.



## Leah Kabotoff - Business Expertise Advisor with Employment Insurance



Leah is a Business Expertise Advisor with the Employment Insurance Call Centre. She has been certified in Mental Health First Aid from the Mental Health Association of Canada, and is passionate about topics related to mental health and wellness from a number of perspectives. She enjoys learning and expanding her knowledge in the area of mental wellness, in order to support her family and wider circle by advocating for mental health understanding and supports. She is grateful for the opportunity to assist in the organization and presentation for Open Door. Leah enjoys spending quiet days with her wife and their fur-baby, Holtzmann: reading books, drinking tea, and spending hours each week in elaborate, fantastical, collaborative daydreams (otherwise known as tabletop role-playing games).

## Darlene Ma - Director, Finance & Administration at Innovation Science & Economic Development

Darlene Ma is the Director, Finance & Administration at Innovation Science & Economic Development (ISED), Pacific Region and has over 29 years experience working in finance for both the federal and provincial government. She has been a member of the BC Federal Council Mental Health Community of Interest since it's inception and champions mental health and wellness for fellow ISED colleagues in the Pacific region. Darlene is a Chartered Public Accountant (CPA) and holds a Bachelor of Accounting Science (BAccS) degree from the University of Calgary. She is married with two sons and enjoys baking, gardening and many outdoor activities.





## Elisabeth Martin – Chairperson, Federal Black Employee Caucus of BC

Elisabeth (Liz) Martin is the chairperson of the Federal Black Employee Caucus - BC Chapter (FBEC-BC). She is a member of the core team of the Anti-Racism Ambassador Network (ARAN) as well. Her mantra is “purpose over popularity”. Her three favourite words are “why?” and “why not?” Elisabeth believes in introspection and authenticity. She advocates for mental wellness including for the BIPOC communities.

## Samantha O’Keefe – Payment Services Officer with Employment Insurance

Samantha joined Employment and Social Development Canada in 2021. Before moving to Regina and joining the Public Service, Samantha worked in public health promotion and chronic disease prevention in the Interlake & North Eastman regions of Manitoba. Her experiences, particularly in mental health promotion have made her passionate about fostering resilience and working towards mental health for all.



## Danae Slater is the BC Wellness Coordinator and Employee Co-Chair of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee for Indigenous Services Canada, BC

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).



## Angela Squires – Wellness Administrator Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Pacific Region

Mental Health and Wellbeing is something Angela is very passionate about as it affects every part of our lives. The Workload & Burnout Panel is especially interesting to Angela as she has both witnessed and experienced burnout during her ten years spent within the department. Why is Wellness important in general? Well, Angela has always felt the need to support and promote positivity and balance amongst those around her. Angela enjoys spending time with friends, family, and coworkers where she can listen, empathize, support and encourage them to reach their personal and career goals. Angela cannot think of a better way to honor herself and those she works with, by working in wellness.



## Tara Sullivan – Wellness Coordinator, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Pacific Region

Tarah Sullivan has been part of the Federal Family since 2016, starting as an administrator for the Science Branch of Pacific Fisheries and Oceans. Since then she has been passionately working on wellness first as a leader of an employee led Wellness Initiative and most recently as the Regional Wellness Coordinator for DFO Pacific. She lives on Vancouver Island and her two favorite wellness practices are walking in the forest with her Great Dane, Faraday and creating mixed media paintings.

