

Program Overview



CASP CANADIAN ASSOCIATION
FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

ACPS ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE POUR
LA PRÉVENTION DU SUICIDE



HEALING DAY

A PRE-CONFERENCE EVENT

TUESDAY MAY 28, 2024

REGISTRATION OPEN!

Program subject to change.

suicideprevention.ca



PURPOSE

Join us for Healing Day on Tuesday May 28 at the Pinnacle Harbourfront Hotel, Vancouver

Healing Day is intended for anyone who has experienced thoughts or behaviours related to suicide or a death by suicide. If you are a person with lived experience, a family member, a friend, a clinician, a caregiver or a researcher impacted by suicide, we welcome you to join us for a day of reflection, hope and healing. This pre-conference day provides attendees with experiential workshops and sessions that offer new tools and resources to support our unique healing journeys.

Registration for Healing Day is on a first come- first served basis. Please register as soon as possible to reserve your space, as seats are limited.





SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Registration

HARBOURFRONT FOYER

9:00 AM – 9:15 AM

Morning Refreshments

HARBOURFRONT FOYER

9:00 AM – 9:45 AM

Healing Day Welcome

MC: Jocelyne Ludgate

HARBOURFRONT BALLROOM 1

9:45 AM – 10:30 AM

Opening Plenary

**A Conversation About Navigating
the Path of Healing**

Carol Todd

HARBOURFRONT BALLROOM 1

10:30 AM – 10:45 AM

Break

HARBOURFRONT FOYER

10:45 AM – 12:00 PM

Breakout Session Block A

Walking with our Stories

Connor Lafortune

**We are NOT immune to grief:
exploring the landscape for
clinicians who have lost a
client or colleague to suicide**

Dr. Yvonne Bergmans, Dammy
Damstrom Albach and Nancy
Moreau Battaglia

**Living Happily Ever Average:
Secrets from a Suicidal Showgirl**

Kristin Light

**Your Wise and Tender Pen:
A Journaling Workshop for
Suicide Loss Survivors**

Donaleen Saul

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Lunch Buffet

HARBOURFRONT FOYER

1:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Breakout Session Block B

**Write to Heal: Therapeutic
Writing and Songwriting,
Tools Everyone can Use**

Maureen Pollard

BLOCK B CONTINUES ABOVE

1:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Breakout Session Block B

**Breaking Through Burnout:
How to Unlock the Burnout Cycle**
Hannah Austin

**Finding Strength in Every Step:
Crafting Your Personal Toolkit
for Hard Times**

Makaylah Rogers and Dr.
Yvonne Bergmans

**The Journey of Suicide Loss:
looking forward, looking back**

Nancy Moreau Battaglia
Veronica Marshall-Bernard

2:15 PM – 2:30 PM

Break

HARBOURFRONT FOYER

2:30 PM – 4:00 PM

Closing Plenary

Connor Lafortune

HARBOURFRONT BALLROOM 1

7:00 PM – CLOSE

Healing Day Sharing Circle

Optional and for Healing
Day Attendees Only

SALON B



AGENDA - TUESDAY MAY 28

Registration & Information Desk

HARBOURFRONT
FOYER

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Morning Refreshments

Light refreshments: fruit, muffins, coffee, tea

HARBOURFRONT
FOYER

9:00 AM - 9:15 AM

Healing Day Welcome

Welcome, Indigenous Opening and Icebreakers

MC: Jocelyne Ludgate

HARBOURFRONT
BALLROOM 1

9:15 AM - 9:45 AM

Opening Plenary

A Conversation About Navigating the Path of Healing

An informal discussion with Carol Todd where she will share her experiences and perspectives on self-care, self-compassion and positive intention.

HARBOURFRONT
BALLROOM 1

9:45 AM - 10:30 AM

Break

HARBOURFRONT
FOYER

10:30 AM - 10:45 AM

Breakout Session Block A

Four sessions to choose from

LOCATIONS
LISTED BELOW

10:45 AM - 12:00 PM

Walking with our Stories

Connor Lafortune

SALON C

Political poetry consists of poems that reflect, reject, and reform political climates while shedding light on activism, protest, and abolition. Participants will be guided through writing exercises aiming to fuel their creative fires within a political lens. Their poems will reflect their understanding of the world while pushing them to seek their ideal alternatives. Writing political poetry seeks to change, heal, challenge, and transform the world as we know it. The participants will be encouraged to rewrite their radical history. Together, we will storytell, engage in conversation, and write our journeys as we walk alongside them.



AGENDA CONT'D

Breakout Session Block A

Four sessions to choose from

LOCATIONS
LISTED BELOW

10:45 AM -12:00 PM

We are NOT immune to grief: exploring the landscape for clinicians who have lost a client or colleague to suicide

SALON D

Dr. Yvonne Bergmans, Dammy Damstrom Albach and Nancy Moreau Battaglia

Coping with suicide loss for health care providers has unique complexities in the context of loss of clients and coworkers. In a discussion format we will explore:

1. Our common emotional and behavioural reactions to suicide loss;
2. Address what might be helpful in supporting ourselves and our colleagues;
3. Through reflection and support, discuss the complexities of grief and trauma in suicide loss in personal and professional settings.

Living Happily Ever Average: Secrets from a Suicidal Showgirl

SALON E

Kristin Light

For those of us living with relentless suicidal ideations, we know that 'happily ever after' is a fictional tale as old as time. In the real-life version, the adversity we face is not one magically overcome by a new dress or a fresh perspective. Our persistent ruminations are not silenced by sunshine or solved by distraction. And well-meaning doctors are no more the heroes than we are the villain. Life is more a multi-volume chronicle than a single story; a choose-your-own-adventure with countless twists and turns, climaxes, and conclusions. If such a tale called for only one satisfactory ending, then would it still be worth reading?

With this dynamic and inspirational new presentation, award-winning speaker (and psych ward regular) Kristin Light tackles the trope of the suicide attempt survivor overcoming adversity to live happily ever after – instead exploring the very real possibility of multiple relapses, despite well-intentioned efforts to the contrary. She demystifies major depression and the neurodivergent overlap with a few made up mashups, reframing our measure of achievement from the lofty end goal to instead the very act of pressing on.

A theatrical dance specialist and delightful dork, Kristin draws on classic literary tropes and jazz-age flair to share her personal story of persistent survival, unpacking old myths and sharing new secrets so that we may all enjoy a fighting chance at finding balance after breaking down – no matter how many chapters we may face along the way.



AGENDA CONT'D

Breakout Session Block A

Four sessions to choose from

LOCATIONS
LISTED BELOW

10:45 AM - 12:00 PM

**Your Wise and Tender Pen: A Journaling
Workshop for Suicide Loss Survivors**

SALON F

Donaleen Saul

Your wise and tender pen not only offers companionship to broken-hearted people overwhelmed by loneliness, confusion, and grief after losing of a loved one to suicide, it also helps survivors envision and shape a new life for themselves. Participants will discover journal-writing techniques that can open the door to a more joyful and expansive life, even in the face of devastating loss. They will also learn what writing exercises best serve the process of healing and reconciliation, and which ones to avoid.

Lunch Buffet

HARBOURFRONT
FOYER

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Breakout Session Block B

Four sessions to choose from

LOCATIONS
LISTED BELOW

1:00 PM - 2:15 PM

**Write to Heal; Therapeutic Writing and
Songwriting, Tools Everyone can Use**

SALON C

Maureen Pollard

Participants will learn the theory behind therapeutic writing and songwriting, including the benefits of an intentional, supported writing practice and the risks, as well as practices to mitigate the risks. This is an experiential workshop and participants will be guided through a variety of sample therapeutic writing and songwriting activities with a focus on grief and trauma recovery. The practical segment of the workshop will be followed by a group discussion of how it felt to try these tools, and how they might incorporate such strategies in their personal or professional lives.

No experience is necessary and participants will not be asked to share their writing.



AGENDA - CONT'D

Breakout Session Block B

Four sessions to choose from

LOCATIONS

LISTED BELOW

1:00 PM - 2:15 PM

**Breaking Through Burnout; How to
Unlock the Burnout Cycle**

SALON D

Hannah Austin

A chronic state of urgency and heightened stress have made it more challenging for professionals worldwide to reach our potential. Many of us feel depleted and less effective in our jobs. This powerful session will provide actionable key takeaways to help you break the burnout cycle and move forward with more focus, enthusiasm, and energy.

Participants will learn:

- The myths and facts about burnout
- How to identify when we're burning out
- How to reach out to help others in need
- Easy-to-implement energy conservation strategies for improved well-being
- Participants will create a personalized burnout prevention plan

**Finding Strength in Every Step: Crafting
Your Personal Toolkit for Hard Times**

SALON E

Makaylah Rogers and Dr. Yvonne Bergmans

A heartfelt conversation with Makaylah & Yvonne about navigating suicidal ideation and what practical tools can help in the dark moments. Sharing personal experiences and practical guidance, attendees will discover strategies for prevention and self-care. By sharing the transformative process of writing a letter to oneself and other empowering techniques, this conversational presentation empowers participants to build their own toolkit for navigating dark moments in their journey towards healing.



AGENDA - CONT'D

Breakout Session Block B

Four sessions to choose from

LOCATIONS
LISTED BELOW

1:00 PM - 2:15 PM

The Journey of Suicide Loss: looking forward, looking back

Nancy Moreau Battaglia and Veronica Marshall-Bernard

SALON F

The path of surviving suicide loss can often be a frightening and unpredictable one for individuals and families; with a rapidly shifting landscape and no map to guide you or elements to follow. Yet - there is hope. In a conversation format, this workshop will provide a forum for us to share our experiences, and how they may have shifted over time, as we have travelled on our journeys. Nancy and Veronica, both mental health clinicians, will facilitate the discussion drawing on their combined personal and professional experiences as Suicide Loss Survivors.

Break

HARBOURFRONT
FOYER

2:15 PM - 2:30 PM

Closing Plenary

Connor Lafortune

HARBOURFRONT
BALLROOM 1

2:30 PM - 4:00 PM

Healing Day Sharing Circle

Optional and for Healing Day Attendees Only

SALON B

7:00 PM - FINISH

Available Throughout the Day:

Quiet Room

Dedicated quiet room with qualified emotional support available

PORT OF
SINGAPORE

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Smudging Space

Available in the Quiet Room during Healing Day, should someone wish to smudge and have the sacred items to do so

PORT OF
SINGAPORE

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

**Carol Todd, Educator and Founder
of the Amanda Todd Legacy Society**

Carol has impacted the world as an educator, an advocate, a parent and a leader for social change in speaking openly about the bullying, cyberbullying, exploitation and the mental health challenges that Amanda went through. She has become a voice of global change and is driven by her passion and leadership to change the mindset behind negative behaviours and the challenging barriers of stigma by sharing Amanda's story. Empowering youth and adults with strategies and resources to address exploitation and sextortion has become a primary focus. Carol was recently awarded UBC Alumni Educator of the Year for 2023.



In 2012, Carol's daughter Amanda took her own life at the age of 15, following the posting of a YouTube video that detailed the sextortion and exploitation she endured via an international predator which then resulted in severe harassment that came from her peers (online and offline). From this place of tragedy, Carol found that by sharing Amanda's story, she could help others.

Hannah Austin

Hannah is a bestselling author, international podcast host, and the CEO of SheShatters. She specializes in the management and prevention of burnout for professionals and has been featured on ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox News. Before founding SheShatters, Hannah spent 20 years as an executive in the healthcare industry, a role in which she faced immense pressure and witnessed her colleagues suffering the effect of burnout en masse. She became determined to make a change that would impact not only her path in life but also the paths of the many inspiring professionals she knew and worked with. Hannah founded SheShatters in 2021 to help employees and managers with their mental health and find a balance between their personal and professional lives, and on a macro level, leading a movement away from corporate hustle culture.



Dammy (Diana) Damstrom Albach

Dammy has worked in various aspects of suicide prevention, intervention, postvention and wellness creation for over 30 years. Retired in 2021, her career has included educational, supervisory, managerial and advocacy roles, but also most significantly 18 plus years as a full-time therapist and suicide intervention counsellor with SAFER, a programme of Vancouver Coastal Health offering individual counselling, support and group work to people experiencing suicidal thoughts or having made one or more suicide attempts. She has also delivered one to one and group work with those whose lives have been impacted by a suicide death, including other therapists and helpers. She estimates she has worked with more than 1500 people over the years and, at least to her knowledge and sadness, lost four of them to suicide.

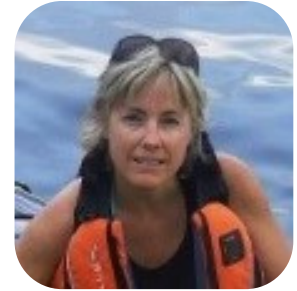




SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Nancy Moreau Battaglia

The core of Nancy's work, as she 'holds onto hope', is providing therapeutic support for integrating loss in a healthy way and building self-esteem and resilience. A registered psychotherapist, Nancy works with a variety of clients experiencing struggles with mental health and wellness particularly related to trauma. Nancy is a two-time survivor of suicide loss and a specialist in companionship those grieving a sudden traumatic death. She is active in speaking to educate clinicians, survivors and those supporting them. She is also a Professional Art Therapist, and an ADEC certified Fellow in Thanatology: The Study of Death, Dying and Bereavement. Nancy is a committee member for the Simcoe County Suicide Awareness Conference, and Chair of the Credentialing Council for the Association of Death Education and Counselling. She is a previous member of the CASP Board of Directors and continues to serve the organization on its People Impacted by Suicide Working Group.



Dr. Yvonne Bergmans

Obtaining a MSW at the University of Toronto and PhD at Dublin City University, Yvonne has been a suicide interventionist for the past 25 years. Working individually and in groups with people at risk of dying by suicide, with her clients, she co-created Skills for Safer Living: A Psychosocial/Psychoeducational Intervention for People experiencing suicide-related thoughts and behaviours (SfSL/PISA) at the Arthur Sommer Rotenberg Chair in Suicide Studies at St. Michael's Hospital. Her roles have included crisis intervention, risk assessment, case management, clinical consultation, education, supervision and research focused on understanding and responding to suicide-related thoughts and behaviours. Yvonne is currently an adjunct lecturer at the Temerty Faculty of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto. She is loving her work that includes consultation, supervision, training and research with colleagues interested in working with those at risk of suicide. Prior to becoming a suicide interventionist, Yvonne worked as a Child and Youth Worker, as a special education teacher for children and youth identified with emotional and behavioural challenges and as a guidance counsellor.



Veronica Marshall-Bernard

Veronica Marshall-Bernard is of Mi'kmaw ancestry and a member of Potlotek First Nation in Nova Scotia. She holds a master's degree in social work with a specialty in Mi'kmaw Maliseet social work and is a Registered Social Worker. As a Clinical Therapist with the Nova Scotia Health Authority, as well as an educator, motivational speaker and workshop facilitator specializing in Indigenized Clinical Social Work, Veronica integrates Western approaches with Indigenous approaches, such as ceremony and cultural practices. She is the Vice President of CASP's Board of Directors and a member of several other working groups and has supported the establishment of several crisis units in local first nations communities. Veronica has lived-experienced of suicide loss and has made it her lifelong mission to help others impacted by suicide.





SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Connor Lafortune

G'chi Waabshka Mukwa ndizhinikaaz miinwaa Nimkiins ndizhinikaaz bineshiinh ndondem Okikendawt ndonjiibaa Anishinaabe nini ndow

Connor Lafortune is from Dokis First Nation on Robinson Huron Treaty territory of 1850 in Northeastern Ontario. He completed his Bachelor's Degree at Nipissing University with a Double Honors Major in Indigenous Studies and Gender Equality and Social Justice. He is in his first year of his Masters in Indigenous Relations at Laurentian University. Connor is Anishinaabek, Queer, and Francophone. He works primarily in Life Promotion, harm-reduction, mental health, and Indigenous education through organizations such as the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, School Mental Health Ontario, Cannabis and Psychosis Canada, and the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Above all else, Connor is a poet, an activist, a shkaabewis (helper), and a compassionate human being.



Kristin Light

Engagement strategist, vintage dancer, published author and award-winning speaker Kristin Light has split her eclectic career between the boardroom and the ballroom. As a vivacious showgirl and co-founder of multiple successful companies, she was perhaps the last person you'd expect to be dealing with diagnosed mental and cognitive disorders. But following a brush with suicide that left her confined to a psychiatric ward (twice!), she now speaks out to provide real insight and practical strategies that demystify the facts surrounding mental illness and neurodivergence including inspirational (and often hilarious) stories from her own personal and professional life.



Jocelyne Ludgate

Jocelyne is a person with lived experience of suicide loss and an advocate for those impacted by suicide loss. She is a past member of CMHA - PEI Division's Suicide Prevention & Life Promotion Committee, where she supported the development of the Supporting Children & Youth to Grieve After Suicide Loss Kit and A Resource Kit for Adults Impacted by Suicide Loss. She has been a keynote speaker at CMHA's Women and Wellness Event and most recently become a member of CASP's People Impacted by Suicide Working Group. Jocelyne's passion for life promotion and advocating for people impacted by suicide loss propels her continued work to end stigma and improve education and awareness surrounding suicide. She has a special interest in the support of children, youth and young adults as they navigate through their journey of loss, grief and healing. Jocelyne enjoys a busy life with her husband and two children. She is an active community volunteer and was recently acclaimed as the Public School Board Trustee for her community's school zone.





SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Maureen Pollard

Maureen Pollard is a Registered Social Worker with 32 years experience in the field. She is the founder and lead social worker in a group private practice in central Ontario with a specialization in providing grief and trauma recovery support for individuals, families and groups, and for providing support for first responders and frontline professionals across the community. Maureen provides workshops on suicide prevention, intervention and postvention for professionals and community members, and offers groups for those bereaved by suicide in addition to individual and family therapy. Maureen also provides therapeutic writing and songwriting workshops and coaching for groups of people impacted by suicide, for community members and for professionals.



Donaleen Saul

Donaleen Saul is a certified creativity coach and writing teacher based in Duncan, BC. A writer who has written extensively in the social services field, she is the author of *Did You Know I Would Miss You*, which recounts her personal experience of losing her younger brother to suicide in 2004 and, through a series of journaling exercises, guides the bereaved through the complexities of the particular grief experienced by suicide loss survivors. Donaleen is a graduate of the Center for Journal Therapy in Denver, Colorado, and taught creative writing courses at Vancouver's Langara Community College Continuing Studies Department for ten years, as well as a popular course in creativity at the Vancouver Film School.



Makaylah Rogers

Makaylah is a passionate mental health advocate and speaker who creates spaces that bring down walls, deepen connection and foster empathy. Makaylah is a neurodivergent, queer, non-binary, trauma survivor with a raw, yet relatable approach. They share stories that humanize mental health struggles, make us laugh and bring us together. Makaylah is passionate about sharing their personal stories to educate and raise awareness around depression, anxiety, and suicide prevention. Makaylah also speaks on mental health in the workplace, creating spaces of belonging for 2SLGBTQIA+ and neurodivergent folks while inspiring empathy-driven action.

