



CCTSC/ TNO Conference: Mindfulness, Healing, and Social Transformation

This event is a partnership between The Canada Center for Transformative Social Change ([CCTSC](#)) and TNO, the Neighborhood Organization ([TNO](#)).

Background:

The Covid pandemic, high poverty rate, inequality, and the economic recession we pass through as global citizens created challenges for individuals, groups, and communities across the globe, including our Canadian society. As individuals, organizations, and a society, we face increasing challenges, including a lack of social cohesion, maintaining social solidarity, and practicing healthy healing practices to address our daily psychological and social stressors. Furthermore, we are still behind in addressing the issues of indigenous people and minority groups in our society and the problem of economic inequality. This conference will discuss the individual, community, organizational, national, and global healing strategies that might effectively address these and other issues?

Applications and Benefits:

This conference will address how Mindfulness and other healing practices can assist in overcoming societal and psychological strains. Some of the issues discussed have been ongoing, while others are new or have been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic. This conference aims to raise awareness of the importance of Mindfulness and other healing practices in dealing with mental health and societal challenges we face daily. Although this conference will include a wide diversity of experts in many fields, it will empower the participants to undertake their critical thinking and apply concepts and practices to their unique work situations and daily routine.

Here are some of the potential benefits of this conference: participants can gain some knowledge about mindfulness practices and techniques to deal with stress, anxiety, trauma, and more. In addition, professional participants will learn about recent research in mindfulness studies and strategies for combining emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual healing. Furthermore, all

participants will explore the benefits of traditional practices from different cultural lenses and learn about specific innovative holistic programs.

This conference is an opportunity to share experiences and insights about Mindfulness and other holistic practices, promote critical thinking, and develop strategies for individuals, communities, and community-based organizations to deal with mental health and societal challenges.

When: Friday November 18 and Saturday November 19.

Where: Thorncliffe Park Community Hub - 45 Overlea Boulevard, Toronto, ON, M4H 1C3

For Registration, please follow the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/mindfulness-healing-and-social-transformation-tickets-394714179737>

Conference Program:
Mindfulness, Healing, and Social Transformation

Day One: (Friday- November 18)

Friday Morning: Concepts and Practices for Promoting Social Transformation

8:00 am -8:30 am registration

8:30-9:00 a.m.

A Brief Welcome to the Conference

Opening: Recognition of Land

9:00-9:45 a.m.

Brief Meditation – 10 Minutes Brad Hutchinson - Chair of the Canada Center for Transformative Social Change.

Keynote Speakers: Mindfulness, Healing, and Social Transformation.

5 minutes break

9:50 – 10:20 a.m. Indigenous Wholistic Healing and Growing Challenges (Leonard Benoit (He/Him) Indigenous Patient Navigator, Indigenous Program Development, The Wilson Centre Toronto General Site).

10 Minutes break

10:30 -11:00 a. m. Wholistic Theories, Values and Other Practices in a Post Pandemic World (Peter Dunn, PhD. Online)

11:00-11:30 a.m. Mindfulness and Mental Health - (Simplified experimental research- Aqeel Saeid Ph.D)– (In person and online)

Q &A for the speakers (30 min)

12-1:00 p.m. Lunch break

Friday Afternoon:

Impact of settlement and displacement on mental health & social transformation (Panel of settlement workers and social workers)

1:00–1:30 pm. Settlement and mental health (Mathura Thiagarajah - TNO & Aqeel Saeid)

1:30- 2:00 pm. How mindfulness and cultural healing practices can help newcomers? (Tania Jivraj and Hafsa Alavi - TNO)

1:30–2:15 pm Individual stories of mindfulness practices (open discussion) (recruiting participants can be done from both agencies – Brad Hutchinson – In person & online)

3:00-3:15 Break

3:15- 4:00 pm Panel: Moving from Individual to Collective Healing approach (Aqeel Saeid, Arthur Lockhart , and Brad Hutchinson)

4:00–5:00 pm Group Reflections and Discussions of Action Steps (open Space) (In-person and Chat Rooms)

Second Day (Saturday Nov 19)

Saturday Morning:

9:00 - 9:30 am: Reporting Back from Yesterday’s Experiential Workshops (Chat Rooms and in-person discussions).

Addiction, Justice, and Mindfulness Practices:

9:30 - 10:00 am: Problem Gambling and Mindfulness – Peter Chen and Nigel Turner Ph.D. (CAMH-)

10:15- 10:50 am: Networking for professionals – Open for making professional connections

10:50-11:20 am: Mindfulness in Dealing with the Criminal Justice System and Oppressions (Arthur Lockhart and Terry Swinton. Author, Social Activist, Mindfulness Practitioner)

10-minute break

11:30 am - 12:00 pm: Addressing the Issues of violence in our community – (Farhan Ali – Neighborhood Community Office - Toronto Police Service).

12:05- 12:35 pm Mindfulness and suicidal prevention (Arthur Lockhart – Brad Hutchinson)

12:15 - 12:45 pm: Restorative and Transformative Justice (Peter Dawson Ph.D)

15 Minutes break

1:00- 1:30 pm: Migration and unanticipated grief (Soheila Pashang Ph.D).

1:35–2:05 pm The Next Steps in Social Solidarity and Transformation in a Post Pandemic Era (Open Space Process – Arthur Lockhart , Aqeel Saeid, and Brad Hutchinson)

Group Discussions

2:10 - 2:20 Closing remarks.

Speakers:

Peter Dunn, PhD

Dr. Peter A. Dunn: I have been a professor at the Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, for over 30 years, where I taught courses at the MSW and PhD levels related to social policy, research, poverty, gender issues, social change, and holistic practices. I completed numerous local and national research projects funded by SSHRC as well as I wrote extensively about these topics. Along with 30 diverse contributors I authored a book called: *Holistic Healing: Theories, Practices and Social Change*. Prior to being a professor I was an activist, community organizer and social planner in Canada, the United States and Great Britain. I became interested in holistic healing as a result of my own healing journey. I discovered a whole new world of healing when I started meditation practices. Since then I participated in and studied healing at many major holistic centres throughout the world. As a result of these experiences, I designed an MSW course in social work that taught a range of holistic healing practices and I have continued to write out these practices. My goal now, since retiring from teaching, is to continue to promote holistic healing in post-secondary education.

Brad Hutchinson

Chair of the Canada Center for Transformative Social Change

Brad Hutchinson is an award-winning community leader who has been recognized for his positive impact in the not-for-profit, public, and private sectors. Brad is a Restorative Justice trainer/facilitator, former Executive Director of The Gatehouse, Master Trainer of ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Trainer), black sash martial artist, former Chair of the Mississauga Library Board, and author. For over two decades, Brad has led mindfulness workshops and provided mentorship for thousands of individuals to help transform unconscious self-limiting patterns into greater personal freedom. Brad is widely respected for walking his talk. Surviving cancer twice—once in childhood and then in 2016—Brad has an intimate understanding of how traumatic experiences can have a negative influence on emotional and mental wellbeing. Brad's teachings seamlessly combine Eastern wisdom and Western expediency to help transform adversity into achievement. His compassionate teaching style incorporates compelling storytelling, spontaneous humor, and simple proven practices to build resilience in the face of hardship.

Leonard Benoit

Leonard Benoit is Qualipu Mi'Kmag from Burgeo First Nations on the unceded territory of Newfoundland and Labrador. He calls Toronto home for the last 16 years. Leonard's spirit name is Circling Wolf, and he is Wolf Clan. He has a valid Ontario Nursing license and has been practicing for the last 21 years. He also holds certification in the Community Worker Program, and he has completed Palliative Care Certification through Seneca College. He is a certified Death Doula. Currently he is finishing a Thanalogy program at Centennial College. Leonard has been

employed as the Indigenous Patient Navigator with the Toronto Regional Cancer Program since December 2017.

Arthur Lockhart, M.Ed.

Arthur Lockhart, M.Ed. Over the past 46 plus years Arthur has held the positions of: Professor-School of Social and Community Services, Chair of The School of Social and Community Services, Chair of The Board of Directors of The Gatehouse, Executive Director of The Gatehouse, Coordinator-Advanced Justice Studies Certificate, Senior Development Manager-Ministry of Correctional Services

Arthur is a founding member of the following organizations:

(2022) Survivors Council Canada (<http://www.thegatehouse.org>)www.thegatehouse.org)

(2021) The Gatehouse Global Poetry Movement (<https://globalpoetrymovement.com/>)

(2014) Canada Centre for Transformative Social Change (www.cctsc.ca)

(2010) Annual International Transforming Trauma Into Triumph Conference(<http://www.thegatehouse.org>)www.thegatehouse.org)

(2005) Laser Eagles Art Guild (<https://lasereagles.wordpress.com/history/>)

(1998) The Gatehouse (<http://www.thegatehouse.org>)www.thegatehouse.org)

Film Co-productions/Documentaries:

2013 **illuminating Silence:** -Stories of people Transforming Trauma Into Triumph

2007 **Into The Light:** -Male Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

2005 **Laser Eagles:**-Celebrating capacities of people labeled disabled

Published Works:

2022 **Transformative Justice:** Canadian Criminal Justice Association (CCJA)

2018 **Why We Bully-A Transformative Response:** (CCJA)

2018 **The Gatehouse:** (CCJA)

2007 **Restorative Justice:** Provincial School Resource Officer Training Manual.
Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services

2007 **The Human Touch:** The Heartbeat of Extraordinary Education.

Transformative Publishing

2005 **Restorative Justice --Transforming Society:**

Inclusion Press

2004 **Community Lost and Found: A conversation between two dreamers.**

2001 **Restorative Justice:** National Crime Prevention Centre of Canada

Arthur is the recipient of a number of awards for his work in the fields of education and social justice, including: Canada's Top 50 Champions of Change, Innovator of the Year Award, Student Teacher Appreciation Awards, Community Builder Lifetime Achievement Award, City of Toronto Mayor's Community Safety Award, Lakeshore Community Building Award of Merit, Youth Impact Award, Inaugural Purple Door Award, Paul Harris Fellow, Humber College Inaugural Distinguished Community Service Award

Arthur provides training and organizational transformation consultation on the local, national and international levels. At the core of his workshops are: the power of the human spirit, trauma transformation and transformative social change. **All of Arthur's endeavours are positioned within a Mindfulness Meditation Framework.**

Nigel E. Turner Ph.D.

Nigel is an Independent Scientist with the Institute for Mental Health Policy Research at CAMH. He is also Assistant Professor in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto. Dr. Turner has a PhD in psychology from the University of Western Ontario.

Dr. Nigel E. Turner is a well-published researcher in the field of gambling studies. He has extensive experience in a variety of quantitative and qualitative research methods including experiments, surveys, interviews, focus groups, and content analysis.

In addition to numerous research publications and conference presentations, he has helped develop and evaluate prevention material for problem gambling (Turner, Macdonald, & Somerset, 2008). This problem gambling prevention program is available for free (see Turner, Macdonald, Ballon, Dubois, 2010).

He is one of the leading researchers in the psychology of electronic gambling machine technology and has published papers on the interface between the psychology of the player and the mathematics of the gambling technology (Turner, 2011). In this study it is shown how the electronic gambling games are designed to provide a high level of positive reinforcement in the short term which encourages continued play, but very few long-term winners.

For the past five years he has been conducting research on problem gambling amongst adult offenders (Turner, Preston, Saunders, McAvoy, & Jain, 2009). This research indicates that 10% of the correctional population in Ontario has a severe gambling problem, and another 11% has a subclinical level of gambling problems.

Peter Chen, HSC, BEd,

Peter is a founding member of the Gambling, Gaming and Technology Use program, formerly known as the Problem Gambling Institute of Ontario, (PGIO) at CAMH, where he has worked

since 1995 when funding was initiated for problem gambling treatment, research and education by the Ministry of Health, following the opening of the first Ontario casino in Windsor in 1994. For over 20 years, he counselled people with gambling problems and their family members.

He works as a Community Health and Education Specialist on the Gambling, Gaming and Technology Use team, Knowledge Exchange, Provincial System Support Program (PSSP) that supports addictions and mental health service providers through training and education, developing digital tools and resources, and facilitating knowledge sharing related to problem gambling, video gaming, and Internet addiction. He is the chair of the Canadian Problem Gambling Certification Board and was part of the initial working group that developed the criteria that the board still adopts for their certification process. His area of specialty is the integration of mindfulness meditation and problem gambling counselling. He introduced mindfulness to the Problem Gambling and Technology Use Treatment Service at CAMH in

2010 and led Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention groups for ten years. He has also facilitated mindfulness workshops for addiction and mental health service providers. Peter is also a published author in the area of Mindfulness and Problem Gambling treatment.

Peter Dawson, PhD

Peter Dawson was raised in South Africa and introduced to human rights advocacy at an early age. After coming to Canada he attended York University from which holds a Ph.D. with a specific focus on international human rights. He is an articulate, innovative human rights education; investigator; advocate, and certified community mediator with anti-racist, intercultural knowledge and experience. Has expert knowledge of United Nations (UN) human rights instruments; (UN) Charter; UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; UNDHR and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; the UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Peter has 20 + years' Post-Secondary teaching using a collaborative community engagement pedagogical model founded on an international human rights perspective. He is familiar with the Afrocentric concept of Ubuntu and the significant contribution it makes to international human rights law and practice. He is a multi-award recipient and was honored with the York University Senate Award for Service to Students (2009); the Friends of Africa Humanity Award presented by Ndaba Mandela for anti-racist advocacy (2016) and the NGO; 'Common Frontiers' for human rights advocacy and anti-racist investigations (2016). He has been involved in restorative justice initiatives in Southern Africa with African National Congress (ANC) community activists Reverend Alf Dlamini and Rommel Roberts and in the United States with Russell Means cofounder of the American Indian Movement (AIM). He has undertaken human rights investigations and collaborations in Canada, Latin America, the United States, and Southern Africa.

Aqeel Saeid, Ph.D.

Executive Director of the Canada Center for Transformative Social Change & Professor at Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning

Dr. Aqeel has worked in multiple academic institutions and still practicing academia in his capacity as a professor at Humber College. Aqeel also worked as a researcher in several educational institutions, including the University of Toronto and Wilfred Laurier University. He has also published multiple peer-reviewed journal articles on social problems, social theory, mindfulness, mental health, and more.

Aqeel is well involved in community-based work as he served as president of the United Nations Association –Toronto Region Branch from 2008-2010, a board member of the Children’s Aid Society of Toronto from 2008-2014 (CAST), and a member of the New Horizons: Healing and Hope Coalition (NHHHC) to help kids and families traumatized by war and displacement. In addition, he facilitates healing sessions for children, youth, and families traumatized by war and immigration for several communities in the GTA as one of his roles in the NHHHC.

Aqeel holds a Ph.D. in Sociology, and Master’s degree in Sociology, and another MA in Criminology.

Dr. Soheila Pashang

Soheila Pashang is a criminology professor and SafeTALK suicide prevention trainer at Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning. Prior to joining Humber, she was an academic coordinator and faculty at Seneca College (Social Service Worker program) where she implemented the SSW-Immigrants and Refugees program. Over the years, Dr. pashang has led numerous research projects and has published various journal publications on topics of migration, COVID-19, grief, mental health, gender violence, sex trafficking, cyber sexual violence, and diversity education. Her latest edited book focuses on youth mental health. As a social worker, she has extensive front-line experience within the settlement, health, and criminal justice system. In addition to this, Dr. Pashang operates a private practice offering counselling and consulting services.

Terry Swinton

Terry Swinton is one of “the Canadians ” who were instrumental in securing the release of Rubin Hurricane Carter from his wrongful conviction of murder in New Jersey, and co wrote the book, “Lazarus and the Hurricane, the Freeing of Rubin Hurricane Carter ” which the Denzel Washington movie “The Hurricane ” was based upon He continues to live and work communally as he’s done for decades, and highly recommends it as an alternative to the often stifling normal way of living and working He loves jazz, roots reggae and folk music. But don’t ask him to sing. He’s also a keen gardener - he loves flowers.

Mathura Thiagarajah MSW, RSW- Youth Mental Health Counsellor, Newcomer Support Services - The Neighbourhood Organization (TNO)

Mathura Thiagarajah has over ten years of experience working with newcomer children, youth and families in schools and in community health settings. She is committed to supporting newcomers who experience mental health concerns while adapting to a new country. Mathura has extensive experience supporting individuals experiencing anxiety, depression, grief, life transitions and histories of trauma.

For the past five years, Mathura has had the opportunity to introduce mindfulness practices to newcomer populations. She has been able to use a wide array of mindfulness theories and techniques and has facilitated numerous groups and workshops.

Hafsa Alavi, MSW RSW – Health Access Thorncliffe Park

Hafsa is a Registered Social Worker with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers and has completed a Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Toronto. Hafsa has over 8 years of experience working in a variety of community and clinical settings with diverse population in both long-term and brief interventions. Hafsa recognizes the complex ways mental health manifests for everyone. She works collaboratively with each individual by using an integrative approach tailored to the client's unique needs. Hafsa incorporates the role of culture, ethnicity, and spirituality in her Social Work practice. She has a specialized interest in working with racialized immigrant women and children who experience complex social, systemic, and institutional barriers. Hafsa currently works at Health Access Thorncliffe Park, providing psychotherapy and case management to support children, young adults, individuals, and families.