



Autism
Alliance of Canada

Alliance canadienne de
l'autisme

Presenters

10th Annual Canadian Autism
Leadership Summit

Présentateur·trice·s

10e Sommet canadien du
leadership en autisme

April 17-19, 2024
17-19 avril, 2024



Welcome to the 10th Annual Canadian Autism Leadership Summit

Please note that this document will be updated continuously up to CALS2024.

CALS2024 will take place at the Fairmont Château Laurier in Ottawa (ON) and will be streamed via Zoom. Most sessions will be in English with simultaneous translation in French.

To register, visit: event.fourwaves.com/cals2024/registration.

To view the full program, visit: autismalliance.ca/cals/cals/cals2024/program

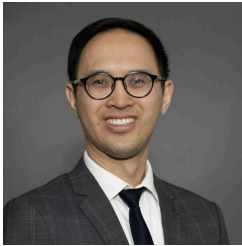
For more information, visit: autismalliance.ca/cals2024.

- [View the presenters for Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1](#)
- [View the presenters for Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2](#)
- [View the presenters for Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3](#)



Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1 **Inform.**

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1
9:00 - 9:30 AM
Opening Remarks



Dr. Jonathan Lai
Executive Director
Autism Alliance of Canada

Presenter

Jonathan Lai, PhD, is the Executive Director at Autism Alliance of Canada. He also holds an Adjunct Faculty position in Health Services Research at the Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto.

At Autism Alliance of Canada, Jonathan's work involves responding to emerging national policy gaps in the autism and disability sector. Through his career, he has experience working at the interface of research, community and policy to affect systems change in the health and social services sector across Canada and internationally. From designing surveys and analyzing data on service use for people with developmental disabilities to facilitating policy dialogues on autism and disability, he champions the use of data and community perspectives to inform decision making. Jonathan has been appointed to serve as the Vice Co-chair of the Minister of National Revenue's Disability Advisory Committee to improve how the Disability Tax Credit and other federal disability tax measures are delivered. He is also a former Maytree Policy School fellow.

His graduate research training was in Neuroscience at the University of Guelph and McMaster University focused on gene-environment influences on the developing brain, funded by Ontario Mental Health Foundation and subsequently, as a CIHR Vanier Scholar. This was followed by a postdoctoral fellowship at York University in knowledge mobilization and a CIHR Health System Impact Fellowship at McGill University.



Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

9:00 - 9:30 AM

Opening Remarks



The Hon. Mark Holland
Minister of Health of Canada

Presenter

The Honourable Mark Holland is a lifelong resident of the Ajax-Pickering area, and was first elected as the Member of Parliament for Ajax in 2004.

As a Member of Parliament, Minister Holland has served in many roles including as the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, and as Chief Government Whip. He has been a staunch advocate of marriage equality rights and played a key role in helping to reform Canada's animal cruelty laws.

In both public and private roles, Minister Holland has backed health-related initiatives, serving as Executive Director of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada's Ontario Mission, as well as its National Director of Children and Youth.

As Minister of Health, Minister Holland has worked to sign bilateral health care funding agreements with provinces and territories to improve health care across the country, he launched the Canadian Dental Care Plan that will help up to 9 million Canadians get the essential dental care they need, and recently has introduced pharmacare legislation that will provide universal access to contraception and diabetes medications.

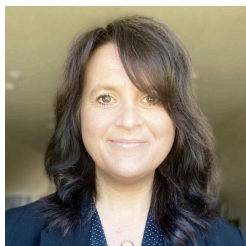
Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

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9:30 – 10:30 AM

Harmonizing Hope: Bridging the Gap between National and Local Autism Policy



Karen Bopp,

Ph.D., Executive Advisor for the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth of British Columbia, Adjunct Professor, Director of Provincial Outreach at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research and Collaboration in Autism (CIRCA), University of British Columbia (UBC), and Co-Chair of Autism Alliance of Canada

Moderator

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

9:30 – 10:30 AM

Harmonizing Hope: Bridging the Gap between National and Local Autism Policy



Sally Scott

Executive Director, Division of Children and Youth, Public Health Agency of Canada

Presenter

Sally Scott is the Executive Director, Division of Children and Youth, within the Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Branch at the Public Health Agency of Canada. Through the National Autism Strategy Secretariat, Sally's team is responsible for leading the development of a federal framework for Autism in Canada, as well as a national autism strategy. She is also responsible for leading the renewal, implementation, oversight, redesign and management of key contribution programs for the Public Health Agency of Canada, including the Community Action Program for Children, Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program and the Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities Program. Sally has over 25 years of experience in negotiating and maintaining effective partnerships, providing strategic advice on policies, programs and initiatives, and effectively mobilizing people, organizations and partners to deliver results.

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9:30 – 10:30 AM

Harmonizing Hope: Bridging the Gap between National and Local Autism Policy



Suzi DeBlois

Autism Coordination Project Lead, Department of Education and Early Years, Prince Edward Island

Presenter

An educator; program coordinator for a not-for-profit organization; advocate and now public servant. Suzi's current role in PEI's provincial government supports the work of the Autism Coordinating Committee and is tasked with implementing the Autism Coordination Act on Prince Edward Island.

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

9:30 – 10:30 AM

Harmonizing Hope: Bridging the Gap between National and Local Autism Policy



Margaret Spoelstra

Chief Executive Officer, Autism Ontario

Presenter

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

10:30 – 11:00 AM

Third Annual Jim and Ginette Munson Autism Leadership Award



Kim Ward

Ph.D., Member of Munson Award Committee and Board Member of Autism Alliance of Canada

Presenter

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

10:30 – 11:00 AM

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Third Annual Jim and Ginette Munson Autism Leadership Award



Whitney Hodgins

Recipient of the First Munson Award

Presenter

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

10:30 – 11:00 AM

Third Annual Jim and Ginette Munson Autism Leadership Award



Tom Jackman

Recipient of the Second Munson Award

Presenter

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

10:30 – 11:00 AM

Third Annual Jim and Ginette Munson Autism Leadership Award



The Hon. Jim Munson and Ginette Munson

Former Canadian Senator

Presenter

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11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

From Strategy to Action: Perspectives from Community Organizations



Shino Nakane

Provincial Director, Autism Society Alberta, and Co-Vice Chair of Autism Alliance of Canada

Moderator

Shino has a passion for helping non-profit groups that strive to meet the unique needs of families like hers. She is currently the Provincial Director for Autism Society Alberta. She has volunteered on a variety of boards and committees over the past decade like the Alberta Children’s Hospital Ethics Committee. Currently, she is a member of the External Advisory Committee on Regulatory Competitiveness for the Treasury Board of Canada. She is a Current Member, Past Vice Chair for the Premier’s Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, an advisory body for the Government of Alberta. Shino is the mother of a young adult who is on the autism spectrum who communicates uniquely without words to the people he loves and the world around him. She enjoys walking and listening to music with her son. Shino continually strives to spearhead efforts so that all people are able to live in accessible and inclusive communities.

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

From Strategy to Action: Perspectives from Community Organizations



Paul Walsh

Chief Executive Officer, Autism Society of Newfoundland & Labrador

Presenter

Since January 2021, J. Paul Walsh has been the Chief Executive Officer at the Autism Society of Newfoundland & Labrador. He is responsible for the overall direction of the organization and oversight of its daily operations including leadership, human resource management and administration. Paul is also Chair of the Board of Directors of Accessibility Standards Canada.

Previously, Paul worked in private industry in the banking and utility sector for 35 years.

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During that time he was also a Course Instructor Faculty of Business Administration, Memorial University.

Over the years, Paul has done various community and volunteer work on boards, committees and councils including the St. John's Transportation Commission, the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities, and the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.

He is a mentor, coach, and leader with a strong track record of developing emerging professionals. Paul was the recipient of EmpowerNL's 2020 Cecilia Carroll Award for Independent Living in recognition of his personal commitment exceeding 20 years to the full inclusion of people with disabilities. He was also a finalist for the NL Human Rights Award.

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

From Strategy to Action: Perspectives from Community Organizations



Liette Lanteigne

Le Centre d'excellence en autisme de la Péninsule acadienne (CEAPA)

Presenter

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

From Strategy to Action: Perspectives from Community Organizations



Eric Douglas

President and Peer Group Facilitator, Asperger Manitoba Inc. (AMI)

Presenter

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11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

From Strategy to Action: Perspectives from Community Organizations



Suzanne Perreault
Executive Director, Autism BC

Presenter

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

From Strategy to Action: Perspectives from Community Organizations



Rebecca Fenton
Executive Director, Autism Yukon

Presenter

Rebecca Fenton is the Executive Director of Autism Yukon and the Co-Executive Director of the Network for Healthy Early Development Yukon. Rebecca also owns Rainbow's End Consulting. In her over 30 years of work in the Yukon she has had many roles including a University Instructor, Early Childhood Specialist, Family Educator and Project Coordinator. Rebecca is also in the final stages of becoming one of two active Focal Point Trainers in Canada for the World Health Organization's Caregiver Skills Training Program. She has a passion for working with families and child care providers; and in ensuring that neurodiverse individuals and those with disabilities receive the support and service they need to live their best lives.

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1



1:00 – 1:45 PM

A Journey Towards Supporting Autistic Mental Health



Britt Anderson

Chief Executive Officer, Canucks Autism Network

Presenter

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

1:00 – 1:45 PM

A Journey Towards Supporting Autistic Mental Health



Stephanie Jull

Vice President, Programs, Training & Community Engagement,
Canucks Autism Network

Presenter

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

2:00 – 4:55 PM

Global Insights with the IACC: International Autism Policy Discussion



Mark Nafekh

Director General, Centre for Health Promotion, Health Promotion
and Chronic Disease Prevention Branch, Public Health Agency of
Canada (In-person)

Presenter

Mark Nafekh joined the Public Health Agency in 2020 as the Director General for the Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Equity and is currently the Director General of the Centre for Health Promotion. He has led his teams in implementing programs and policies that promote healthy living and prevent chronic disease through the lens of health equity. He also champions equity, diversity and inclusion and ensures intersectional analyses are used to assess how diverse groups of people in Canada experience different policies, programs and initiatives.

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Prior to joining the Agency, Mark worked in a number of areas at Correctional Services Canada, including research, evaluation, offender redress and investigations into non-natural deaths in custody. He holds a Masters degree in Economics and continuously seeks learning opportunities in both his professional and personal endeavours.

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1
2:00 – 4:55 PM

Global Insights with the IACC: International Autism Policy Discussion



Andy Shih

Ph.D., Chief Science Officer, Autism Speaks (United States)
(Online)

Presenter

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1
2:00 – 4:55 PM

Global Insights with the IACC: International Autism Policy Discussion



Pru McPherson

Director, Autism Policy, Foundational Support and Early Childhood Reform Branch, Department of Social Services of the Government of Australia (Online)

Presenter

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1
2:00 – 4:55 PM

Global Insights with the IACC: International Autism Policy Discussion



Menan Abd El-Maksoud

M.D., General Director of Hospitals, General Secretariat for Mental Health and Addiction Treatment, Ministry of Health and Population of the Government of Egypt (Online)

Presenter



Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

2:00 – 4:55 PM

Global Insights with the IACC: International Autism Policy Discussion



Joshua Gordon

M.D., Ph.D., Director, National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
and Chair, IACC (Online)

Discussion Moderator

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

2:00 – 4:55 PM

Global Insights with the IACC: International Autism Policy Discussion



Deepa Singal

Ph.D., Scientific Director, Autism Alliance of Canada (In-person)

Co-moderator

Deepa Singal (PhD) is the Scientific Director of Autism Alliance of Canada where she provides strategic and scientific leadership, working at the intersection of research and policy. Dr. Singal has a Ph.D. in Community Health Sciences from the University of Manitoba and Executive Education in Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, and a decade of experience in academia, government, and the not-for-profit landscape. Her expertise in quantitative child and maternal health research and public policy drives her leadership in pan-Canadian, multidisciplinary initiatives.

Dr. Singal's mission focuses on generating community-driven evidence to shape national-level policy, advocating for the full inclusion of neurodivergent people in Canadian society. Her work is supported by numerous national grants, and has been widely disseminated to policymakers and the media. Dr. Singal has testified at the Canadian Senate to support legislation for the creation of Canada's first National Autism strategy and presented at the United Nations, and various national and international conferences. Additionally, she is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Alberta and an Adjunct Research



Scientist at the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy. Dr. Singal is an alumna of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Health System Impact Post-Doctoral Fellowship, a recipient of the CIHR Rising Star Award and was recently awarded Canada's first CIHR Health System Impact Embedded Researcher Award.

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

2:00 – 4:55 PM

Global Insights with the IACC: International Autism Policy Discussion



Susan Daniels

Ph.D., Executive Secretary, IACC; Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) National Autism Coordinator; Director, Office of National Autism Coordination, NIMH (Online)

Co-moderator

Dr. Daniels is the National Autism Coordinator for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), a role created by Congress to facilitate coordination and implementation of federal autism activities. She is also the Executive Secretary of the IACC, a federal advisory committee that provides advice on autism issues.

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

2:00 – 4:55 PM

Global Insights with the IACC: International Autism Policy Discussion



James Cusack

Ph.D., Chief Executive, Autistica (United Kingdom) (Online)

Presenter

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2:00 – 4:55 PM

Global Insights with the IACC: International Autism Policy Discussion



Gauri Divan

Ph.D., Director, Child Development Group, Sangath (India)
(Online)

Presenter

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

2:00 – 4:55 PM

Global Insights with the IACC: International Autism Policy Discussion



Liliana Mayo

Founder and Chief Executive, Centro Ann Sullivan del Perú
(Online)

Presenter

Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Day 1

2:00 – 4:55 PM

Global Insights with the IACC: International Autism Policy Discussion



Amina Abubakar

Ph.D., Professor and Director, Institute for Human Development,
Aga Khan University (Kenya) (Online)

Presenter

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2:00 – 4:55 PM

Global Insights with the IACC: International Autism Policy Discussion



Clare Gibellini

Co-Chair, National Autism Strategy Oversight Council (Australia)
(Online)

Presenter

Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2
Implement.

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Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

9:00 – 9:30 AM

Opening Remarks



The Hon. Kamal Khera

Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities of
Canada

Presenter

Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

9:00 – 9:30 AM

Opening Remarks



The Hon. Mike Lake

Member of Parliament, Edmonton-Wetaskiwin

Presenter

Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

9:00 – 9:30 AM

Opening Remarks



Tanya McLeod

President, The Sinneave Family Foundation (Champion-level
Supporter of CALS2024), and Board Member of Autism Alliance
of Canada

Presenter

Tanya McLeod is President of The Sinneave Family Foundation in Calgary, Alberta; an organization committed to coordinating and investing in a portfolio of purposeful initiatives and projects aimed at removing barriers and enhancing opportunities for



autistic youth and adults to live, learn, work and thrive in their communities and realize their desired futures.

Tanya is committed to contributing to the alliance's collaborative work, and brings decades of experience working with the federal government as well as skills and experience in governance, teamwork, strategy, risk management and stakeholder engagement.

Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

9:30 – 10:00 AM

Latest Developments on Disability Supports in Canada: Disability Tax Credit



The Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau

Minister of National Revenue of Canada

Presenter

Marie-Claude Leblanc, Adm. A., MBA, B.Sc. KIN. Passionate about DEI, ESG, and social innovation, Marie-Claude is the CEO of Autisme sans limites. A manager for over 25 years, she has gained diverse experiences in municipal, community, and healthcare settings. Holding an EMBA from McGill-HEC Montreal, her thesis focused on the inclusion of autistic individuals in the workplace.

Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

9:30 – 10:00 AM

Latest Developments on Disability Supports in Canada: Disability Tax Credit

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Gillian Pranke

Assistant Commissioner, Assessment, Benefit and Service Branch (ABSB) in the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)

Presenter

In September 2022, Ms. Gillian Pranke was appointed to the position of Assistant Commissioner, Assessment, Benefit, and Service Branch (ABSB) in the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). Prior to this, she held the position of Deputy Assistant Commissioner for ABSB as of September 2018. Ms. Pranke began her career in the federal public service as a summer student in the CRA. Her career has led her through both Headquarters and Field operations where she has worked in many of the Agency's business and program lines, holding positions of increased responsibility. Some of the positions she has held included, Director, International Tax Services Office, Director, Ottawa Tax Services Office, and Director, Ottawa Technology Centre, Ontario Region. In 2016, she returned to Headquarters and was appointed to the position of Director General, Call Centre Services Directorate, ABSB.

Ms. Pranke is a graduate of the Public Service Commission's Direction program, holds a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Ottawa and is a graduate of the University of Ottawa, Public Service Leadership and Governance Certificate Program. She also studied political science and public administration at Carleton University. Ms. Pranke thrives on the challenges and opportunities around service delivery, derives great satisfaction in seeing tangible results and likes working to bring out the best in others.

Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

9:30 – 10:00 AM

Latest Developments on Disability Supports in Canada: Disability Tax Credit

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Sujata Verma

Director General of the Disability, Indigenous and Benefits
Outreach Services Directorate, Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)

Presenter

Sujata began her career with the CRA in 2001 at the Prairie Regional Office in Winnipeg. Since then, she has held positions with increasing responsibilities which included management positions in the Ontario Region, Assessment, Benefit and Services Branch (ABSB) and the Collections and Verification Branch (CVB). She holds a Masters in Clinical Psychology and has a Professional Certificate in Management Skills from the Sprott School of Business, and is a graduate of the Agency's Middle Management Development Program. In August 2020, Sujata became the national lead for the CRA's Visible Minority Network until 2023 and took up her functions as Director General of the Disability, Indigenous and Benefits Outreach Services Directorate in April 2022. Sujata has taken the skills developed through her various roles and the Middle Management Development Program to provide mentorship to young professionals. She is flexible, loyal, empathetic and is dedicated to bringing solutions and opportunities for career development.

Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

10:00 – 11:00 AM

Breaking Barriers: Promising Practices for Inclusion in Autism



Alexia Ostrolenk

Ph.D., CIHR Postdoctoral Health System Impact Fellow, Autism
Alliance of Canada

Moderator

Alexia Ostrolenk (PhD) holds a Bachelor's degree in Life Science from Sorbonne Université in Paris, and two Master's degrees in Cognitive Neuroscience from



University College London and École Normale Supérieure. She completed her PhD in Psychiatric Science at Université de Montréal.

Her research is focused on reading and language development in autistic children, and she advocates an approach to autism based on its strengths rather than its deficits. She is also a passionate science communicator and co-founder of ComSciCon-QC, a free science communication training workshop for grad students. Alexia is the recipient of a Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Health System Impact Fellowship award that supports her postdoctoral training.

Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

10:00 – 11:00 AM

Breaking Barriers: Promising Practices for Inclusion in Autism



Courtney Weaver

Learning & Development Technical Assistant, CASE,
Self-advocate

Presenter

Courtney Weaver (M.A) is the Project Coordinator for “Navigating Working from Home for Autistic Employees” at Autism Alliance of Canada, a project that seeks to highlight the challenges and best practices of working from home for neurodivergent employees in order to better inform employers. The hope is that this will help them in their efforts to employ and retain neurodivergent talent as well as create and maintain workplaces where such talent can thrive.

Courtney obtained her Master of Arts in Critical Disability Studies from York University and since then she has been, and is, involved in a variety of autism and disability roles. These include Program Support Officer for the Accessibility, Accommodation & Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) Program, office assistant to MP Mike Lake, and self-advocate advisor to the Autism Mental Health Literacy and Housing Through an Autism Lens Projects (AMHeLP and HAL).

In her spare time, Courtney loves to do a variety of activities including reading, writing, taking long walks and bike rides and making up her own pun jokes just to name a few!

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Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

10:00 – 11:00 AM

Breaking Barriers: Promising Practices for Inclusion in Autism



Cyndi Gerlach

Trustee North Vancouver School District, Director Inclusion BC,
Self-advocate, Parent

Presenter

Cyndi Gerlach resides on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish people, specifically, the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and the sə́lílwətaʔt (Tseil-Waututh) Nations (North Vancouver), with her husband and three grown sons, two of whom are diagnosed autistic. Cyndi is currently elected to her 4th term as a school trustee in North Vancouver and is a volunteer director for Inclusion BC and AutismBC. Diagnosed in 2020 at the age of 57 with autism, and Cyndi believes the entire continuum of the autism spectrum must be represented in all areas of advocacy. Cyndi strongly believe in breaking down the stigma, and the barriers faced every day by autistic people and advocating for a world that accepts people for who they are. In her down time, Cyndi turned her backyard into a vegetable garden and an apple orchard, where she has 13 different apple varieties. It's her oasis, and where you will find her when she is not trying to make the world more autistic-friendly.

Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

10:00 – 11:00 AM

Breaking Barriers: Promising Practices for Inclusion in Autism

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Marie-Claude Leblanc

Parent and partner, Executive Director, Autisme sans limites

Presenter

Marie-Claude Leblanc, Adm. A., MBA, B.Sc. KIN. Passionate about DEI, ESG, and social innovation, Marie-Claude is the CEO of Autisme sans limites. A manager for over 25 years, she has gained diverse experiences in municipal, community, and healthcare settings. Holding an EMBA from McGill-HEC Montreal, her thesis focused on the inclusion of autistic individuals in the workplace.

Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

10:00 – 11:00 AM

Breaking Barriers: Promising Practices for Inclusion in Autism



Sharon McCarry

Parent, Executive Director, Little Red Playhouse, and Director of the Engagement Program, Child Bright Network

Presenter

For the last 17 years, McCarry has been navigating health systems, involved in research, policy consultations, inclusive education and housing projects for the Autism and the disability community provincially and nationally. For the last 4 years, she has been a member of and Co-Chair of the Disability Advisory Committee for the CRA, the Director of Engagement at the Child-Bright Network as well as the Executive Director of La Petite Maisonette Rouge.

Before the creation of her charitable foundation serving children with Autism in 2008, McCarry was an accomplished business professional working with numerous Fortune 500 companies. She has worked with major brand-name companies such as Reebok, BMW Canada, Rollerblade Inc., Benetton, L'Oreal, Seagram's and Mega Bloks doing marketing strategy and brand management.

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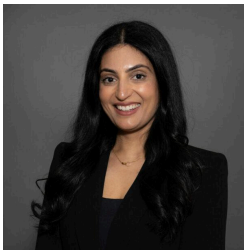


McCarry holds a BA from McGill University and lives in Montreal, Quebec, with her two proudly neuro-diverse sons and two dogs.

Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

11:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Empowering Tomorrow's Autism Researchers: Showcasing High-Impact Trainee-Led Projects



Deepa Singal

Ph.D., Scientific Director, Autism Alliance of Canada

Moderator

Deepa Singal (PhD) is the Scientific Director of Autism Alliance of Canada where she provides strategic and scientific leadership, working at the intersection of research and policy. Dr. Singal has a Ph.D. in Community Health Sciences from the University of Manitoba and Executive Education in Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, and a decade of experience in academia, government, and the not-for-profit landscape. Her expertise in quantitative child and maternal health research and public policy drives her leadership in pan-Canadian, multidisciplinary initiatives.

Dr. Singal's mission focuses on generating community-driven evidence to shape national-level policy, advocating for the full inclusion of neurodivergent people in Canadian society. Her work is supported by numerous national grants, and has been widely disseminated to policymakers and the media. Dr. Singal has testified at the Canadian Senate to support legislation for the creation of Canada's first National Autism strategy and presented at the United Nations, and various national and international conferences. Additionally, she is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Alberta and an Adjunct Research Scientist at the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy. Dr. Singal is an alumna of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Health System Impact Post-Doctoral Fellowship, a recipient of the CIHR Rising Star Award and was recently awarded Canada's first CIHR Health System Impact Embedded Researcher Award.

Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

Presenters | Présentateur-trice-s :

10th Annual Canadian Autism Leadership Summit | 10e Sommet canadien du leadership en autisme
April 17-19, 2024 | 17 au 19 avril, 2024 | #CAL2024 | autismalliance.ca/cals2024



11:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Empowering Tomorrow's Autism Researchers: Showcasing High-Impact Trainee-Led Projects



Alexia Ostrolenk

Ph.D., CIHR Postdoctoral Health System Impact Fellow, Autism Alliance of Canada

Presenter

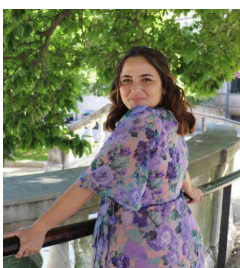
Alexia Ostrolenk (PhD) holds a Bachelor's degree in Life Science from Sorbonne Université in Paris, and two Master's degrees in Cognitive Neuroscience from University College London and École Normale Supérieure. She completed her PhD in Psychiatric Science at Université de Montréal.

Her research is focused on reading and language development in autistic children, and she advocates an approach to autism based on its strengths rather than its deficits. She is also a passionate science communicator and co-founder of ComSciCon-QC, a free science communication training workshop for grad students. Alexia is the recipient of a Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Health System Impact Fellowship award that supports her postdoctoral training.

Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

11:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Empowering Tomorrow's Autism Researchers: Showcasing High-Impact Trainee-Led Projects



Marina Schor

Research Coordinator, Autism Alliance of Canada

Presenter



Marina Schor, MSPH, is the Research Coordinator at Autism Alliance of Canada, and was born and raised in São Paulo, Brazil. With a Bachelor's in Applied Biology from the University of British Columbia and a Master's in Public Health from Johns Hopkins, she focuses on qualitative research, advocating for health equity, and the improvement of the lives of Autistic Canadians and their loved ones.

Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

11:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Empowering Tomorrow's Autism Researchers: Showcasing High-Impact Trainee-Led Projects



Angela MacDonald-Prégent

Ph.D.(c), Data-to-Policy Fellow, Autism Alliance of Canada

Presenter

Angela MacDonald-Prégent (PhDc) is a Doctoral Candidate in the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders at McGill University.

Having worked over ten years as a speech therapist supporting autistic children who have language difficulties, she developed an interest in nonspeaking children on the autism spectrum. Noticing that the scarcity of research for this subgroup, she returned to school to complete her doctoral degree where she has led and participated in a variety of autism-specific research projects. Her dissertation examines the efficacy of teaching methods for nonspeaking autistic children when learning to use a non-spoken communication system.

As a fellow for the Autism Alliance of Canada's Data-To-Policy Fellowship, she is looking forward to sharpening her ability to engage in a "bottom up" approach where key stakeholders, including autistic people, drive initiatives.

Thursday, April 18, 2024: Day 2

1:30 – 4:55 PM

Building Blocks for Provincial and Territorial Policy-Shaping: A Workshop to Find Gaps, Consensus and Next Steps

Presenters | Présentateur-trice-s :

10th Annual Canadian Autism Leadership Summit | 10e Sommet canadien du leadership en autisme
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Adrienne Lipsey

Co-founder, Springboard

Facilitator

Adrienne Lipsey co-founded Springboard to help bring good, diverse ideas to the table for better public policy. She leads projects to help organizations transform their knowledge and experience into clear public policy asks, develop complete strategies for systems change, or build their capacity to make change. As a former Chief of Staff to provincial Ministers, she has experience steering landmark policy strategies across social and economic policy.



Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3 **Innovate.**

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

9:00 – 9:30 AM

Opening Remarks



Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum

Deputy Grand Chief of Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN)

Presenter

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

9:00 – 9:30 AM

Opening Remarks



Phillip Rizcallah

CEO of Accessible Standards Canada

Presenter

Philip Rizcallah is the Chief Executive Officer and Deputy Head of Accessibility Standards Canada. Since 2019, he has led this departmental corporation in setting initial policy, receiving accreditation, and establishing strong governance practices. With his team, he spearheads the development of accessibility standards to deliver on the organization's mandate to help achieve a barrier-free Canada by 2040.

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

9:30 – 10:00 AM

Federal Updates on Disability Policy in Canada: Human Rights Commission



Charlotte-Anne Malischewski

Interim Chief Commissioner, Canadian Human Rights
Commission

Presenter

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

9:30 – 10:00 AM

Federal Updates on Disability Policy in Canada: Human Rights Commission



Carleen McGuinty

Acting Manager, International Cooperation and Monitoring,
Canadian Human Rights Commission

Presenter

Carleen McGuinty, Acting Manager, International Monitoring and Cooperation Unit, Canadian Human Rights Commission.

Carleen joined the Commission in October 2019 and has been managing the international team since June 2020. Prior to joining the Commission, she spent 12 years advocating for children’s rights in international development, including most recently as Deputy Director of International Policy and Programs at UNICEF Canada.

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3



10:00 – 11:00 AM

The Pathways in Autism Study: Reflections and Findings on a 24-Year Journey in Policy, Clinical Practice, and Research



Dr. Peter Szatmari

Chief, Child and Youth Mental Health Collaborative at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and The Hospital for Sick Children and Director of the Division of Child and Youth Mental Health at the University of Toronto

Presenter

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Building Connections for Enhanced Neuroinclusivity in Housing



Mike Chong

Knowledge Mobilization Officer, Accessibility Institute, Carleton University

Presenter

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Building Connections for Enhanced Neuroinclusivity in Housing



Tara Connolly

Accessibility Institute Lead, Accessibility Institute, Carleton University

Presenter

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

Presenters | Présentateur-trice-s :

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11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Building Connections for Enhanced Neuroinclusivity in Housing



Roxana-Maria Barbu

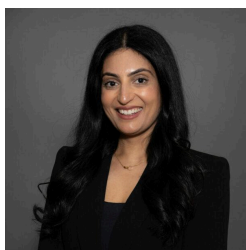
Research Lead, Accessibility Institute, Carleton University

Presenter

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

The Value Add of a National Autism Research Network: A Network of Networks



Deepa Singal

Ph.D., Scientific Director, Autism Alliance of Canada

Co-moderator

Deepa Singal (PhD) is the Scientific Director of Autism Alliance of Canada where she provides strategic and scientific leadership, working at the intersection of research and policy. Dr. Singal has a Ph.D. in Community Health Sciences from the University of Manitoba and Executive Education in Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, and a decade of experience in academia, government, and the not-for-profit landscape. Her expertise in quantitative child and maternal health research and public policy drives her leadership in pan-Canadian, multidisciplinary initiatives.

Dr. Singal's mission focuses on generating community-driven evidence to shape national-level policy, advocating for the full inclusion of neurodivergent people in Canadian society. Her work is supported by numerous national grants, and has been widely disseminated to policymakers and the media. Dr. Singal has testified at the

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Canadian Senate to support legislation for the creation of Canada's first National Autism strategy and presented at the United Nations, and various national and international conferences. Additionally, she is an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Alberta and an Adjunct Research Scientist at the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy. Dr. Singal is an alumna of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Health System Impact Post-Doctoral Fellowship, a recipient of the CIHR Rising Star Award and was recently awarded Canada's first CIHR Health System Impact Embedded Researcher Award.

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

The Value Add of a National Autism Research Network: A Network of Networks



Dr. Lonnie Zwaigenbaum

Professor and Director of Autism Research, Faculty of Medicine
& Dentistry, University of Alberta

Co-moderator

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

The Value Add of a National Autism Research Network: A Network of Networks



Cyndi Gerlach

Trustee North Vancouver School District, Director Inclusion BC,
Self-advocate, Parent

Presenter



Cyndi Gerlach resides on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish people, specifically, the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and the sə́lílwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations (North Vancouver), with her husband and three grown sons, two of whom are diagnosed autistic. Cyndi is currently elected to her 4th term as a school trustee in North Vancouver and is a volunteer director for Inclusion BC and AutismBC. Diagnosed in 2020 at the age of 57 with autism, and Cyndi believes the entire continuum of the autism spectrum must be represented in all areas of advocacy. Cyndi strongly believe in breaking down the stigma, and the barriers faced every day by autistic people and advocating for a world that accepts people for who they are. In her down time, Cyndi turned her backyard into a vegetable garden and an apple orchard, where she has 13 different apple varieties. It's her oasis, and where you will find her when she is not trying to make the world more autistic-friendly.

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

The Value Add of a National Autism Research Network: A Network of Networks



Mallory Solomon

Oshkaatisak Youth Council Member, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Presenter

Mallory Solomon (they/them) is a Two-Spirit Oji-Cree person from Constance Lake First Nation. They are currently in their second year of their Masters in Clinical Psychology at Lakehead University. They are also a member of Nishnawbe Aski Nstion Oshkaatisak Council and 2-Spirit in Motion Youth Council. Mallory enjoys travelling, music, hiking, crafting, Legos, and camping.



Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

The Value Add of a National Autism Research Network: A Network of Networks



Dr. Melanie Penner

Senior Clinician Scientist and Developmental Pediatrician;
Bloorview Children’s Hospital Foundation (BCHF) Research
Chair in Developmental Pediatrics, Extension of Community
Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) Autism

Presenter

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

The Value Add of a National Autism Research Network: A Network of Networks



Mélanie Couture

Ph.D., Associate Professor at Université de Sherbrooke, and
Co-director of Transforming Autism Care Consortium (TACC)

Presenter

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

The Value Add of a National Autism Research Network: A Network of Networks



Susan Daniels

Ph.D., Executive Secretary, IACC; Department of Health &
Human Services (HHS) National Autism Coordinator; Director,
Office of National Autism Coordination, NIMH

Presenter

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Dr. Daniels is the National Autism Coordinator for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), a role created by Congress to facilitate coordination and implementation of federal autism activities. She is also the Executive Secretary of the IACC, a federal advisory committee that provides advice on autism issues.

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

2:30 – 4:00 PM

Autism Across the Lifespan: Aging Perspective



David Nicholas

Ph.D., Professor and Associate Dean of Research and Partnerships, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary, and Board Member of Autism Alliance of Canada

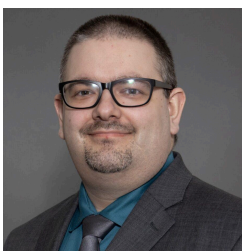
Moderator

David Nicholas, Ph.D., RSW is a Professor and Associate Dean, Research and Partnerships in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary, and the co-lead of the Supports, Services and Systems Program of the Neuro-developmental Disability Azrieli Accelerator, also at UCalgary. His research addresses autism in the area of wellbeing and transition to and through adulthood. He brings lived experience as a family caregiver.

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

2:30 – 4:00 PM

Autism Across the Lifespan: Aging Perspective



Mackenzie Salt

Ph.D., Postdoctoral fellow, Autism Alliance of Canada

Presenter

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Dr. Mackenzie Salt is an Autistic autism researcher and a postdoctoral fellow with the McMaster University Autism Research Team and Autism Alliance of Canada. He is a CIHR Health System Impact Fellowship program alumnus and has a background in qualitative research and research engagement. His research focuses on Autistic adults.

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

2:30 – 4:00 PM

Autism Across the Lifespan: Aging Perspective



Terri Robson

Autistic Self-Advocate

Presenter

Terri Robson: CJAE Editorial Board Member and Treasurer

Terri has a Bachelor of Education specializing in Music and English. As well, she has a 2 year Music Business Diploma and she is a certified Journeyman Partsperson. Terri has completed many courses towards getting her CGA. She is the founder and owner of Awkward Spirit: Looking Beyond the Mask. Terri has spoken about Asperger's Syndrome at international as well local events and founded an Adult Asperger's Syndrome support group in Red Deer Alberta after learning that no such support existed there, and has mentored several young people with Asperger's. Terri received the Alberta Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities Award of Excellence for Public Awareness in 2016. She has been a volunteer with Lions Clubs International for many years and has received a number of awards from this organization.



Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

2:30 – 4:00 PM

Autism Across the Lifespan: Aging Perspective



Fakhri Shafai

Ph.D., Chief Science Officer, AIDE Canada

Presenter

Dr. Fakhri Shafai is the Chief Science Officer of AIDE Canada, where she co-develops evidence-informed resources with and for the autism and/or intellectual disability community. Dr. Shafai has a master's in education and a PhD in neuroscience. Her interests include knowledge translation, sensory processing, anxiety, and aging in autism.

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

2:30 – 4:00 PM

Autism Across the Lifespan: Aging Perspective



Margaret Bauman

Ph.D., Research Associate Professor, Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology, Boston University School of Medicine (Online)

Presenter



Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

2:30 – 4:00 PM

Moving Post-Secondary Education Forward: Gathering Research and Lived Experience Insights Together



Brian Foster

Ph.D., National Manager of Policy and Resource Development,
Ready, Willing and Able (RWA)

Chair

Brian has a diverse background in the social sciences, research, communications, media, politics, not-for-profit operations, and academia. Brian has a PhD in history and social sciences from Carleton, and a Masters from Western, as well as a nearly two decades of strategic and operational experience spanning municipal and federal politics, not for profits, and private sector work. Brian has worked as an assistant professor, policy and media analyst, consultant, and director or manager during that time. His research and development work is currently focused on disability and the labour market, and on the creation of resources for that help employers, job seekers, and support professionals in their inclusive employment journeys.

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

2:30 – 4:00 PM

Moving Post-Secondary Education Forward: Gathering Research and Lived Experience Insights Together



Heather Brown

Ph.D., Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, University of
Alberta

Presenter



Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

2:30 – 4:00 PM

Moving Post-Secondary Education Forward: Gathering Research and Lived Experience Insights Together



Patty Douglas

Ph.D., Associate Professor of Disability Studies and Inclusive Education, Brandon University

Presenter

Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

2:30 – 4:00 PM

Moving Post-Secondary Education Forward: Gathering Research and Lived Experience Insights Together



Margaret Janse Van Rensburg

Ph.D.(c), Carleton University

Presenter

My name is Margaret and I am a fourth-year PhD candidate in Social Work at Carleton University. Most of my work is interested in supporting Autistic adult mental health, wellbeing, and inclusion. My current PhD project seeks to investigate Practitioners' and Professionals' barriers to and facilitators of providing Ottawa Autistic adults with mental health support with the Ottawa Adult Autism Initiative; and I work as a Researcher with the AIDAN Lab, as a Community Outreach Liaison for the Neuroinclusivity in Housing project. In the Past, I worked as a Research Assistant for the Bridging the Silos project and in the Oral Histories of Disability Rights Movement project.



Friday, April 19, 2024: Day 3

2:30 – 4:00 PM

Moving Post-Secondary Education Forward: Gathering Research and Lived Experience Insights Together



Briano Di Rezze

Ph.D., Associate Professor, Rehabilitation Science, McMaster University

Presenter