

Complex Child and Youth Mental Health: Recent Developments, Resiliency, and Psychosocial Interventions

Dr. Terry Bennett et al.

November 25, 2025

8:30am – 3:00pm EST

Zoom – Child and Parent Resource Institute (CPRI), 600 Sanatorium Rd, London, ON, N6H 3W7

Overall Learning Objectives:

By the end of this symposium, participants will be able to:

1. Interpret the concept and practical application of “evidence-based interventions,” highlighting their strengths through critical appraisal.
2. Articulate the level of evidence supporting mental health interventions across inpatient/live-in treatment, outpatient, and classroom settings.
3. Inspect the balance between treatment fidelity and practical constraints, while demonstrating strategies for busy clinicians to learn new psychosocial interventions and build resilience.

Session-Specific Learning Objectives:

By the end of these sessions, participants will be able to:

DR. TERRY BENNETT, MD, FRCPC, Ph.D. (plenary speaker)

ADDRESSING EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION IN NEURODIVERGENT CHILDREN AND TEENS: PARSING COMPLEXITY THROUGH A DEVELOPMENTAL-ECOLOGICAL LENS

1. Identify early risk and protective factors in the development of emotional dysregulation among Autistic children.
2. Apply a developmental-ecological approach to evaluate children at risk of persistent emotional and behavioural challenges.
3. Model key strength-based, family-centred care principles into practice to engage and support Autistic children and families with complex needs.

DR. PETER JAFFE, Ph.D., C. PSYCH. (plenary speaker)

CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

1. Explain how exposure to domestic violence can impact children's development.
2. Discuss the risk and protective factors that moderate children's outcomes.
3. Outline the potential risks of homicide for children living with domestic violence.

4. Develop knowledge about prevention and intervention strategies to support children exposed to domestic violence.
5. Interpret changing family laws that recognize the impact of domestic violence and coercive control on children.

DR. MICHELLE PONTI, HBSc, MD, FRCPC (workshop speaker)

SCREEN USE AND INFANT MENTAL HEALTH

1. Summarize the impacts of screen time and use on infant and preschooler mental health.
2. Use practical guidance to counsel parents and caregivers on healthier use of screens with young children.
3. Describe the updated Canadian guidelines on screen time in preschool children using the 4M principles.

DR. KRISTINA KASTELANAC, BHSc., ND, SEP. (workshop speaker)

THE CHILD AND YOU: EXPERIENCING RESILIENCE USING POLYVAGAL THEORY
INFORMED MODALITIES

1. Participants will be able to interpret the polyvagal theory (PVT) to understand autonomic nervous system responses and apply polyvagal-informed techniques, such as breathwork, nature connection, and mindfulness, to enhance evidence-based practices like Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). Through discussion of supporting studies, participants will be able to judge the efficacy of integrating PVT with traditional interventions.
2. Participants will be able to determine the role of co-regulation in children's developing nervous systems and apply self-regulation techniques to manage their own nervous system states (fight, flight, freeze, rest, and digest) within therapeutic relationships. Through this, they will be able to demonstrate how ongoing self-care and personal development enhance therapeutic outcomes for their clients.
3. Participants will be able to describe the concept of treatment fidelity and its role in effective interventions, defending how PVT supports flexibility based on moment-to-moment observations of clients' and clinicians' nervous system states. They will design a balanced approach that maintains core intervention principles while adjusting techniques to meet individual client needs.
4. Participants will be able to evaluate their own autonomic nervous system states through guided exercises, gaining a somatic and cognitive understanding of these states to enhance personal resiliency and self-regulation. They will be able to model practical, time-efficient tools into their busy schedules as clinicians.

SARENA DALJEET, Ph.D. CANDIDATE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY (workshop speaker)

DYADIC EMOTION-FOCUSED THERAPY FOR YOUTH AND CAREGIVERS

1. Recognize the rationale for incorporating caregivers into the therapy process for youth.
2. Define the primary components of treatment in Dyadic Emotion-Focused Therapy for Youth (EFT-Y).
3. Outline the importance of studying multiple perspectives on the therapeutic alliance.

DR. GENEVIEVE MONAGHAN, Ph.D., C. PSYCH. (workshop speaker)

CO-MORBID PTSD AND EATING DISORDERS IN YOUTH – CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL TREATMENT AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

1. Recall common clinical features and diagnostic considerations in youth presenting with co-morbid PTSD and eating disorders.
2. Describe the bidirectional relationship between trauma exposure and disordered eating behaviours in adolescents.
3. Apply core principles of trauma-informed care and phased treatment planning to clinical work with this population.
4. Determine strategies for engaging parents and caregivers as active participants in treatment and recovery.

DR. KARYS PETERSON-KATZ, Ph.D. (workshop speaker)

ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY SYSTEMS OF CARE: THE INFANT AND EARLY MENTAL HEALTH CARE PATHWAYS INITIATIVE

1. Describe the current gaps in Canada's mental health system related to infant and early mental health (IEMH). Participants will be able to recognize at least three systemic challenges or gaps in training, access, or navigation for IEMH services in Canada.
2. Explain the five-phased approach of the IEMH Care Pathways Initiative. Participants will be able to accurately summarize the key steps in the IEMH Care Pathways methodology and their relevance to building coordinated systems of care.
3. Identify strategies for engaging community partners in mapping and developing care pathways. Participants will be able to list at least two effective strategies used in the initiative for engaging cross-sector champions in system-level change.

DR. KERRY BOYD, MD, FRCPC, PSYCHIATRIST and ARIANNA ALATI, B.A.Sc. CANDIDATE HONOURS APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY IN HUMAN BEHAVIOUR (workshop speakers)

FOSTERING THERAPEUTIC ENCOUNTERS: INTERVIEW WITH CARE

1. Evaluate communication guidelines and tools for therapeutic interviewing.
2. Identify three INTERVIEW with CARE principles or practices to apply in their setting.
3. Discuss Communicate CARE for virtual care encounters.

November 25, 2025

8:30 – 9:00	Sign-in to Zoom Virtual Event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the Day – Technology, COI Readings, Agenda, and Land Acknowledgement 		
9:00 – 10:00	AM Plenary Speaker Dr. Terry Bennett <i>Addressing Emotional Dysregulation in Neurodivergent Children and Teens: Parsing Complexity Through a Developmental-Ecological Lens</i>		
10:00 – 10:20	Break		
10:20 – 10:25	Hosts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Workshops 		
10:25 – 11:25	AM Workshop (Room 1) Dr. Michelle Ponti <i>Screen Use and Infant Mental Health</i>	AM Workshop (Room 2) Dr. Kristina Kastelanac <i>The Child and You: Experiencing Resilience using Polyvagal Theory Informed Modalities</i>	AM Workshop (Room 3) Sarena Daljeet <i>Dyadic Emotion-Focused Therapy for Youth and Caregivers</i>
11:25 – 12:25	Lunch		
12:25 – 12:30	Hosts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Back 		
12:30 – 1:30	PM Plenary Speaker Dr. Peter Jaffe <i>Children Exposed to Domestic Violence</i>		
1:30 – 1:50	Break		
1:50 – 1:55	Hosts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Workshops 		
1:55 – 2:55	PM Workshop (Room 1) Dr. Genevieve Monaghan	PM Workshop (Room 2) Dr. Karys Peterson-Katz	PM Workshop (Room 3)

	<i>Co-morbid PTSD and Eating Disorders in Youth – Considerations for Individual Treatment and Parental Involvement</i>	<i>Establishing Community Systems of Care: The Infant and Early Mental Health Care Pathways Initiative</i>	Dr. Kerry Boyd and Arianna Alati <i>Fostering Therapeutic Encounters: INTERVIEW with CARE</i>
2:55 – 3:00	Hosts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing Remarks and Online Evaluations 		

25% of this program is dedicated to participant interaction

For RCPSC (MOC Section 1)

This event is an Accredited Group Learning Activity (Section 1) as defined by the Maintenance of Certification Program of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, and approved by Continuing Professional Development, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University. You may claim a maximum of 4.00 hours (credits are automatically calculated). Each participant should claim only those hours of credit that they actually spent participating in the educational program.

Financial Support Statement

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