

LDawc Family Conference Program Summaries

PLENARY SESSION – 9:05-9:20

Moving Beyond OK

Susan Schenk is an Occupational Therapist, Entrepreneur, Author, and Motivational Speaker. Her business Technology & Tools for kids teaches Occupational Therapists across the globe how to tap into the power of technology to help kids develop skills in a whole new way. She also supports parents with her Strategy Sessions and in her new program Invincible Mama: Moving your Child Beyond Ok.

Susan offers strategies to professionals and parents but what she really does is show the adults how they can help kids maintain their confidence in learning so they will maintain their self-esteem and reach their full potential. Her book, Beyond OK from Invisible to Invincible, takes you on her inspirational journey as she discovers the world of learning differences, as a child, a professional and a parent...and is the WHY behind all that she does.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: OVERCOMING OBSTACLES AND BEATING THE ODDS, LESLEY ANDREW

Lesley Andrew is a Canadian singer, actress and motivational speaker. Lesley has spoken across North America about 'Beating the Odds - taking the responsibility for personal change and growth, overcoming obstacles, facing fears and attaining goals.'

Lesley's presentation is a mixture of stories, poignant memories, humour, lessons to be learned and inspiration and has been extremely well received by groups of all ages. A well-known Canadian singer and actress, Lesley's seminars include a performance of songs. Topics covered by her presentation:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| ~ Multiple intelligence | ~ Creative problem solving |
| ~ Gifted learning disabled | ~ Critical thinking skills |
| ~ Handicap of giftedness | ~ Use of humour |
| ~ The gifts of being learning disabled | ~ Developing Organizational skills |
| ~ Finding Joy | ~ Time management |
| ~ Importance of art | ~ Finding and being a hero |

BREAKOUT SESSION – 10:35-11:25, choose 1 of 3 sessions

Breakout #1

Navigating the Education System: Understanding the IPRC and IEP Process

Dr. Sean Cameron's presentation will address the following topics, which are critical foundation information for parents:

- Learning disability diagnosis - what now?
- What is IEP, IPRC and what do they mean?
- How to support your child in school with a learning disability
- Movement from elementary to secondary to post-secondary with a learning disability
- Frustrated - what now?

Dr. Cameron is a developmental psychologist that has worked in the field of education for the past 10 years. He has taught courses on learning disabilities at the University of Guelph for six years, and currently works as an administrator in elementary education. Dr. Cameron has experience with the IPRC process both as special education resource teacher and a school administrator.

Breakout #2

Assistive Tech Tools for Post-Secondary Students

Athol Gow will present on assistive technology options for students in post-secondary education. This presentation will include the following topics:

- different technology options that are available to students such as mobile apps, freeware, and payware
- the assistive technology environment in postsecondary institutions
- how to choose AT options based on student needs, students computing platform, and financial situation.

This breakout session will allow parents to use their personal ipad to participate at points in this interactive presentation. Athol Gow is the Manager, Library Accessibility Services, from the University of Guelph Library.

Breakout #3

Neuroplasticity: Strengthening the Capacity to Learn

Jan Klassen and Jenny Lillie from Guelph Community Christian School, will present on the Arrowsmith program. This is a program that works on strengthening the cognitive capacities that often are the root cause of many types of learning disabilities. The presentation will explain how various learning disabilities are manifested and how they are often the root of a variety of struggles within and outside of the classroom. They will explain how the program began, who is a good candidate, and what the program looks like.

Jan Klassen has been teaching for 20 years. She began in primary education and had a passion for children who learn differently and struggle. Jan has completed her Specialist Qualification in Special Education and tried to incorporate what she has learned into her daily teaching. Being intrigued by the Arrowsmith program and the methodology based on the science of neuroplasticity, Jan helped launch the Arrowsmith Program in Georgetown in 2008 and then helped launch the program in Guelph in 2009. To quote Walt Disney "*All you dreams can come true if you have the courage to pursue them*".

Jenny Andrews has been working in education for six years. She started her career by supply teaching in England. Upon moving back to Canada, she began working at Guelph Community Christian School as an Educational Assistant. The following year, Jenny was asked to take on the role of an Arrowsmith teacher which she gladly accepted. With a passion for teaching struggling students, this position was a perfect fit. This past summer, Jenny completed her Specialist Qualifications in Special Education which has further prepared her for supporting her students in the classroom and finding different, out-of-the-box ways to help students in their learning. Jenny believes that being able to see students change their brains and gain confidence first hand is an amazing aspect of teaching the Arrowsmith Program.

BREAKOUT SESSION – 11:30-12:15, choose 1 of 3 sessions

Breakout #1

School Difficulties of Youth with Moderate to Severe Emotional and Behavioural Disorders

This program of research has been conducted with youth accessing intensive mental health treatment (mainly residential and intensive home-based treatment) and their parents. These youth have multiple disorders with ADHD being the most prominent. Some of these youth have Learning Disabilities; most of these youth have mental health symptoms that interfere with learning. Most youth reported accessing specialized education and reported a variety of difficulties including academic difficulties, interpersonal difficulties with peers and teachers, truancy, violence and a lack of motivation. What does the research suggest will help in developing better relationships and improved motivation?

Michèle Preyde is an Associate Professor in the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences at the University of Guelph. Her PhD is from the Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto. Dr. Preyde's approach in research centres on practitioner-researcher collaboration and integrated knowledge translation. Her main research interests concern mental health and intervention effectiveness. She has published in the areas of child and youth mental health, residential and home-based treatment outcomes, the psychosocial impact of illness and vulnerable populations. She is currently involved in research with child and adolescent clinical populations, the long-term adaptation and outcomes of youth who accessed residential and the home-based intensive mental health treatment, and a synthesis review on the transition of youth with mental health problems to adulthood.

Breakout #2

Learning Disabilities and Anxiety

This presentation will provide an introduction to cognitive-behavioural perspectives of anxiety. The presenters will also discuss how the various cognitive weaknesses associated with Learning Disabilities may cause children to be more susceptible to anxiety symptoms. Strategies for how parents can cope with their child's anxiety, recommended books, and online resources will be shared.

Dr. Paula Cerveny is a registered psychologist with the College of Psychologists of Ontario. Dr. Cerveny received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Waterloo in 2005. After completing her residency at the Alberta Children's Hospital, she worked at Hull Services as the Director of a residential facility supporting children with complex mental health and behaviour needs. Dr. Cerveny currently works at both Norfolk Psychological Services and the Upper Grand District School Board. Dr. Cerveny's areas of expertise and passion are psychological assessments of learning and mental health needs, as well as therapeutic interventions for children and adolescents. Dr. Cerveny primarily works from a Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) model with youth, and their caregivers, who are working on further developing strategies to cope with mood, emotion, behaviour regulation, or executive functions difficulties, including anxiety, OCD, depression, anger, trauma, and ADHD.

Allison Singh is a registered Psychological Associate with the College of Psychologists of Ontario. She received her Honours Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Psychology from McMaster University in 2007. She received her Masters degree in Counselling Psychology (M. Ed) from the University of Western Ontario in 2009. Allison's area of expertise is working in school board settings as she completed her Masters Internship with the Thames Valley District School Board and has worked for the Upper Grand District School Board for the past six years. Allison has extensive experience in the assessment and diagnosis of learning and mental health needs. She also provides therapeutic

intervention to children and adolescents using mainly a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) framework. She is particularly passionate about working with children and adolescents who are experiencing anxiety and/or depression, as well as those who have academic challenges and require assistance to cope in the school environment.

Breakout #3

Family Support: Parental Stress Coping Strategies

This is a talk about parenting that will not focus on your child. This session is based in the belief that the most important force behind your child's well-being is you. Dr. Dutrizac will talk about the range of emotions parents of atypical children experience. Drawing from her experience in assessing and treating children and families, she will explore how parents can cope with the added stress of having a child with a disability. Finally, she will explore what "balance" could look like for parents of atypical children.

Dr. Gwen Dutrizac is a Registered Psychologist who works at Norfolk Psychological Services in downtown Guelph. She works with children, adolescents, and adults, providing both assessments and treatment. Dr. Dutrizac has worked in a variety of settings including inpatient psychiatric settings, community mental health services for children and youth, and private practice in both Waterloo and Guelph. Dr. Dutrizac completed her PhD at UWO in London.

BREAKOUT SESSION – 1:00-1:45, choose 1 of 3 sessions

Breakout #1

What Tech Tools Are Available to Support Students in Reading & Writing?

Janet Ragan will help parents better understand what tools are available for students. Janet will focus on the following topics:

- Identify what tools children have available to them at the school so parents are aware of which tools could benefit their child
- Allow parents to better understand what the tools can offer their children to fully understand the benefits
- Provide insight into what is available for free on the cloud and how to access it

This breakout session will allow parents to use their own technology to participate in this session if they chose. These tools are geared towards students in Grade 4-12.

Janet Ragan is a teacher and instructor in educational and assistive technologies. She believes that parents and others in a student's circle of support should have awareness of the technology the student is using, to help with their learning struggles. She has worked with students Grade 2 to University and ESL, one on one, and in small groups, as well as with teachers, parents and administrators. Janet believes that when specific technology tools are introduced to a student, their confidence to learn and express their ideas can be greatly enhanced.

Breakout #2

Strategies in the Classroom for Different types of "Learners"

Deborah Szymanski-Potts will provide suggested strategies for various groups of children who learn differently. These types of "learners" could include needs of anxious youngsters, kids with ADD or ADHD, children with "spectrum" challenges, as children who benefit from technology support such as

speech to text or predictive writing. Deborah's classroom and personal experience with learning disabilities will provide parents with practical information and strategies.

Deborah is a retired teacher who has begun a service for children and adults coping with the new diagnosis of a learning disability. Working in partnership with the psychologists at Norfolk Psychological Services as an Educational Consultant, she works to provide a "bridge" between the diagnosis and smooths the way for success in school or work. Deborah provides coaching in specific strategies to showcase strengths and compensate for needs. In this workshop, Deborah will share her strategies for success.

Breakout #3

Finding Your Passion: A Personal Story

Eric Gillis will be sharing his personal story of his life with dyslexia. He will address his school journey highlighting the challenges of his personal academic experience as well as the enjoyment he found in playing all kinds of sports. His story includes a supportive family in sports and school. Eric's presentation will discuss how he first became involved in running and how his mother spotted his passion for running before he did and played a positive role in finding that fit. Eric's running career is full of lots of great moments as well as challenges and how he came to be a part of the Olympic team.

Eric is a Professional Marathoner who grew up in Antigonish Nova Scotia. He attended home town St. Francis Xavier University for Human Kinetics and Bachelor of Education. Eric moved to Guelph in 2006 and is married with two children, Luke 2 years old, and Heidi 5 years old. Eric is a current member of the Speed River Track & Field club in Guelph. He competed in two Olympic Games, Beijing 2008 & London 2012.

BREAKOUT SESSION – 1:50-2:35, choose 1 of 3 sessions

Breakout #1

Healthy Body, Healthy Mind: Simple Strategies to Immediately Improve Children's Attention Span and Maximize their Learning Potential

In this presentation you will learn powerful techniques to immediately help children improve their attention span. We will talk about physical activity and learning techniques that maximize the learning potential of children who have limited attention span. We will also talk about how to help your child have healthier diet and sleep habits to maximize their well-being and their learning potential.

Dr. Alexandre Tavares is a child psychiatrist. He grew up knowing that he did not have the best attention span, was not a good speller, and was not a fast reader, but had a thirst for knowledge. He was supported by his parents and grandparents since his childhood. They believed in him and never questioned the validity of learning with less formal educational methods used at that time: TV programs, magazines and supported listening. As a child psychiatrist Dr. Tavares uses his personal experiences to better empathize with the experiences of children and teenagers with ADHD and/or learning disorders.

Breakout #2

Disclosure of Diagnosis

Linda Di Nardo and Dianna Gamble will be presenting a summary of the importance of having a psychological assessment, and the impact of having a diagnosis, such as a Learning Disability. Specific emphasis will be on how a diagnosis is communicated to the child/adolescent as well as to the parents, especially around focusing on strengths, needs, learning style, and accessing resources and supports. There is also some attention given to empowering the child/adolescent with knowledge that will help him/her advocate for him/herself, and enhancing self-esteem. Having a diagnosis and understanding it can be a very powerful and positive tool for change and development.

Linda Di Nardo is a Registered Psychological Associate. She received her Master's degree in Applied Psychology from the University of Toronto (O.I.S.E.), and registered for autonomous practice with the College of Psychologists of Ontario in 2006. Linda has been working in the field of Psychology for over twenty-five years. She has extensive knowledge and expertise in assessment, consultation, and being on many multi-disciplinary teams. Her work has spanned many school boards, and hospital and mental health settings. Linda has been with Norfolk Psychological Services for about the last 8 years. Her primary interest is completing comprehensive psychological and developmental assessments with children and adolescents. Her areas of expertise include Learning Disabilities, ADHD, giftedness, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and many developmental issues. She also has an interest in supporting parents around understanding these issues. Linda strongly believes that all children and their families are to be viewed with "respect", having "strength" and "competency". She also believes that working together with families to access their knowledge and strengths is most important in helping children.

Dianna Gamble is a Registered Psychological Associate. Dianna received her Masters in Applied Child Psychology from The University of Guelph (MA), and was registered with the College of Psychologists of Ontario for autonomous practice in 2001. Dianna previously worked at the Hospital for Sick Children and the Halton Board of Education, and has been at Norfolk Psychological Services for the last fifteen years. Her role is to provide comprehensive psychological and/or psychoeducational assessments of childhood and adolescent learning and attention issues, and is on the list of recommended psychologists for the University of Guelph and Conestoga College. Her areas of expertise include Learning Disabilities, ADHD, giftedness, reading remediation, and transitions to post secondary education, including career counselling and vocational assessments.

Breakout #3

Panel Discussion: Creating Positive Communication between Home and School

Join our panel discussion on how to build successful home/school collaboration through transparent communication. Parents and representatives from Wellington County school boards will lead an open discussion, sharing experiences and tips that have worked for them. Learn strategies on positive communication with your child's school that will enhance relationships and school experiences. These tips will help establish strong, trusting relationships that will best support your child.

WDSCB REP: Mary Beth McCuen is the proud mom of Sam who attends Senior Kindergarten at Sacred Heart Catholic School. She has worked for the Wellington Catholic District School board for sixteen years in a variety of roles including teacher, Special Education Teacher, Special Education Technology and

Coordinator of Student Support. Mary Beth currently serves the St. Peter School Community as a Vice-Principal and is also the Acting Administrator of Student Support Services.

PARENT REP: Kristina Campbell is a certified Educational Therapist who works in private practice, as a dyslexia teletherapy clinician for Lexercise.com, and is working on her Associate level practicum for The Academy of Orton Gillingham Practitioners and Educators. Her youngest son was diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome Disorder and was educated with a combination of public, homeschooling, private, as well as online schooling.

PARENT REP: Gabriele Wright, a parent member of the LDAWC Board, has learned a lot about learning disabilities through her own family's experiences since youngest daughter's grade 1 teacher realized she was 'pretending' to read – though her daughter had extraordinary memory, she could recite whole passages (her parents had read to her at home) back to the teacher! This teacher, recognizing her daughter's need to fit in with peers, gently encouraged a closer look which eventually lead to identification of a learning disability. From primary school to high school Gabriele has learned that consistent, constructive communication with teachers, resource supports and health professionals can be been positive and productive.

PARENT REP: Susan Shaw is the mother of three teenagers - all on the Autism Spectrum; all with wide ranges of abilities and highly individualized learning strengths and needs. Sue has been active in all levels of education from Daycare, Nursery school, Elementary and now Secondary and is currently investigating transition to post-secondary work and schooling. Her family experiences have also included: a child in a congregated class, exposure to intellectually gifted with an LD, an interlude of a partial homeschooling arrangement for her middle child as well as some more typical experiences. In an effort to understand and advocate for different learning styles Sue has been trained as an ABA provider as well as holding leadership roles with the Wellington Chapter for Autism Ontario, and as a Representative on the SEAC. Sue is always happy to provide outreach to families and is often invited for appearances to provide lectures and/or as a panelist for different education events.

PLENARY SESSION – 2:50-3:50

The Evolution of Emotion: What Science is Telling Us About Separating the Brain from the Person (Child)

This workshop will take a fresh look at brain chemistry and the impact it has on emotional regulation. Separating out the child from the brain, Susan will suggest fast-acting tools and techniques for parents to use to help their children get into a regulated state.

Susan is a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist and a Clinical Fellow of the American Association for Marriage and Family. She followed her first degree from the University of Waterloo in Health Education with a Certificate in Gerontology and then a Master's in Counselling at University of Toronto (OISE). She then earned a Certificate in Contextual Family Therapy in Philadelphia and also completed Level 2 training in EMDR.

Susan brings her skills together in unique ways to help parents to stay in charge of their relationships with their children. She also works with relationships which are under stress or breaking, post-traumatic stress and attachment difficulties. Many of her clients are children, adolescents and students who are struggling with discipline or the demands of school or university. Clinically, and thru invited presentations she works with parents to provide them with the resources they need to reconnect with their children.

**Event
Sponsored
By:**

