



oasis



We are thrilled that we are now just a few days away from hosting the **OASIS 2025 Conference: *Climbing Higher: Investing in Tomorrow, Today!.*** from **Wednesday 30th April - Friday 2nd May 2024!!**

We have **SOLD OUT** our registration and in fact we will be welcoming more people than have ever attended one of our Conferences before (**600+ with Sponsors and Exhibitors**). We can't wait to welcome all participants to the **Blue Mountain Resort and Conference Centre**.

As always, The 2025 OASIS Conference will feature a number of inspiring keynote speakers, a wide range of break out sessions, exhibitors and vendors and networking events designed to engage all who attend.

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Gallagher



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

As a registered attendee, you should have received a welcome email with important event details earlier this week. Details Included:

[Where](#)

Blue Mountain Village Resort Conference Centre
242 Jozo Weider Blvd
The Blue Mountains, On
L9Y 3Z2

Conference App

To view the conference agenda, and to enjoy a full interactive experience, download the conference app or access it by visiting <https://eventmobi.com/oasis25/>. If you download the App the Event Code is: **OASIS25**

CHECK-IN

Conference Registration will be open from **9AM - 5PM on Wednesday April 30th and 7 AM - 5 PM on Thursday May 1st** outside the **Huron Ballroom**. Make sure to pick up your name badge on arrival.

PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

If you have signed up for a **pre-conference activity**, check in will be at the registration desk.

Transportation will be provided for the Apple, Grapes & Hops and the Adventure Hike Tours. **Please dress according to weather conditions and wear comfortable footwear as your tours go outside.**

If you are signed up for the **Relaxation Your Way** Tour, transportation will not be provided and you

will need to get to the location by vehicle or walking.

Please see below for important details on your pre-conference activity start time:

Those signed up on the [Apple, Grapes & Hops Tour](#) will be leaving the conference centre at **12.30 PM** sharp (a lunch will be provided to you on your tour).

Those signed up on the [Adventure Hike Tour](#) you will be leaving the conference centre at **1.00 PM** sharp (a boxed lunch will be provided to you on your tour).

Those signed up on the [Relaxation Your Way Tour](#) should check in at the Scandinavian Spa at **1.00 PM** sharp (lunch is not provided)

Those signed up for the Education [Workshop](#), it will begin at **1.00 PM** sharp and will be located in the conference centre.

**Sign up was required in advance for a pre-conference tour in order to attend. You will have also received a separate email with additional details on your activity. If you did not receive your email, please email meaghan@connectdot.ca*

Welcome Reception at the Exhibitor Hall [4.30 PM - 6.00 PM]

The Welcome Reception begins at 4:30 p.m. in The Courts at the Conference Centre.

Welcome Dinner & Social [6:00 PM - 9:00 PM]

Help us kick off the conference by joining us for an evening of delicious cuisine and music! This evening features [The Emily Power Band!](#)

[For the full event schedule, please login to EventMobi](#)

Pre-Conference Workshop: *Dream Maker: Person-Directed Services with a Codesign-Approach* - Wednesday 30th April, 1PM

Transform services! Picture a Director's Chair in a movie set environment, surrounded by a team of Co-Producers who listen intently to your aspirations for the next chapter of your life. For people living in South Georgian Bay, this isn't just a dream – it's reality. We will take you through an inspiring journey, using a human-centred, inclusive co-design approach to shift from traditional models of support to a bold, person-directed and co-produced system.

You will discover how e3 embraced person-directed supports, by hearing from Liam, who will share his experience as an influencer and director of changes to e3's Community Participation Supports. You'll hear about e3's ongoing change management process from Cory, our passionate and committed team lead and from Dan, PMB's enthusiastic consultant who co-facilitated the co-design process. Finally, you will learn about e3's new financial approach to CPS with a focus on sustainability and reinvestment in quality services.

This session will leave you inspired and equipped with practical insights for how co-production can foster meaningful change. You will learn about the steps e3 took to redesign services, the tools they used, and the outcomes that have been achieved. Most importantly, you will witness firsthand how involving people as Directors and Co-Producers of their own supports is not only innovative but necessary for creating services that truly reflect their desires and dreams.

Join us as we explore how organizations like e3 are leading the way, and how you too can become a Dream Maker in the lives of the people.



Christine Vallis-Page
CEO
E3 Community Services



Liam Russell
Influencer



Cory MacDonald
Team Lead
E3 Community Services



Dan Bigonnesse
Consultant
People Minded Business

KEYNOTE SPEAKER 1st May at 9AM

Lessons from Nova Scotia's Human Rights Remedy & Other Key Reforms – How Leadership Can Mobilise & Sustain Whole System Reforms

Eddie Bartnik will focus on the Nova Scotia Human Rights Remedy from a leadership perspective as well as a technical perspective, examining what it takes to create such an opportunity and build

partnerships to get collective agreement. He will also use other international reform examples of how taking a whole population and investment approach can achieve systemic change, and where some opportunities might be to get started.



Eddie Bartnik

BREAKOUT SESSIONS: 10.30AM

1A: Four More Years: Navigating Government Relations & Advocacy

On Feb. 27, 2025, the Progressive Conservative Party was re-elected for a third term in Ontario. In order to advance the DS sector's priorities, we need to continue to learn how to work effectively with them.

What works? What have we learned? Join us for a Panel discussion on government relations and advocacy and how this Government Thinks. Whether you're an organisation, advocate, or community leader, this session will equip you with the tools to better understand and navigate the current political landscape in Ontario and amplify your impact.



Moderator: Al Roberts
Board Member, OASIS &
OCAPDD
OASIS



Panellist:
Sarah Letersky
Partner and National Health
Practice lead
Rubicon Strategy



Panellist:
Ashley Harnden
Director of Stakeholder
Engagement
Automotive Parts
Manufacturers' Association
(APMA)



**Panellist: Jeremy Roberts, Former
MPP**



Panellist: James Janeiro
Director of Public Policy and Government
Relations
Canadian Centre for Caregiving
Excellence

1B: The Balancing Act: Navigating People's Rights and Employer Obligations

Developmental Services Lawyer Alan McCallum will provide essential guidance on navigating the complex balance between the rights of people supported, their families, employees, and agencies. This session will explore key legal considerations, including autonomy, dignity, and personal choice, while ensuring compliance with health and safety obligations.

Topics will also cover addressing abuse and harassment claims, legislative compliance, tenancy challenges in shared housing, and best practices for leadership and governance. Gain valuable insights into fostering a fair, legally sound, and respectful environment for all stakeholders.



Brendon Pooran
Co-Founder & Managing Partner
PooranLaw



Alan McCallum
Labour and Employment Lawyer
PooranLaw

1C: Unlocking the Full Potential of Passport Funding: A Data-Driven Approach

Despite Ontario's \$701M Passport funding commitment, hundreds of millions go unused each year.

This interactive session, led by Kim Thorn (YSSN) and Paul Fleming (People Minded Business), will unveil key findings from a groundbreaking collaboration among 40+ agencies in Ontario's Central Region. Learn why some agencies achieve over 75% utilization while others struggle, and gain practical, data-driven strategies to boost funding access. Walk away with actionable tools to help families receive the support they deserve and ensure Passport funds are fully utilized to enhance lives.



Kim Thorn
Executive Director
Your Support Services Network



Paul Fleming
Partner, Strategic Services
People Minded Business

1D: Leading with Quality: Strengthening Developmental Services Through Leadership, Strategy, & Data-Driven Excellence

Quality services in the developmental sector are not just operational goals but essential leadership priorities. Led by Dawn Lee, ED Inclusion Northumberland, this session equips executive directors, CEOs, and agency leaders with actionable strategies to embed quality into their organizations.

Key topics include leveraging accreditation standards and performance metrics for continuous improvement, strengthening professional networks through workforce engagement and best practices, and embracing data-driven decision-making for long-term sustainability.

Through real-world case studies and interactive discussions, participants will gain practical insights to enhance service outcomes, mitigate risks, and position their organizations as leaders in innovation and excellence.

Dawn Lee
Executive Director
Inclusion Northumberland



1E: OASIS Housing Committee Breakout Session 1: The A to Z of Building – A Roadmap for Developmental Services Agencies

Finding sustainable housing solutions for individuals with developmental disabilities requires thinking beyond traditional models.

This session, led by Tina Williams, a member of the OASIS Housing Committee and Executive Director at Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley, will explore building partnerships with landlords and developers to secure tenancies in existing buildings while ensuring the necessary living supports are in place.

Tina Williams, as well as Managers with her team Managers Karen Brown, Suzie Desjarlais and Mary Varughese, Community Development Manager, Karis Disability Services from London Ontario, will walk attendees through how to engage private sector partners, navigate challenges, and create mutually beneficial arrangements that increase housing opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. The session will also draw on insights from the OASIS Housing Committee's recent work, highlighting how agencies can advocate for policies and practices that foster inclusive living.



Tina Williams
Executive Director
Community Living Upper Ottawa
Valley



Mary Varughese
Community Development Manager
Karis Disability Services

Suzie Desjarlais
Manager of Supports & Services
Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley

Karen Brown
Manager of Supports & Services
Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley

BREAKOUT SESSIONS: 1.15PM

2A: OASIS Housing Committee Breakout Session
2: The A to Z of Building – A Roadmap for
Developmental Services Agencies

For Developmental Services agencies looking to develop housing, the process can be complex—but with the right knowledge and partnerships, it is possible to bring projects to life. In this session, Gary Gladstone (REENA) and Dave Petkau (KARIS), both members of the OASIS Housing Committee, will provide a step-by-step guide to building housing for individuals with developmental disabilities.

From securing land and navigating zoning bylaws to funding models, construction planning, and long-term sustainability, this session will cover the key elements agencies need to know when embarking on a housing project. Real-world examples, lessons learned, and practical strategies will be shared to help agencies move from concept to completion.

Whether your agency is just beginning to explore housing development or looking to refine its approach, this session will offer valuable insights and actionable takeaways to support your journey.



Gary Gladstone
Stakeholder Relations
Reena



Dave Petkau
Director of Community
Engagement
Karis Disability Services

2B: Breaking Barriers, Building Solutions: What Leaders Need to Know About Health & IDD

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) face systemic barriers to quality healthcare, leading to avoidable health crises and fragmented care.

This panel, featuring Bryan Keshen (CEO, Reena), Gina St. Amour (Executive Director, Ottawa Rotary Home), and Dr. Yona Lunsky (Senior Scientist, CAMH), will explore how developmental services organizations can drive change by building partnerships with healthcare providers, strengthening internal capacity, training frontline staff, and leveraging key resources to enhance care coordination. Leaders will also discuss advocacy strategies to influence systemic improvements.

Join us to discover how developmental services can play a pivotal role in ensuring equitable, person-centered healthcare for people with IDD.



Dr. Nicole Bobbette
Assistant Professor,
School of
Rehabilitation Therapy
Queen's University



Ziv Har-Gil
Health Strategy and
Partnerships Lead
Reena



Bryan Keshen
CEO
Reena



Gina St. Amour
Executive Director
The Ottawa Rotary Home



Dr. Yona Lunsky
Scientific Director
Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental
Centre



2C: Rethinking Corporate Integration in a J2B World

This insightful session on corporate integration models in the developmental services sector will break down the legal structures, advantages, and challenges of each approach from shared management services to full mergers. Learn how integration can enhance service delivery, diversify revenue, and improve operational efficiency while ensuring compliance with legal and strategic requirements.

Whether you're considering collaboration or restructuring, this session will provide the tools to help your organization navigate the evolving economic and political landscape.



Cheryl Wiles Pooran
Partner & Leader of Labour and
Employment Team
PooranLaw



Saquiba Rahman
Associate
PooranLaw

2D: Square Peg in a Round Hole: Disability Support Organizations & Ontario's Employment

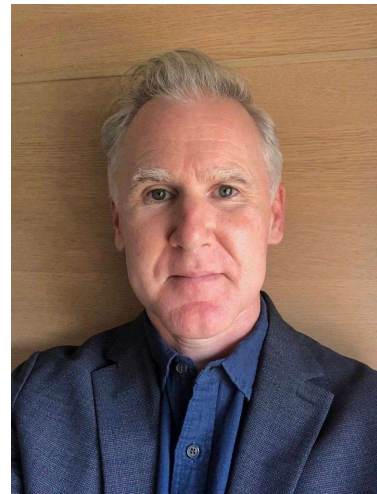
Services Transformation

Ontario's Employment Services Transformation has had a significant negative impact on ODSP Employment Service providers, including developmental service agencies, with reduced funding and policies that are not disability-friendly.

Presented by Shawn Pegg, CLO, this session will provide developmental service leaders and employment program staff with insights into recent survey data, advocacy efforts, and trends in the sector. Presenters will review challenges faced by service providers and lead a discussion on how to improve Integrated Employment Services to better support job seekers with intellectual disabilities.

Shawn Pegg

Director, Social Policy & Strategic Initiatives
Community Living Ontario



2E: National Caregiving Strategy: A Path to Support & Empower Caregivers

This session will explore the current landscape of caregiving in Canada and the critical need for a comprehensive, national strategy to support caregivers.

Join James Janeiro, Director of Policy and Government Relations for the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence as he discusses key elements of the strategy, including policy recommendations, resources, and initiatives aimed at improving the well-being of caregivers across Canada and enhancing their ability to provide care.

Participants will gain valuable insights into how the strategy can help empower caregivers, strengthen support systems, and create a more inclusive and sustainable caregiving environment across the country.

James Janeiro

Director of Public Policy and Government
Relations
Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence



BREAKOUT SESSIONS: 3.00PM

3A: Labour & Employment Law Update



Charles Hofley
Senior Labour &
Employment Lawyer
Hicks Morley

Hicks Morley Hamilton Stewart
Storie LLP is a leading law firm in
Canada representing employers
on human resources and
advocacy matters, with intimate
knowledge of local labour and
employment issues.
This presentation, led by Charles
V. Hofley, will provide a
comprehensive overview of recent
updates in labour/employment,
with a focus on issues that directly
impact the developmental
services sector, through a review
of recent jurisprudence and trends
covering the areas of labour
negotiation/arbitration,
employment, and human rights.

3B: What is OADD & Why Does it Matter to Me?

Join Michelle Del Carmen, OADD Chair, and Tracey Berman, OADD Chair Elect, as they provide an overview of the Ontario Association on Developmental Disabilities (OADD), which has been a key platform for discussion, resource sharing, education, and networking in Ontario for 36 years.

The session will highlight OADD's evolution, focusing on its two annual conferences and research event designed to disseminate valuable information and resources to those in the developmental disabilities field. Attendees will also learn about the Journal on Developmental Disabilities (JoDD), a peer-reviewed research publication that showcases the latest developments in developmental services and supports.



Michelle Del Carmen
Chair
OADD



Tracey Berman
Director
Reena

**3C: Future-Proofing Community Organizations:
Building Sustainable, High-Performing Teams
Before Change Arrives**

Join Michael Schiel, Director at Invictus High Performance and Suzanne Willet from Community Living Huntsville, for an insightful session on how community organizations can thrive amidst increasing system pressures, workforce challenges, and transformative initiatives like Journey to Belonging (JTB).

This session will introduce the High Performing Community Organization (HPCO) Framework, offering a roadmap to enhance resilience, service delivery, and sustainability. Learn from Community Living Huntsville (CLH)'s proactive approach to building a high-performance culture that prioritizes staff engagement, psychological safety, and operational alignment. Participants will leave with practical strategies and best practices to create a thriving organizational culture in the face of sector transformation.



Suzanne Willett
Executive Director
Community Living Huntsville



Michael Schiel
Director
Invictus High Performance

3D: Exploring Access & Utilization of Passport Funding: Perspectives of People with the Label of Intellectual Disability & Their Families

There are over 100,000 people labeled with an intellectual disability in Ontario, millions of dollars of Passport Funding go unused, and

thousands of people are living without the supports and services they need to live an authentic life. This research study examines the disconnect between money available and access by potential recipients.

This study used an electronic survey of people who are labeled (diagnosed or self-diagnosed) as having an intellectual or developmental disability, across the province of Ontario. The survey was sent to agencies, organizations, programs, and long-term care homes. The researchers encouraged the survey to be shared with connections and networks, province-wide. Responses were received from 422 Ontarians.

Results (Interim):

- *422 survey respondents*
- *402 identified as having one or more disability (319 self identified as having an intellectual and/or developmental disability; 359 self identified as having a diagnosis)*
- *256 had someone help them fill out the survey while 129 completed it by themselves (of those who had someone help them; 182 were helped by a family member and 77 were helped by an agency support worker)*
- *120 survey respondents do not require accommodation when doing things online; other respondents identified needing accommodations*
- *Responses reflect a broad geographic distribution across urban, suburban, and rural parts of the province.*

The presentation will elaborate on results with a focus on the accommodations and tools people use in order to participate with on-line spaces, and how agencies could increase support in this area.



Nicole Flynn



Kathryn Primrose

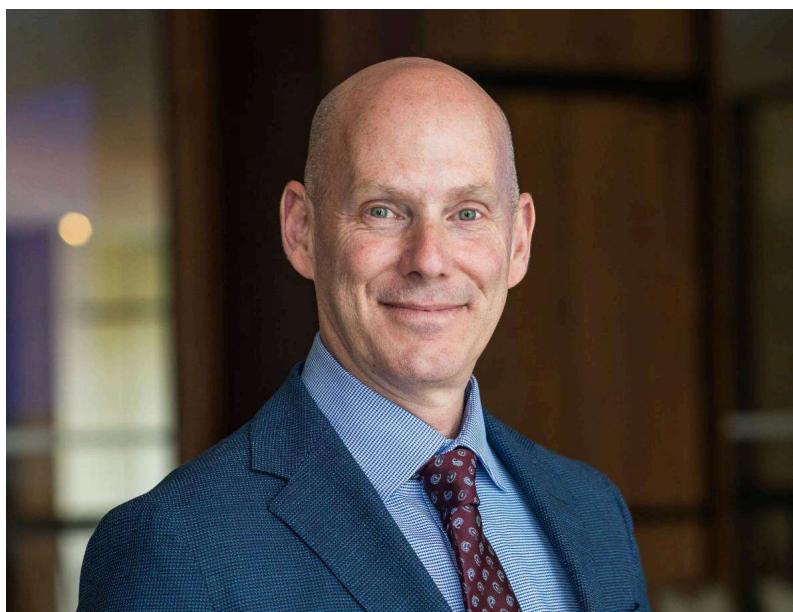


Theresa Somerton

3E: AI Sidekick, Not Overlord: Building AI That Actually Works for You

Presented by Sharon Magor from REENA, this interactive session will introduce leaders in the developmental services sector to the potential of custom AI tools designed to address the unique challenges of the field. Attendees will explore how AI can streamline operations, enhance decision-making, and improve service delivery through simple, adaptable solutions—no tech background required. The session will include real-world examples, live demonstrations, and discussions on ethical considerations and data privacy. By the end, participants will gain practical insights on how to customize AI for their roles and confidently integrate it into their work to boost efficiency while keeping people at the center of their services.

*****Prior to attending this session, we encourage you to download the ChatGPT app***



Sharon Magor
Manager, Marketing & Communications
Reena



OPTIONAL SESSION FRIDAY 2nd May at 8.00AM

Unpacking the Nova Scotia Human Rights Remedy

Join Eddie Bartnik, co-author of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Remedy, as he explores Local Area Coordination as a foundational strategy for making disability supports more personal, local and accountable.



PRESENTATION: Things That Go Bump in the Night - 2nd May at 9AM

What's keeping you up at night? From the emergence of AI to global trade wars, and from (Gasp!) American politicians to a young generation suffering from high anxiety, there's a lot of things contributing to our lack of sleep. These challenges impact all of us, including those with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the agencies that support them, but they also make it harder for our voices to be heard above all the chaos. So how do we separate the

real worries from the imaginary problems, and find a way to move forward with hope?



Brock Dickinson

KEY NOTE PRESENTATION: Friday at 2nd May at 10AM

Resilience Through Difficult Times

Boasting more than 30 years in both amateur professional figure skating, Elizabeth Manley was the first Canadian female to successfully land a triple-double combination jump in competition. She has earned over 50 national & international medals throughout her career, including participating in two Olympic Games, the 1984 Games in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia & the 1988 Games in Calgary, Alberta, where she won the silver medal & became the Olympic freestyle champion in front of her home crowd. She competed in six World Championships, notably earning a silver medal in Budapest, Hungary in 1988, & has won three National Titles along with two additional silver medals at the National Figure Skating Championships.

Reliving her incredible journey for audiences, Manley gives a behind-the-scenes glimpse into what it takes to make it to the top & speaks with honesty about the importance of mental health & surviving the loss

of her parents. Since 1999, Manley has established herself as a distinguished coach, earning her NCCP certification in Canada & becoming an International & National Coach in both Canada & the United States.

Throughout her career, Manley has been deeply committed to philanthropic work. She served as the National Spokesperson for the Canadian Mental Health Association from 1988 through the mid-90s & continues to speak for CMHA throughout Canada today. Her extensive advocacy work includes roles with numerous organizations: CODA, CUSO global volunteer organization, World Vision Canada, Boys & Girls Clubs, the Starlight Foundation of Canada, & Elections Canada. She currently serves as a spokesperson for The Alzheimer's Society of Ottawa & was formerly the national spokesperson for Winners Walk of Hope for Ovarian Cancer Canada. She is an ambassador for the Health Council of Canada & has been a guest speaker for major corporations including Northern Telecom, IBM, Acer Computers, Trans Canada, & SunLife Financial.

Elizabeth has become a Producer of the charity event Elizabeth Manley & Friends for Mental Health & is a member of the Cancer Foundation Courage Campaign Presidents' Advisory Circle in Ottawa. She has spoken at more than 75 schools on the importance of Mental Health, Bullying, & Teen Suicide. She also serves as an MC for numerous public events, including golf tournaments & major dinner galas, & has worked alongside Canadian Tire to promote Skate Canada's Can Skate programming. In 1988, Manley was made a Member of the Order of Canada. She is a member of the Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame, the Ottawa Sports Hall of Fame, & the Skate Canada Hall of Fame. In 2014, she was inducted into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame. She has served as an Athlete Ambassador for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, an Ambassador for the Special Olympics, & supported Toronto's 2024 Olympic Bid.

In 2015, Elizabeth received one of Ottawa's highest honors, "The Builders Award" from United Way, recognizing her continuous contributions & charitable work in the community.



ELIZABETH MANLEY

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

The Conference will also feature a live performance on Thursday Evening from:

THE STRANGE POTATOES

To view the conference agenda, and to enjoy a full interactive experience, download the conference app or access it by

visiting <https://eventmobi.com/oasis25/>. If you download the Eventmobi App, the Event Code is:
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