

OASIS CONFERENCE BREAKOUT SESSIONS 2025

BREAKOUT SESSIONS 1A - 1E

SESSION STREAM	TIME	SESSION TITLE	SESSION DESCRIPTION
Breakout Session 1A	10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	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.
Breakout Session 1B	10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	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.
Breakout Session 1C	10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	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.
Breakout Session 1D	10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Leading with Quality: Strengthening Developmental Services through Leadership, Strategy, and 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.

Breakout Session 1E	10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	OASIS Housing Committee Breakout Session 1: Partnering for Housing – Engaging Landlords & Developers	<p>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.</p> <p>Presented by Tina Williams, attendees will learn 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.</p>
BREAKOUT SESSIONS 2A - 2E			
Breakout Session 2A	1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	OASIS Housing Committee Breakout Session 2: The A to Z of Building – A Roadmap for Developmental Services Agencies	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Breakout Session 2B	1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	Breaking Barriers, Building Solutions: What Leaders Need to Know About Health & IDD	<p>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 Lunskey (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.</p>

Breakout Session 2C	1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	Rethinking Corporate Integration in a J2B World	Join Brendon Pooran, Managing Partner at PooranLaw, for an insightful session on corporate integration models in the developmental services sector. From shared management services to full mergers, Brendon will break down the legal structures, advantages, and challenges of each approach. 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.
Breakout Session 2D	1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	Square peg in a round hole: Disability support organizations and 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.
Breakout Session 2E	1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	National Caregiving Strategy: A Path to Support and 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.
BREAKOUT SESSIONS 3A - 3E			
Breakout Session 3A	3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Labour & Employment Law Update	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.

Breakout Session 3B	3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	What is OADD and 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.
Breakout Session 3C	3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Future-Proofing Community Organizations: Building Sustainable, High-Performing Teams Before Change Arrives	Join Michael Schiel, Director at Invictus High Performance, 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.
Breakout Session 3D	3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Exploring Access and Utilization of Passport Funding: Perspectives of People with the Label of Intellectual Disability and their Families	Presented by Yvonne Spicer from the Successful Advocacy Research Group, this research study investigates the gap between available Passport Funding and the unmet needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities in Ontario. Through a province-wide survey of 422 respondents, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the study reveals key insights on access barriers and the accommodations needed for participation in online spaces. The interim results highlight how many individuals rely on assistance from family members or support workers to navigate these processes. This session will explore how agencies can better support people with disabilities, particularly by improving access to online resources and increasing the utilization of available funding to help individuals live authentic lives.

Breakout Session 3E	3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	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.
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