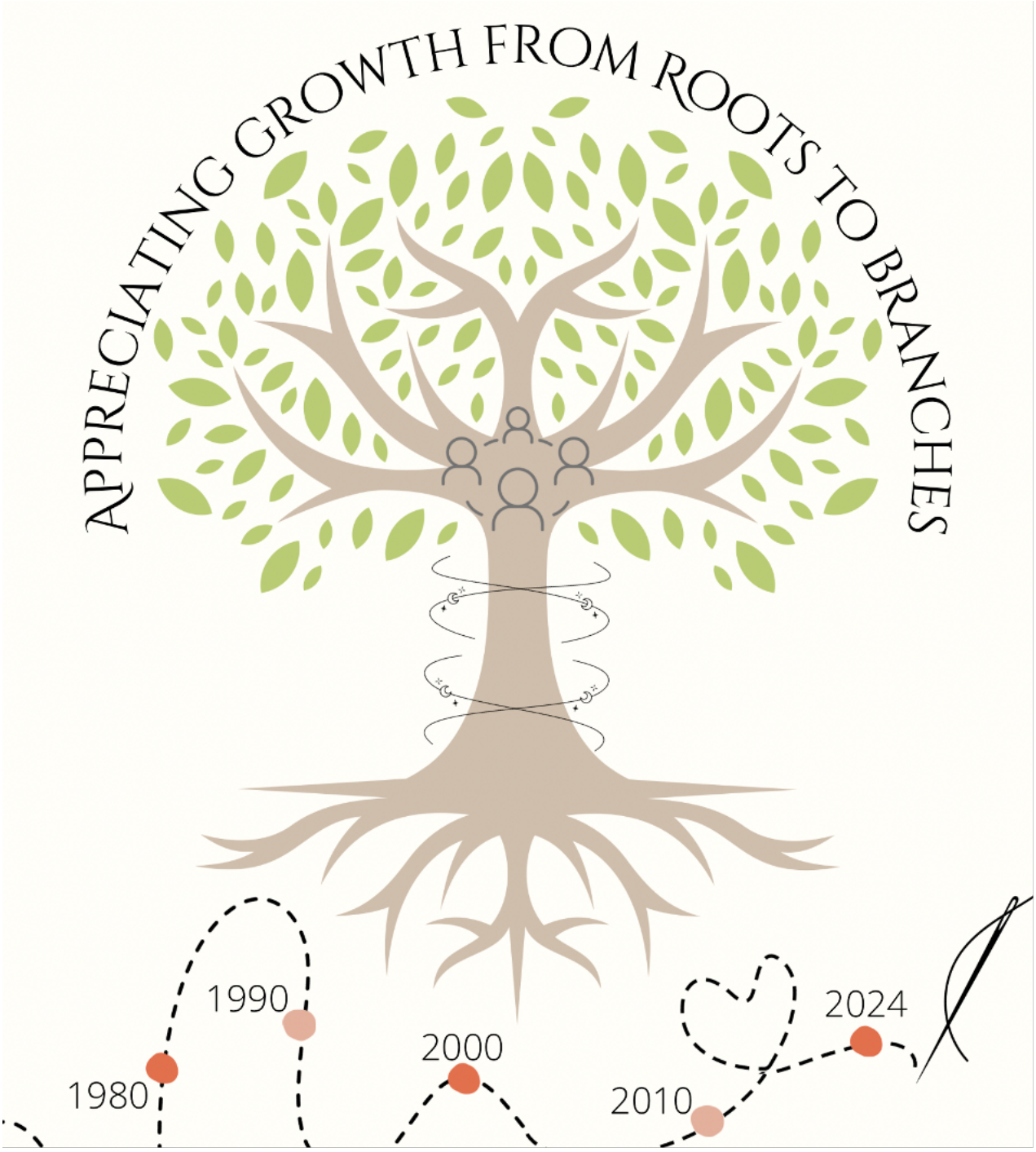
CityU (UN) Conference



June 7 - 9, 2024

MEd School Counselling

CityUniversity in Canada

MC Master of Counselling

UnConference Information for our Community



Photo contributed by Tina Li

Territorial Acknowledgement







xʷməθkʷəy̓əm **səlilwətaɬ** **Sḵwx̱wú7mesh**

We acknowledge that the CityU Vancouver Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Nations of xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh), and Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) people.

We also recognize that the Canada many of us know was built on Indigenous lands without consent. Manipulation and violence have been, and continue to be, used to control Indigenous peoples' bodies and lands through colonialism.

Importantly, alongside every act of violence exists a parallel story of resistance to that violence. We recognize and honour Indigenous peoples historical and ongoing resistance to colonial violence.

We invite our community to learn more about these Coast Salish Nations:
xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) https://www.musqueam.bc.ca/our-story/
səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) https://twnation.ca/our-story/
Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) https://www.squamish.net/about-our-nation/

We also invite you to learn about the territories from which you will be joining the UnConference and to learn more about Territory Acknowledgements: https://www.cityuniversity.ca/

indigenous-engagement/

Explore more learning resources: https://www.cityuniversity.ca/learning-resources/

Museum of Vancouver Information

All in-person participants receive a free admission to the Museum of Vancouver as a gift of learning from CityU to our community.

Learn more about current exhibitions: https://museumofvancouver.ca/feature-exhibitions

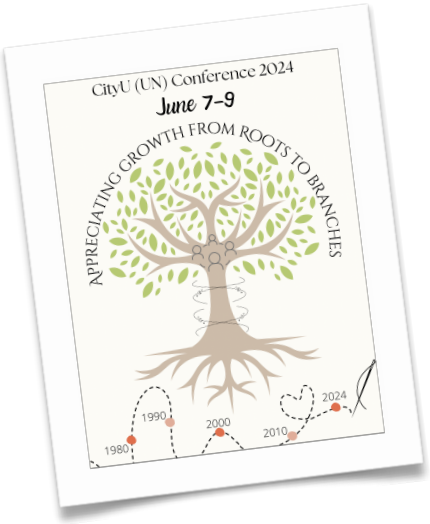
Learn about Unity Indigenous Plant Garden - A Living Exhibition https://museumofvancouver.ca/unity-indigenous-plant-garden

Learn more about Indigenous Plants: INDIGENOUS PLANT GUIDE INDIGENOUS PLANT GUIDE (AUDIO)

PLANT GUIDE IN SQUAMISH LANGUAGE

PLANT GUIDE IN HƏN̓ Q̓ƏMIN̓ ƏM̓ LANGUAGE

Appreciating Growth from Roots to Branches



Student Organizing Committee

The theme of the UnConference - Appreciating Growth from Roots to Branches - was created by the Student Organizing Committee. And the title page image was designed by Dorian Richardson.



NOTE ABOUT THE THEME AND THE TITLE IMAGE FROM DORIAN

Appreciating growth from roots to branches is the message to convey interconnectedness. The idea of the tree embodies the core ideology of this conference. The rings around the trunk represent the rings found from the cambium to heartwood; the history intertwined with the tree trunk from the past being grounded by its roots to the branches of our future. Connecting at the ends are the leaves, representing the give-and-take, likewise to the tree's inhalation of carbon and exhalation of oxygen. At the center are the people symbolizing the individuals and communities bridging the connection of our roots to our branches.



NOTE FROM YOSHIAKI

I am ready to bring my energy, creativity, and dedication to the team and help create a conference that is both memorable and impactful.

Student UnConference Organizing Committee,
Dorian Richardson (MC Virtual) and Yoshiaki Fujita (BAM)

Dear Community,

We are thrilled to invite you to the UnConference, a unique event that celebrates the outstanding work of our students. This gathering, driven by and for students, is designed to recognize and honour their achievements as scholars, practitioners, and advocates. As we move into the 8th iteration of this gathering and celebration, we would like to share some foundational beliefs of this event that glow our paths as we move together in this journey.

The Fireflies of the UnConference:

Relationality and Indigenous Wisdom

The heart of the UnConference is relationality, particularly in our connection with the Indigenous communities whose lands CityU occupies, with our community, and with ourselves. We draw inspiration from Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, which emphasize deep respect, reciprocity, and interconnectedness. These values guide us as we strive to create a space where everyone feels a sense of belonging, mutual respect, genuine acknowledgment and authentic connections.

Celebrating Diversity and Community

The UnConference is a space where we celebrate diverse ways of being, knowing, and belonging. It is a community effort where everyone is a learner, and every voice matters. Our aim is to create an environment where students can see themselves and their work in ways they might not have imagined before—an experience that is both profound and transformative.

"We are all here to learn from one another, fostering an environment where growth and discovery are collective endeavours."

Embracing Ubuntu and Umoja

Together, we will explore what learning can look like when we remove hierarchies and embrace the idea of Ubuntu and Umoja: "I am because we are." This principle reminds us of the interconnectedness of our community and the importance of mutual respect, relationality, and reciprocity.

Moving Toward Decolonization

The UnConference is not just an event but a movement toward decolonizing our hearts, minds, practices, and spaces. It provides the freedom to decolonize our educational spaces, fostering a sense of belonging for everyone involved. This is an opportunity to hold spaces for all to embody healing values, to walk the talk, and to create a learning experience that bridges institutional practices with decolonizing efforts.

Our Hopes and Intentions:

Our intention is for everyone to leave this event with a sense of wellness, having contributed to and benefited from systemic supports that nurture and sustain our community. Each student, leading and responsible for different areas, is supported by the broader CityU community, ensuring a collaborative and empowering experience.

"By embracing the learners' stance, we acknowledge the value this event brings to the wider community. We are all here to learn from one another."

We are excited about the possibilities this UnConference presents and look forward to coming together to learn, grow, and celebrate as a community. Let us embrace this opportunity to support one another, to recognize our shared achievements, and to continue our journey of decolonization and transformation.

UnConference Team

Neha Arora

Laura Farres

Renee Hock

Carla Alexander

Kristina Berynets

Danijela Vukovic

Tanya Scorah

Maika Tshimbalanga

Elvia Pinilla

Eleonora Joensuu

Kate O'Neill

Carolyne Begin

Amy Huang

Laurel Tien

A Message from Carla Alexander



To all Unconference presenters, participants, and organizers,

Congratulations to all presenters for your courage and intellectual effort to get to this stage of your academic program and career. It is a significant milestone and in the academic tradition, a rite of passage, to present your scholarly work to your peers in this kind of (semi) formal setting. I hope that you will find it meaningful to share your thinking and engage with the response that your work elicits.

Each conference I hear from presenters and participants how impressive the work is, and how much they have learned by joining the Unconference. You might find yourself surprised by how scholarly your colleagues are, and you may surprise yourself as well. You belong here!

The diverse perspectives and ways of doing, being and knowing that you will participate in during the Unconference are inspiring, and in my experience quite humbling. I wish this experience for all participants and presenters. I invite you to join in this scholarly community with enthusiasm and curiosity, and to also bring your hearts and minds to the truth and reconciliation activities led by Elder Martin Sparrow, with his family. I am grateful for the relationship we are building as we spend time together, and the support they are lending the CityU community to learn and practice in a good way.

In tribute to wonderful colleageus who have left CityU this year, I would like to recognize the collaborative way Dr. Laura Farres has worked with students to create this innovative, student-led UnConference. Jalissa Schmidt shared her considerable gifts with the Unconference development and the CityU community as a whole as we engage in reconciliation and learning. Thank you and best wishes!

I offer my thanks to the student organizers, faculty and staff for their work to make this a welcoming student-centred event, where people can find their way to share their knowledge and perspective with the community in a way that is meaningful to them, supported by and deepening warm relations.

Carla Alexander
Vice-President, Canadian Academic Programs, BC

Message from Maika Tshimbalanga

Celebrating the Graduating Class of 2024 Capstones in Counselling and Education

Dear Graduates of the Master of Counselling and Master of Education in School Counselling Programs,



As we gather to celebrate the remarkable and exceptional achievements of the Class of 2024, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to each one of you. Your presentations showcase the innovative and impactful capstones that you have diligently developed, reflecting your dedication, creativity. They also reflect the profound understanding of the field, marking the culmination of years of hard work, and an unwavering commitment to your professional and personal growth.

As you step into your roles as counsellors and educators, I invite you to reflect on the profound wisdom found in the African principles of Ubuntu and Umoja, and consider how these philosophies can help guide your practice and enrich your impact in the fields of education and counselling. These African principles not only enrich the academic and practical aspects of counselling and education but also offer a tens through which we can view and address the challenges in our communities.

"**Ubuntu"**– often translated as "I am because we are" – emphasizes the interconnectedness of all people and reminds us of our shared humanity and the importance of community. In your practice, let **Ubuntu** inspire you to foster environments where empathy, understanding, and mutual respect are paramount. Whether you are working with students, clients, or colleagues, through group therapy sessions, community outreach programs, or school-based initiatives, you have embodied the spirit of Ubuntu in nurturing a sense of belonging and mutual support

among individuals. Remember that your actions and words contribute to the collective well-being of the community. Embrace the power of relationships and the strength that comes from supporting one another.

"**Umoja**"– meaning "Unity" – calls for a harmonious and united community and emphasizes the significance of solidarity and collaboration. This principle already exists in the collaborative and inclusive frameworks within your projects. As you embark on your professional journeys, let **Umoja** guide you in building inclusive and united communities.

By prioritizing unity, you will continue to develop strategies that encourage cooperation among stakeholders, strengthen partnerships between schools and families, and build resilient support networks. In the school setting, work towards creating harmonious partnerships between educators, families, and students. In counselling, strive to develop cohesive support networks that empower individuals and promote holistic healing. Unity will be a cornerstone of your success, enabling you to address challenges with collective strength and shared vision, leading to more effective and sustainable solutions in both counselling and educational settings.

This UnConference is not only a celebration of your individual achievements but also a recognition of the collective effort that has brought you to this point. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my deepest gratitude to the profession for welcoming our new graduates. Your mentorship and support are invaluable as they transition into their careers.

To the families of our graduates, thank you for your unwavering support and encouragement throughout this journey. Your belief in their potential has been a source of strength and motivation.

A special thank you to the CityU faculty and staff, whose dedication to excellence and passion for education have been instrumental in shaping the futures of these graduates. Your guidance, wisdom, and commitment have left an indelible mark on their academic and personal development.

2024 Graduates, as you embark on the next chapter of your lives, I wish you all the best. May you carry forward the principles of Ubuntu and Umoja in your work, continually striving to make a positive difference in the lives of those you serve. Your journey is just beginning, and the world awaits the contributions you will make.

Congratulations once again, and may your future be filled with success, fulfillment, and the profound joy of making a difference.

Thank you for joining us at the 2024 UnConference with its enlightening and empowering presentations.
Warm regards,

Maika Tshimbalanga, Director of Enrollment and Student Success

A Message from Dr. Joel L. Domingo

Hello and welcome to the 8th biannual UnConference!



There is a word used in traditional research approaches called *trustworthiness*, which refers to the many underlying principles that ensure that research is done in a way that is reliable, objective, transparent, replicable, and ethical. In short, trustworthiness can be described as those qualities that make research honest and fair. While all these are the standard ideas behind conducting good research, I like to also think of trustworthiness in the broader sense and how it intersects with some of the bigger questions surrounding the integrity and purposes of research.

As conversations continue to ramp up regarding the value of universities and intellectual space, the question of how inquiry helps address and even ameliorate the human condition becomes even more prominent in our modern dialogue. In a world of increasing skepticism of facts and ideas, strengthening the confidence that we have of our academic institutions through trustworthy research is a notable, worthy, and even timely, aspiration.

Our institution prides itself on the idea that both rigor and application are a necessary combination to make a transformative impact on the world. Rigor is not merely about producing sound intellectual insights, it is also about approaching our curiosity through the lenses of integrity, empathy, and a commitment to make a positive impact in the communities in which we are situated.

All these factors come together at this UnConference. The desire not only to present and share knowledge that has undergone academic rigor while situated in contexts that when applied, makes an impact is what this gathering is all about.

The UnConference has always been a nexus for the exchange of ideas and insights that have at times transcended established disciplinary boundaries. It is a space where diverse perspectives converge, fostering a collaborative spirit that is essential in tackling the multifaceted challenges we face. By sharing our collective knowledge, we aim to ignite the spark of inspiration that propels us towards innovative solutions.

May we embrace the opportunities and challenges that come with sharing knowledge, recognizing that each capstone project has the potential to contribute in several spheres, from the academic, to the practical, and may our shared commitment to this work pave the way for a future where inquiry is not just a intellectual exercise but a powerful agent that builds trust and creates positive and lasting change in our world.

All the best,

Dr. Joel L. Domingo

Director of Research

What to Expect at the UnConference — ONLINE

Saturday, June 8

The unconference program has the schedule with main links (see below) and all necessary information. Session descriptions are at the end of the program. This program is your go-to-guide for the event. Below please find a list of what to expect at the unconference.

Zoom link for June 8

https://cityu-edu.zoom.us/j/88998672698?pwd=bMEuGLBDp620LosyijkLrohPFZPo5g.1

Meeting ID: 889 9867 2698

Passcode: 556409

General Information

- You are welcome to join and depart the unconference at any time throughout the day.
- Zoom is the Unconference online platform. We ask that you consider downloading the most up-to-date software.
- There is one main zoom link for the unconference which is in the unconference schedule.
- When entering any of the zoom rooms (main or breakout), please mute your mic right away. You can choose to leave your camera on or off. In an Unconference, you are invited to be part of many of the sessions, provide comments, ask questions, and discuss, so please unmute as appropriate.
- During concurrent sessions, there will be a facilitator in the main zoom room to provide support to access breakout rooms as needed.
- Sessions may be recorded, so please choose to participate in a way that feels comfortable for you. Session moderators will remind participants of the

recording.

- Breakout rooms will be used for concurrent sessions. From the main room, attendees will be given the option to select the breakout session of choice. One can return to the main room to enter another room during most of the breakout sessions.

Concurrent Session Breakout Protocol

- In the breakout room, there will be a student moderator who will provide the support to the presenters and attendees.
- There will likely be a brief period at the beginning of the session as the moderator checks in with presenters and prepares them for the session. A brief pause will also occur between each presenter to support set up needs.
    - **There are five sharing formats:**

❖ 10-minute Prerecorded CityU TALK sessions – Similar to a TED talk, students present their capstone findings via video. These sessions will be streamed in breakout rooms prior to the official start of the day during the UnConference Gallery on June 8

❖ 15-minute TALK sessions – Students share their topic and invite questions, ideas, curiosities that they would like to talk with, about, or through with those attending the session

❖ 20-30 minute BUILD sessions – Students collaborate with those attending about an idea for a tool, a resource, workshop, practice, etc. emerging from their capstone that they would like to BUILD on with others' support.

❖ 30-40 minute TEACH sessions – Students share hands-on tutorials, practical tools/ exercises, or embodied practices experientially related to their capstone with session participants. Active participation in a TEACH session is strongly encouraged.

❖ 10-15 minute PLAY sessions – Students share creative representations which reflect their learning taken from their capstone. This session is meant to celebrate diverse ways of knowing and sharing about the

capstone experience or topic.

NOTE: Please participate and collaborate when asked! Students are looking for your ideas, engagement, and insights. This event is meant to create space for our community to collaborate, share, and learn together!

- Attendees can arrive and leave the zoom room at any time, but we ask that you choose your exit at transition times if possible.
- If anything in the session is triggering or creates any distress, feel free to reach out by chat to either Laura Farres, Neha Arora, or Kristina Berynets at any time via the private chat function. Kristina, Neha, or Laura will likely be in the main zoom room during concurrent sessions and are able to provide support or resources as appropriate.
- Leaving any concurrent session will bring you back to the main room where you are able to enter the other session running at the same time.
- If you are interested in receiving a copy of the presentation, please contact the presenter directly.

Student Reflections and Experiences: Capstone Student Q & A Discussion

On Saturday, there will be a round table discussion called Student Reflections on Capstone: Q & A Discussion. This is an open discussion among the students who are presenting at the unconference; the unconference attendees; and the CityU community overall. The session will be facilitated by our student organizing committee and in preparation for the discussion, we ask that students reflect on these questions for the session:

- *What have you learned through your journey that you wish you had known at the beginning? Anything you didn't expect?*
- *How have you been able to balance your workload with other obligations? Any suggestions on what worked for you or what you found most helpful?*
- *Would you do Capstone and Internship at the same time again, or not? How do you balance both?*

- *Can you tell us about the journey from your choice of topic and what you learned from the experience? Any regrets or things that surprised you?*

Capstone students, we would be so appreciative if you could find the time to attend this session, and to share your wisdoms about the process of writing, your learnings and to provide recommendations for other students yet to begin the capstone journey. Please consider attending to support your CityU student community. All are welcome.

Pre-recorded CityU Talk Sessions

- Some sessions have been prerecorded and will be shown prior to the official start of the online day.
- Students who have prerecorded their sessions are invited to attend their screening, however, are not required to do so (see schedule for screening times).
- Presenting at the Unconference is just one way that CityU students can share their research.

Networking

- Networking is an important part of attending the unconference. Online this can be a little trickier. To support networking, we encourage presenters and participants to exchange emails/contact information as a way of continuing the conversation and connection. When time allows, the breakout rooms will also stay open briefly after sessions to engage in informal chats.

General Netiquette Guidelines for Our Conference

- Professional behaviour is expected at all times.
- When asking questions or making comments in the chat, be sure messages are relevant to the topics of the discussion.
- Be mindful of language both in text and over video. This is intended to be a safe

and respectful sharing space.

- Please be respectful toward other participants whose views may differ from your own.
- Please remain courteous at all times.
- Be supportive of others by encouraging and praising contributions.

Disclaimer: Recording

Please note some sessions will be recorded during the unconference. If you do not wish to appear in the recording, please turn off your video. The session recordings will not be made public but might be available upon presenters' requests.

What to Expect at the UnConference — In person

Sunday, June 9

The unconference program has the schedule with main links (see below) and all necessary information. Session descriptions are at the end of the program. This program is your go-to-guide for the event. Below please find a list of what to expect at the unconference.

Museum of Vancouver Information

What to Bring

Lunch will be provided along with some tea, coffee and a few light snacks. We encourage you to bring a water bottle and any additional personal snacks or drinks you may prefer. You may also consider bringing a blanket if you would like to enjoy Vanier Park or Kits beach during the breaks.

Getting to the Museum

The Museum of Vancouver is located at 1100 Chestnut Street, Vanier Park in Kitsilano Vancouver, approximately 6 blocks northeast from Cornwall street (toward the water).

For specific directions and more information about modes of transportation, check out the MOV website - https://museumofvancouver.ca/directions-to-mov

Parking

If you are traveling by car, there are a few parking options.

- There is paid parking at the museum which unfortunately is quite expensive. The cost is $19.10 for the day. There are accessible parking spots in this same lot (regular rates apply). This lot is run by Easy Park and monitored VERY regularly.
- In the neighbourhood around the museum there are some two-hour parking spots which are not time restricted on Sundays. So, if you can find a two hour spot nearby, you can park there for the day.

- On the south side of Cornwall, there is an elementary school where parking around the school is permitted on non-school days. If you park there, it is about a 10-minute walk to the museum.

If you are travelling by bike, there are bike racks right outside the museum. Please note you are not permitted to bring your bike inside.

Sign in

Once you arrive, you will be asked to check in right away. You should find some unconference signage and our team there to direct you to the registration desk in the Joyce Walley room. At registration, you will receive your name tag, ASK ME ABOUT… tag, and your unconference goodie bag along with your lunch ticket (if applicable). You will also have access to the Museum of Vancouver throughout the day. See this link for the feature exhibits: https://museumofvancouver.ca/feature-exhibitions

Name and ASK ME ABOUT tags: *A big advantage of the in-person unconference day is the opportunity to meet and engage with others in informal ways. When you check in, you will receive a name tag. We encourage you to display your name tag so others can see it and get to know who you are. Additionally, you will be given a tag that says ASK ME ABOUT… We would like to invite you to write something on the tag that you would be happy to engage in conversation with others about and display the tag prominently with your name tag. You can choose what you would like to put. It can be related to counselling or to anything you might like to discuss (i.e., tennis, art, Italy, favourite movie, who I am here to support). We are hoping to provide easy pathways to conversations and sharing.*

UnConference Spaces

During the unconference, we will be using two rooms along with the outside patio and park.

Joyce Walley Room - This space is the central unconference room for the day where registration, the welcome, and whole group gatherings will occur. It is located on the main floor of the MOV.

Patio/History Room - This space will be used when concurrent sessions are taking place. It is located on the lower floor of the MOV and is connected directly to the patio and outdoor space. Some session leaders may choose to take their groups outside onto the patio or into Vanier park. So if a session is in the patio/history room, come prepared to be mobile and active.

In your welcome package, there should be a printed schedule for the day. The same schedule can be accessed via the QR code that links to the unconference program. Finally, there will be schedules posted outside each of the rooms and in various locations. There should also be unconference leaders available to direct you accordingly or to answer any questions.

Please do your best to arrive in the designated area/room on time for the start of the session block. If you do have to exit or enter late, please wait for a natural break so as not to be too disruptive. Remember if you are going to the patio/history room, the session leader may be taking everyone outside, so being on time means you won't miss anything.

We know students are excited to share about their capstones and will be using different modes to do this. If you are interested in receiving more information about their capstone, please connect with the presenter directly.

Washrooms

Washrooms are located in the Lower Lobby of MOV, which can be accessed by elevator or stairs.

Taking Care of Yourself and Our Community

Just a mindful reminder that topics at the unconference will cover a range of counselling issues and if during the session anything is triggering or creates any distress, feel free to reach out to one of the unconference leaders, such as Laura Farres, Neha Arora, or Kristina Berynets at any time. Kristina, Laura, or Neha will likely be in or around the Joyce Walley room during concurrent sessions and are able to provide support or resources as appropriate.

Lunch and Connect

During the lunch time, we invite you to connect with student session leaders and others at the unconference. This is a great time to explore the ASK ME ABOUT… tags and engage in further discussions about the day and the field of counselling. The lunch provided is meant to be mobile so participants can have their conversations both in and outside.

Recordings and Photographs

Be aware that throughout the day we will be taking pictures of the various goings on at the unconference. These pictures may be used to market future unconferences or to be shared in reflection with our CityU community.

Additionally, some session leaders may request that their presentation is recorded. This is more common at the virtual unconference on Saturday but could also occur at the Sunday event.

UnConference Opening Event

Friday, June 7 - 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm (PDT)/6:30 pm – 8:30 pm (MDT)

Register using the link: https://cityu-edu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAocOCrqD8qG90Vwt3_HaaNhD0N6xRz2vit

Dialogue on Relationality in Inquiry and Learning

As we continue to unconference our approaches to capstone and research, we would like to begin the 8th biannual UnConference with a Dialogue on Relationality. As we celebrate our interconnectedness and the importance of relationship, we would like to explore the role of relationality in learning and inquiry. In a conversation with students and faculty, we would like to reflect on what relationality means to us as practitioners, scholars, and learners. What does relationality look like and feel like? How can we intentionally honour it and recognize its role in our work? How can we make space for it in systems that are not always relational? We will share stories, experiences, and honour the impact that relationality can have on our lives.

Come join the conversation with Neha Arora, Falon Marie, Tracy Laverty, Michelle Morris, and Jalissa Schmidt.



Neha Arora

Neha is the Associate Program Director of the Master of Counseling (MC) program at City U in Canada and a Ph.D. student at Simon Fraser University. With a diverse background in both academic and professional domains, Neha has over 15 years of extensive experience and a versatile, care-centered skill set. Her expertise includes online and in-person instruction, curriculum development, and student-led engagements.

Neha is an inquirer and (un)settler on indigenous territories, focusing her research on decoloniality in higher education. She approaches this exploration through a multi-faceted lens incorporating more-than-human and affective perspectives, rooted in entanglement, reciprocity, and relationality principles. Neha views decolonization as a transformative process involving identifying trauma and its subsequent healing. She is deeply committed to understanding indigenous onto-epistemologies and respectfully integrating their perspectives into her academic and pedagogical work.

Falon Marie



Educator; Story Teller and Spiritual Warrior. I am proudly a woman of blended ancestral background. My ancestral roots run wide and deep. The echoes of connection that were broken due to colonization are an ever-evolving restoration in progress. I have ancestral ties to Shíshálh, Quw'utsun, Tsimshian (Kitselas: Laxgibuu), European (French, Welsh, English, Irish, Scottish, Swedish, Norwegian) and Hawaiian Nations. Due to impacts of colonization, the complexities of identity are multifaceted. I am an urban Indigenous woman who has registered Indian Status. However, I am not enrolled with any of the three member Nations of which I have cultural ties. Nevertheless, I am deeply committed to reclaiming my kinship ties with the xe' xe' tumuxw and All My Relations.

Tracy Laverty



Taansihi, tracy laverty dishinukawshon, Michif niiya and Saskatoon doochin. I move carefully in this collaborative space as an educator with 20 years of experience creating safe and inclusive spaces for Métis students and families and as a new Métis Psychologist, building a practice that reflects my own Ways of Knowing. My maternal family line reaches back to England, Wales, Scotland, and the Netherlands and my paternal ancestors have taken scrip in Red River, fished the coastal waters of the Orkney Islands, and made their living

across the plains of Saskatchewan. I am deeply grateful for my family and community without whom I would have nothing.

Michelle Morris

Michelle Morris was born and raised on the coast in various small communities throughout the province. Michelle has a diverse background and extended health journey which led to her passion for mental health and the importance of community involvement. She has completed her schoolwork at City Uinversity and is in practicum at two sites, BC Cancer and the Adler Centre. She is set to graduate end of 2024 with a Master's in Counselling.



Jalissa Schmidt



Jalissa Schmidt is a multi-racial member of the Acho Dene Koe First Nation, an Indigenous educator, an advocate for systemic change, and the owner of Cedar Bridges Consulting.

Email: JalissaSchmidt@cedarbridges.ca
Website: https://cedarbridges.ca/

UnConference Schedule: Saturday, June 8

Zoom Link	https://cityu-edu.zoom.us/j/88998672698?pwd=bMEuGLBDp620LosyijkLrohPFZPo5g.1
8:30 AM	**UnConference Gallery – Prerecorded Session Viewings** *Choose the Breakout Room that you would like to join. Pre- recorded sessions will be streamed in order below. You can move from one breakout room to the other.

Prerecorded sessions **Breakout Room 1**	**Prerecorded sessions** **Breakout Room 2**	**Prerecorded sessions** **Breakout Room 3**	**Prerecorded sessions** **Breakout Room 4**	**Prerecorded sessions** **Breakout Room 5**	**Prerecorded sessions** **Breakout Room 6**
Pooyeh (Nelly) Jalalipour- (MC- Victoria) *Utilizing Self-Care Strategies to Support Therapists Offering Video Therapy Following the Onset of The Covid-19 Pandemic*	**Lianne Labistour- (MC- Vancouver)** *Chosen Loss: A Closer Look at Adult-Child Parental Estrangement*	**Lillian Huynh- (MC- Vancouver)** *Aging and Mental Health: The role of Positive Well-being*	**Chantel Van Vilet- (MC- Vancouver)** *The Psychological Impact of Female Infertility*	**Hayley Bouton- (MC- Vancouver)** *Blurring the Boundaries of Racial Privilege and Oppression: Exploring the Narrative and Lived Experience of Mixed Race Individuals*	**Riyah Sidhu- (MC- Vancouver)** *Couples Therapy: Looking at Infidelity Through a Multi-therapeutic Lens*

Kristina Sadrolashrafi- (MC- Vancouver) *More than words: Importance of the body's nervous system and the value of somatic experiencing*	**Dionne Chan- (MC- Vancouver)** *Intersectional and Systemic Factors in Migratory Grief and Migrant Mental Health*	**Claire Nyrose- (MC- Victoria)** *Utilizing Harm Reduction Strategies in Eating Disorder Counselling*	**Lucia Arreaga- (MC- Vancouver)** *Beyond Hot Flashes: Counselling for Empowerment and Improved Mental Health in Perimenopause*	**Sherine McNaughton- (MC- Vancouver)** *Understanding Misogynoir and its Impact on the Mental Health of Black and Mixed Race Black Cis, Trans, Queer and Lesbian Identifying Women. A Counsellor's Guide to Exploring Misogynoir*	**Amanda Avison- (MC- Victoria)** *Interracial Couples and the Barriers that Affect the Relationship: Implications for Couples Counselling*
Harmony Wildman- (MC – Victoria) *Healing Through Humour: A Space for Laughter in a Historically Heavy Setting*	**Leigh Kankewitt- (MC- Vancouver)** *Watching Someone You Love Die: An Integrative Approach for Adolescents Dealing with the Traumatic Impact of Parental Life-limiting Illness*	**Rachel Kjearsgaard- (MC- Victoria)** *Smartphones and ADHD*	**Valerie Hamilton- (MC- Vancouver)** *Midlife Women's Health: Elevated Risk of Depression During Perimenopause*	**Nicole Randell- (MC- Victoria)** *Therapy in Solidarity: The Ethical Imperative of Social Justice in Counselling Through Decolonizing and Queering your Practice*	**Kelsey Lee- (MC- Vancouver)** *Viewing Insecurely Attached Couple's Relationship Satisfaction Through an Attachment Theory Lens*
Amy Wierks- (MC- Vancouver) *Healing from the Harmful Effects of Evangelical Purity Culture*	**Tsu Weir Helen Young- (MC- Vancouver)** *Effects on Childhood experiencing a death of a parent*	**Georgina Holdal- (MC- Vancouver)** *Boomers — Babies No More*	**Julia Wilkinson- (MC- Vancouver)** *Gendered Unpaid Labor in Parenthood: Impacts on Women's Mental Health*	**Navdeep Khabra- (MC – Vancouver)** *Building Cultural Humility for Therapeutic Practice with Queer Racialized South Asian Men*	**Luis Zavala- (MC- Vancouver)** *Psychological Effects of Problematic Internet Pornography Use*

Sage Stevenson- (MC-Vancouver) *Etuaptmumk: Healing Indigenous Ancestral Roots Through Group Circle*	**Rosalind Christian (MC – Virtual)** *Population Level Interventions, for Population Level Distress, in the Context of Wildfire and Climate Catastrophe*	**Tina Li- (MC-Vancouver)** *Scroll to Cope - The Relationship Between Problematic Social Media Use and Emotional Regulation*	**Sophie Nataros- (MC- Vancouver)** *Gaps in approaches to women's health - eating disorders*	**Suzanne Wood- (MC Virtual-Alberta)** *Psychogenic Non-Epileptic Seizures - When the Unconscious Presents as Neurological Disorder*	**Sierra Birkett- (MC-Vancouver)** *Romantic Partnerships in The Long Shadow of Childhood Trauma: dynamics, complexities and ways forward*
Ingrid Mesquita- (MC-Victoria) *Exploring the Radical Imagination Through Afrofuturism*	**Yalda Ravanbaksh- (MC- Vancouver)** *Intergenerational Trauma Healing: An exploration of Select Somatic Therapies and Constructive Resilience*	**Nidia Teran Esparza- (MC- Vancouver)** *The Neurobiological and Clinical Consequences of childhood trauma: Consideration for treatment in psychology.*	**Manisha Bains- (MC- Vancouver)** *Domestic Violence within the South Asian Community*	**Kiran Dhaliwal (MC-Vancouver)-** *Ketamine Along with Psychotherapy for Treatment Resistant Depression (TRD)*	**Sara Durand- (MC- Victoria)** *Examining the Influence of Harmful Social Media Spaces on Men: Exploration of Developing Alternative spaces to Mitigate the risk of both Men and Women's Well-being*
Hilary Ison (MC-Vancouver) *Functional neurological disorder and emotion-focused treatment*	**Ryan Gaskin MC-Vancouver** Religious Trauma: Making Sense of, and Seeking Healing for Spiritual Wounds	**Anja Hedji Milasin (MC-Vancouver)** *MDMA-Assisted Couples Therapy for Trauma Healing*	**Dulce Castillo- (MC- Vancouver)** *Is a holistic therapy possible in a brief modality format?*	**Lea Hutcheon- (MC- Victoria)** *'We Move Together': Bringing Disability Justice to Counselling Practice for the Benefit of All Clients*	***Zöe Dagneault MC-Vancouver*** *Where There is Tinder, There's Fire: Navigating Love App-tually by Understanding Red Flags through an Attachment Lens*

10:00 AM	**Welcome, Acknowledgement and Opening Remarks:** **Welcome Opening with Elder Martin Sparrow** It is with gratitude that we begin the day with an opening from Elder Martin Sparrow of xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nation. Opening Remarks with Neha Arora & Laura Farres (MC Associate Directors and Capstone Coordinators)

10:30 AM	**TALK & TEACH Sessions** *Choose the Breakout Room that you would like to join. In order to minimize disruptions for the teach session, please remain in the breakout room for the sessions.

TEACH session **Breakout Room 1**	**TALK sessions** **Breakout Room 2**
Julia Folk **MC-Victoria** Treatment of Chronic Pain in the Therapy Room	**Zane Jiwa** **MC-Vancouver** Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Impact on Emotional Regulation
	Michelle Heshka **MC-Vancouver** Ramp up Awareness: Psychological Impact of Acquired Lower Limb Amputations

11:15 AM	Break

11:30 AM	**TALK and BUILD sessions** *Choose the Breakout Room that you would like to join. In order to minimize disruptions for the build session, please remain in the breakout room for the sessions.

BUILD session **Breakout Room 1**	**TALK sessions** **Breakout Room 2**
Finu Cherian **MC-Vancouver** Empowering Counsellors to Better Support Informal Caregivers to Prevent and Treat Caregiver Burnout	**Samantha Oakes** **MC-Vancouver** Life without Mom: Understanding Developmental Challenges
	Tara Snape **MC-Vancouver** Counsellor Recommended Resources: Considering Accessibility (and Social Media) When Referring Parenting Resources

12:00 PM	**Lunch break** Feel free to share feedback for the presenters while you enjoy your lunch.

1:00 PM	**TEACH session - Breakout Room** **Tracy Laverty (MC-Virtual)** miyoopimatishikh - Métis Wellbeing

1:45 PM	**Somatic Break with Madeleine Downey** Madeleine (she/her), Soul YogaWith over 15 years of dedicated exploration as a Yoga student and now in my second year as a teacher, I've had the privilege of exploring diverse teaching styles. In a world that often moves at a rapid pace, what has consistently resonated with me is the transformative power of self-expression and movement—a practice that allows us to center our minds, reconnect with ourselves, and discover joy in the free movement of our bodies.  As a teacher, my goal is to bring my students out of their minds and into their bodies, fostering presence and self-awareness. It is my mission to create a welcoming, fun, and energetic space for you to discover, explore, and express your true self.
2:00 PM	**Student Reflections and Experiences: Capstone Student Q & A Discussion** This is an open discussion among the students who are presenting at the unconference, the unconference attendees, and the CityU community overall. Please join and share your experience with our community.
2:45 PM	**TALK sessions** *Choose the Breakout Room that you would like to join. During sessions, you can move from one breakout room to the other.

TALK sessions Breakout Room 1	TALK sessions Breakout Room 2	TALK sessions Breakout Room 3
Chelsea DeFazio **MC-Vancouver** Reducing Barriers to Treatment for Drug-Addicted Survivors of Human Sex Trafficking	**Hannah Jarvis** **MC-Vancouver** The Ethics and Efficacy of Kink-Affirming Therapy	**Aimee (Amy) Chan** **MC-Vancouver** Enhancing Access to Mental Health and Substance Use Services for At-Risk Youth: A Community-Based Approach
Gabriela Rosales **MC -** Using a Liberation Psychology Framework in Counselling LGBTQIA2S+ Clients	**Rory Fisher** **MC – Victoria** The Complexities of Defining and Treating Narcissistic Personality Disorder: A Psychoanalytic Perspective	**Eric Hadley** **MC-Vancouver** Turning Toward Death: The Importance of Reflecting on Mortality in Therapy
		John Moss **MC-Victoria** Mystical Attachment

3:45 PM	**Closing - Reflective Gathering with Jalissa Schmidt** Join this Community gathering to reflect on the online day of the UnConference. All are welcome!

UnConference Schedule: Sunday, June 9

9:00 AM	**UnConference Sign in – Joyce Walley Room** Please join us at the Museum of Vancouver at the sign in tables where our volunteers will provide you with the UnConference materials and Information. Join us for networking and exploring the venue. Light snacks and tea/coffee will be
9:30 AM	**Welcome Opening with Elder Martin Sparrow** It is with gratitude that we begin the day with an opening from Elder Martin Sparrow of xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nation.
	Cedar Workshop with Moon Tide Reconciliation - **https://www.moontidereconciliation.com** Join Shona Sparrow of xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nation for a workshop on making cedar hearts. All participants will take their cedar heart home!

10:50 AM	**UnConference Presentation sessions** Sessions will be running concurrently in one of the two spaces: Joyce Walley Room (room upstairs) and the History Room/Patio (downstairs). We will all be returning to some of the sessions to the Joyce Walley Room (room upstairs).

PATIO/HISTORY	JOYCE WALLEY
Michelle Morris – Ritual and ceremony *Healing Trauma Through Community*	**Olessia Axenova – Talk and Walk session** *Therapeutic Alliance: Factors and Skills for Cultivating Presence and Repairing Ruptures*
Michelle Miller – Teach and Explore session *Children at the Checkpoint: Promoting the Mental Health of Palestinian Children Living in the West Bank*	***Jess Tang – Talk and Walk session*** *Championship Mindset: working with high performance athletes as RCC's*
	Janine Binanitan – Play and Connect session *Continuation of Living: Maintaining Dignity and Quality of Life within the Process of Aging*

12:00 PM	**Lunch and Connect** Please join our community in sharing food, wisdom, and stories. During this time, we will invite everyone to grab their lunch, to find like-minded and like-hearted people, and to connect with others in the community. This might also be a great time to explore the Museum or the beautiful Vanier Park around the museum.

1:15 PM	**Somatic Break with Madeleine Downey**  Madeleine (she/her), Soul Yoga With over 15 years of dedicated exploration as a Yoga student and now in my second year as a teacher, I've had the privilege of exploring diverse teaching styles. In a world that often moves at a rapid pace, what has consistently resonated with me is the transformative power of self-expression and movement—a practice that allows us to center our minds, reconnect with ourselves, and discover joy in the free movement of our bodies. As a teacher, my goal is to bring my students out of their minds and into their bodies, fostering presence and self-awareness. It is my mission to create a welcoming, fun, and energetic space for you to discover, explore, and express your true self.
1:30 PM	**Alumni Panel with Dr. Joel Domingo – Post Grad Life** For this panel discussion, we invited Alumni from the MC and the MEd in School Counselling programs to discuss what life has been like since graduating the program. Panelists will share how they navigated the professional world and how their capstones have been informing professional practice. Dr. Joel Domingo is an Associate Professor and Director of the Research Institute at City University of Seattle. He leads the efforts to strengthen the scholarship at City University, and he has been an advocate for student and faculty research and the UnConference Event.

Barb Baker



Barb is a proud graduate of the City University MC program in 2023 and has since started a private practice focusing on the neurodiverse community. She is passionate about supporting parents of neurodiverse children, young neurodiverse adults transitioning to greater independence, and late-diagnosed ADHD and/or autistic folks. Barb has also combined her educator background with her counselling knowledge to develop training for fellow practitioners on working with the neurodiverse community as well as presentations for parents.



Marnie Goldberg

My name is Marnie Goldberg (she/her). I completed the Master of Counselling program in December/2023 as a proud member of FT Cohort 13B. Being a part of this amazing group of people made my journey even more meaningful. I am now a Registered Clinical Counsellor and work at the Burnaby Hospice Society as well as Hollyburn Family Services. I feel grateful to be living my passion by working with clients who have recently lost a loved one. My Capstone focused on whether increasing death education would affect how we process grief. While I know this is the work I am meant to be doing, I am also focussed on rediscovering work/life balance now that school is done.

Marcus Narsaiya



Marcus is an advanced psychoanalytic psychotherapy trainee with interests in social justice, dis/ability, minority issues, and schizophrenic disorders. He integrates coaching into therapeutic encounters, drawing from emotion-focused, person-centered, and humanistic orientations to empower those he works with. When he is not training or seeing clients, Marcus loves spending time with his two cats, reading, writing, and being out in nature.

Giovanni Zenone



Giovanni is a graduate of the MEd in School Counselling program. With years of experience as an educator, he is also working as a Registered Clinical Counselor. In his work, Giovanni focuses on a combination of theories including Internal Family Systems, Narrative Therapy, and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). He is also currently co-authoring a chapter in an edited book "School Counselling in Canadian Contexts".

2:30 PM	**UnConference Presentation sessions** Sessions will be running concurrently in one of the two spaces: Joyce Walley Room (room upstairs) and the History Room/Patio (downstairs). We will all be returning to some of the sessions to the Joyce Walley

PATIO/HISTORY	JOYCE WALLEY
Oliver Wang – Talk and Walk session *Effect of Filial Piety on Complicated Grief*	**Luke Primus – Build and Grow session** *Pills, Politics, and Propaganda: How Capitalism is Hijacking Mental Health*
Katelyn Peterson – Teach and Explore session *Police, RCMP, and PTSD: Integrating the Before Operational Stress (BOS) Program into Detachments*	**Ankita Grewal – Build session** *Early life experiences and brain development*
Jason Currier – Play and Connect session *Begin Again: Inspiration From a Friend to Pay Attention*	**Jo Sawa – Talk and Walk session** *Self-Sabotage in Romantic Relationships*
Christina Chu – Build and Grow session *Individualism and Collectivism in Psychotherapy: Is therapy in North America individualistic? Exploring the infusion of collectivism into therapy practices*	**Adam Shillington – Talk and Walk session** *Integrating anti-oppressive practice into mobile crisis response*

4:45 PM	**Closing and Reflection with Jalissa Schmidt - PATIO** Let's gather as a community to reflect on the UnConference and the wonderful connections we have made.







UnConference Session Descriptions - Saturday, June 8

Pre-Recorded sessions Breakout Room 1	Pre-Recorded sessions Breakout Room 2	Pre-Recorded sessions Breakout Room 3	Pre-Recorded sessions Breakout Room 4	Pre-Recorded sessions Breakout Room 5	Pre-Recorded sessions Breakout Room 5
Pooyeh (Nelly) Jalalipour- (MC- Victoria) *Utilizing Self-Care Strategies to Support Therapists Offering Video Therapy Following the Onset of The Covid-19 Pandemic* As a presenter, I plan to touch on the shared relational, technological, ethical, and environmental challenges therapists have experienced worldwide before and after the pandemic chronologically. I will also mention the internal and external challenges therapists began to face during and after the pandemic. Finally, I will review the self-care plan therapists can employ to adapt to the challenges mentioned. I look forward to engaging in a fruitful discussion with my colleagues, where we can share and learn from each other's innovative self-care strategies. This will undoubtedly help us all strengthen our therapeutic presence while offering video therapy.	**Lianne Labistour- (MC- Vancouver)** *Chosen Loss: A Closer Look at Adult-Child Parental Estrangement* The aim of my Capstone presentation is to fully explore the landscape of adult-child parental estrangement, and to examine (and significantly challenge) the current scholarly conceptualization of estrangement as an inherently problematic state in need of fixing. Specifically, my research questions are these: 1: What are the causes and prevalence rates of adult-child parental estrangement and is it, in fact, on the rise? 2: What are the effects of parental disconnection, and are they net positive, negative or somewhere in between? And 3: could there be benefits in selecting aspects of Attachment Theory, Bowen Family Systems Theory and ambiguous loss to begin viewing estrangement through a new framework that offers clinicians and estrangers something nuanced and supportive, structured yet flexible that goes beyond promoting reunification or intrapersonal work (e.g. boundaries, communication efforts) as the only paths forward to mental and relational health? I hope to increase counsellors' overall awareness of estrangement to help mitigate any deleterious, far-reaching effects clients may experience. Given the difficulties clients describe in locating therapists with experience in estrangement, as well as the existing barriers of high costs and long wait lists, creating an informed, new resource seems key as a social justice move.	**Lillian Huynh- (MC- Vancouver)** *Aging and Mental Health: The role of Positive Well-being* My topic examines the ways in which aging affects mental health in older adults and seniors while considering the many factors in aging that could affect subjective well-being, whether negatively or positive. It will discuss and provide some perspective on how positive subjective well-being can help those who are aging withstand cognitive decline, physical deterioration, as well as low social support. I hope that it addresses best practices for counsellors working with older adult clients struggling with mental health, and to discuss recommendations for future research in this area. I plan to do a recorded video that could convey the research findings that I have discovered. My hopes is that the audience can feel like they had learnt something new from it, and inspired to work with older adults.	**Chantel Van Vilet- (MC- Vancouver)** *The Psychological Impact of Female Infertility* The session explores the psychological impact of female infertility which includes grief and loss, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and stress. Within this exploration the definition of infertility will be considered, with a prime learning objective to increase understanding on the definition of infertility in conjunction with its limitations: a lack of universal definition and it excludes a major population of females. Another objective will be increasing the knowledge of the mental health impacts of female infertility. The last objective will tie in with Chapter 3 in which is to explore why it matters for researchers, counsellors, and females with infertility: gaps of lit review. The plan for this session will be an overview on infertility (stats, general definition, varied definitions according to source), discussion on why it matters, discussion of the mental health impacts of female infertility, exploration and discussion of limitations including major population ignored as well as demographic concerns. The hope for this presentation is to increase the understanding of infertility, offer limitations on its definition and for counsellors specifically increase their understanding of female infertility and how to better support this population.	**Hayley Bouton- (MC- Vancouver)** *Blurring the Boundaries of Racial Privilege and Oppression: Exploring the Narrative and Lived Experience of Mixed Race Individuals.* Although in recent years there has been a marked shift towards social justice and the fight against racial oppression, the narrative of the mixed race experience is one that is less shared, and if shared at all it rarely reflects the broad spectrum of the mixed race lived experience. My session's learning objectives include exploring these untold narratives and offering a resource for counselling professionals to expand their cultural competency to include the support of mixed race clients. In session, I plan to provide a brief overview of the mixed-race identity, including how it was historically viewed by society. I also plan to summarize my literature review on the lived experience of mixed race individuals, and discuss how such experiences impact mental health; as well I will offer a resource for counsellors to support their work with mixed-race clients. My hope for the audience's take-aways with this presentation is to have a greater understanding of the mixed race experience and how to better support such clients within a therapeutic context. My hoped take-away is that I can contribute to the counselling community by sharing knowledge of the impact of mixed race identity on mental health, and supplementing resources to support mixed-race clients.	**Riyah Sidhu- (MC- Vancouver)** *Couples Therapy: Looking at Infidelity Through a Multi-therapeutic Lens* The purpose of this Capstone Research Project is to inform my future practice as it relates to couple's therapy. The intention of this focus holds the hope of expanding my current understanding of relationships as a formulaic life process, to a dynamic engagement between two loving individuals. .The questions directing the research process in determining causality as it pertains to betrayal and/or infidelity include: what are the common factors that contribute to infidelity; what are the reasons that facilitate the decision to cheat; what is missing in the relationship for the cheater; what is the cheater/cheated on individual experiencing pre and post betrayal experience? I plan to discuss my topic in detail and leave the audience with thoughts to explore.

Kristina Sadrolashrafi- (MC- Vancouver)

More than words: Importance of the body's nervous system and the value of somatic experiencing

Discussing the importance of the body's nervous system and the role of somatic experiencing
• Objective: To understand the value of somatic experiencing and the body's nervous system in counselling
• Plan: Highlighting why I chose to do the topic, some findings found in research, key takeaways for mental health therapists •Takeaways: For mental health therapists bring in somatic work to their sessions

Dionne Chan- (MC- Vancouver)

Intersectional and Systemic Factors in Migratory Grief and Migrant Mental Health

Migratory grief represents a tangible but often overlooked experience that resonates deeply with individuals who have left their country of origin to establish themselves in a new land. This phenomenon, commonly experienced by Canadian newcomers, holds the potential to impact multiple generations within families as migrants grapple with the profound losses incurred through their diaspora. This session aims to explore the concept of migratory grief and its impact on immigrant mental health, including an examination of practical strategies for assessing and addressing migratory grief in a culturally competent manner. It is hoped that the presenter's lived experience and clinical work with migrant groups will shed light on this topic. The audience is expected to leave the session with a greater understanding of the unacknowledged sense of loss and the grief reactions experienced by most immigrants.

Claire Nyrose- (MC- Victoria)

Utilizing Harm Reduction Strategies in Eating Disorder Counselling

Eating disorders are complex mental illnesses characterized by persistent challenging behaviours associated with food that significantly impact an individual's daily activities. The risk factors and etiology of eating disorders are multifactorial, and EDs impact all individuals regardless of age, gender, and cultural background. EDs are regarded as highly difficult to treat, and individuals experiencing EDs are at risk of serious physical and mental health complications. This Capstone explores the current landscape of ED care and treatment in Canada highlighting barriers individuals face when accessing care. This Capstone also introduces the concept of harm reduction as a strategy to support individuals with EDs to minimize risks associated with harmful behaviours while continuing to engage in treatment. The potential benefits and ethical challenges of harm reduction approaches will be critically evaluated, to support counsellors in integrating this framework into their existing treatment modalities while prioritizing client safety and respecting client autonomy and recovery goals.

Lucia Arreaga- (MC- Vancouver)

Beyond Hot Flashes: Counselling for Empowerment and Improved Mental Health in Perimenopause

Perimenopause can present a significant transition period in a woman's life, with profound impacts on her identity and her physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing. This session will explore the important and under-recognized opportunity that counsellors can play in supporting women through this midlife transition, with a focus on empowerment and developing a positive self-concept. The session will prepare counsellors to effectively guide clients as they navigate the fragmented medical landscape and challenging social scripts of perimenopause. You'll leave this session better able to recognize the signs and symptoms of perimenopause, understand the psychological impacts of this transition on women's self-concept, and learn helpful approaches to empower clients to find agency and build a positive sense of identity that breaks away from the dominant narratives. You'll leave the session with a deeper understanding of the intersection between perimenopause and mental health and learn practical skills to support this significant demographic group through midlife.

Sherine McNaughton - (MC- Vancouver)

Understanding Misogynoir and its Impact on the Mental Health of Black and Mixed Race Black Cis, Trans, Queer and Lesbian Identifying Women. A Counsellor's Guide to Exploring Misogynoir.

The session will provide the view with an overview of what misogynoir is, the history and why counsellors need to be aware of misgynoir when working with black women. Additionally I will be highlighting the stereotypes associated with misgynoir and it's impact on the mental health of black women. Finally I will go over the guide and highlight therapeutic approaches and resources to learn more about the topic.

Amanda Avison- (MC- Victoria)

Interracial Couples and the Barriers that Affect the Relationship: Implications for Couples Counselling

Capstone topic will focus on the gaps in literature regarding cultural competence while working with interracial couples. Therapeutic recommendations and gaps in studies on therapeutic interventions effectiveness will also be addressed.

Harmony Wildman- (MC – Victoria)
Healing Through Humour: A Space for Laughter in a Historically Heavy Setting

I will explore the integration of humour and playfulness in counselling settings, focusing on their therapeutic potential and ethical considerations. The TedTalk aims to shed light on the role of lightness and joy in mental health care, challenging traditional perceptions and emphasizing the importance of creating space for humour in therapeutic interactions. Learning objectives of the session:
1.Understand the benefits of incorporating humour and playfulness in counselling practice.
2.Explore the ethical responsibilities of mental health professionals in fostering an environment that embraces lightness and joy.
3.Reflect on personal biases and societal norms that may influence the integration of humour in therapeutic settings. I will discuss the findings from my capstone research, share personal reflections on the topic, and provide practical insights on how counsellors can effectively incorporate humour into their practice. The audience can expect to gain a deeper understanding of the transformative power of humour in therapy, challenge preconceived notions around professionalism in mental health care, and explore new possibilities for enhancing client well-being. I hope to foster a dialogue that encourages a shift towards more inclusive and joyful approaches to counselling.

Leigh Kankewitt- (MC- Vancouver)

Watching Someone You Love Die: An Integrative Approach for Adolescents Dealing with the Traumatic Impact of Parental Life-limiting Illness.

This session will be an introduction to my capstone topic and the reason for understanding why grief and loss with adolescents losing a primary care-giver will be a life long process. This includes understanding the impact of grief and loss on adolescent development and attachment. I will explain why it is important to be grief literate in this area as a counsellor when working with youth. The grief process from losing a care-giver during adolescence can be very different than losing a parent as an adult. The way that youth express their grief is often misunderstood. Research shows that youth can be hard to engage in the counselling process and need integrative approaches other than talk therapy as well as group work with their peers that are having a similar experience. Grief can be isolating and separate youth from their social world. Grief left unattended during this time can manifest into adulthood. My capstone explains how previous grief theories have tended to pathologize grief and newer theories have transitioned away from using the stages of grief and positioning grief as something that "one gets over." Meaning reconstruction and continuing bonds theory are modern theories that honor the life-long relationship and on-going grief process that someone has with the person that they lose. I will introduce expressive art therapy, narrative storytelling, and acceptance and commitment therapy that can be used together and are age-appropriate modalities for ages 13-18. I will finish by explaining a six-week bereavement group that I created by combining continuing bonds and meaning reconstruction theory with expressive art therapy. I hope that people leave with a deeper understanding of how to engage youth in therapeutic practices and how to work with grief and loss at this vulnerable stage in life.

Rachel Kjearsgaard-(MC-Victoria)

Smartphones and ADHD

The session will focus on the themes derived from my research on smartphone, addiction and ADHD. Specifically, we will explore evidence-based treatments and interventions that clinicians can employ when working with clients exhibiting ADHD symptoms along with problematic smartphone use. The objective of this session is to equip my colleagues with additional tools for their professional repertoire. By sharing the research findings, I aim to facilitate dialogue and inspire new ideas on how to effectively address smartphone, dependency and ADHD symptoms in our clients.

Valerie Hamilton- (MC-Vancouver)

Midlife Women's Health: Elevated Risk of Depression During Perimenopause

The midlife years and the years leading to menopause often conjure up images of hot flashes and night sweats, but the stark reality is that there are dozens of symptoms commonly experienced by women during these years. Women converse with their health providers citing irritability, sleep issues, mood changes, depression, anxiety, and generally feeling less able to cope - to name a few. Perimenopause is a time of erratically fluctuating hormones and increased stress for women which subsequently impacts their mental health. Women experience depression at higher rates, suicides peak, and elevated depressive symptoms along with high levels of stress are reported during this time. While each woman's experience is unique, and further research is needed to disentangle and understand the multiple complexities, we can state unequivocally that this phase is a critical time for women and one that has lifelong implications on women's health.

Nicole Randell- (MC-Victoria)

Therapy in Solidarity: The Ethical Imperative of Social Justice in Counselling Through Decolonizing and Queering your Practice

This presentation explores the integration of social justice principles in counselling practice, emphasizing the ethical imperative for counsellors to address systemic inequalities and advocate for their clients. It delves into the multifaceted ways in which social justice manifests in counselling, highlighting the transformative potential of incorporating these principles into therapeutic processes. Through a lens of decolonization and queering, this presentation challenges counsellors to actively engage in social justice efforts and become agents of change in dismantling oppressive systems. Learning objectives for this session include understanding the importance of cultural competency and social justice advocacy in counselling practice, exploring practical strategies for integrating social justice principals into counselling methodologies, and the importance of reflecting on personal biases and privileges that may impact counselling relationships and learn how to address them effectively. Through exploring the research, limitations, and recommendations, this session aims to uncover the important relationship between social justice and counselling, while investigating how social justice manifests itself in counselling practice. This session is designed to inspire a commitment to solidarity, advocacy, and equity in counselling practice, ultimately enhancing the quality of care provided to clients.

Kelsey Lee- (MC-Vancouver)
Viewing Insecurely Attached Couple's Relationship Satisfaction Through an Attachment Theory Lens

The purpose of this research is to better understand relationship attachment styles in connection to relationship satisfaction. The focus will be on the insecure attachment styles of anxious and avoidant. In chapter one, I will introduce the topic of attachment theory, attachment styles, and the influences of attachment styles on relationships. I will also discuss the purpose of the paper and the statement of the problem, as well as highlight the research questions. In the next chapter, I will review the literature on attachment theory, insecure attachment, and its impact on a relationship and overall well-being. Furthermore, Chapter 2 will discuss possible interventions that can benefit insecurely attached individuals. In Chapter 3, I will propose implications, recommendations, and a summary to conclude the research.

Amy Wierks-
(MC- Vancouver)

Healing from the Harmful Effects of Evangelical Purity Culture

This capstone project aims to explore the harmful teachings perpetuated by Evangelical Christian purity culture (EPC), such as upholding patriarchal norms, sexual double standards, modesty, rape culture and internalized shame. Evangelical purity culture was a movement centred around teaching youth and young adults to remain pure (sexually abstinent) until heterosexual marriage, which peaked in popularity in the 1990s and early 2000s but is still being taught today. I am proposing an eight-week psychoeducational / process group to encourage healing for women who have been subjected to the teachings of EPC. In this presentation, I will briefly introduce EPC, discuss some of the harmful effects of its teachings and explore some of the ways to help survivors begin healing through the proposed therapy group. Through this presentation, I hope to introduce EPC and some of the healing process to educate more mental health professionals about its impact.

Tsu Weir Helen Young- (MC-Vancouver)

Effects on Childhood experiencing a death of a parent

The topic of my presentation will be, the effects of child bereavement after experience parental death. I will discuss the effects of experiencing death of a parent, and how it may impact the child leading into their adult lives. The purpose of my presentation will be to discuss what I have found in my research about childhood and adolescent's who have experienced parental death. I will also talk about the associations of their loss to their mental health, wellbeing and social aspects. My plan is to show my research findings for my research topic. I hope that it will provide a learning outcome to others who are interested in the same are of research.

Georgina Holdal- (MC-Vancouver)

Boomers —
Babies No More

Baby Boomers are entering retirement in a world vastly different from previous generations, having faced numerous challenges throughout their adult lives. This generation's ability to adapt to societal and technological changes is noteworthy, yet intersecting demographics beyond the default pose additional hurdles in navigating retirement systems. Learning objectives include the following: understand the unique challenges faced by Baby Boomers, especially those with intersecting demographic labels; explore the positive and negative impacts of social factors on Baby Boomers' retirement experiences; and gain insight into the resilience and adaptability demonstrated by Baby Boomers in the face of societal changes. This session will delve into the intersectional challenges Baby Boomers encounter in retirement and examine the social factors influencing their experiences. Through discussion and analysis, we will explore how Baby Boomers navigate these challenges and identify strategies for better societal support. As the presenter, I aim to gain experience sharing information on the complexities surrounding Baby Boomers' retirement experiences and explore avenues for societal improvement. For the audience, the session offers insights into the resilience of Baby Boomers and the need for enhanced support systems, fostering awareness and empathy towards this demographic's unique needs.

Julia Wilkinson- (MC-Vancouver)

Gendered Unpaid Labor in Parenthood: Impacts on Women's Mental Health

This session will share an overview of the literature review component of my capstone on the gendered division of unpaid labour in parenthood and the resulting impacts on women's mental health. My objective is to explore how longstanding social norms relating to gender impact the division of domestic labour among heterosexual couples in parenthood. Despite the growth in dual-earning couples as more women have joined the workforce in recent decades, partnered, employed women remain responsible for the majority of housework and childcare. This unequal participation in unpaid work can have detrimental effects on women's mental health. My hope is for audiences to gain new insights into the harmful outcomes of gender discrepancy as it relates to domestic labour and childcare.

Navdeep Khabra- (MC – Vancouver)

Building Cultural Humility for Therapeutic Practice with Queer Racialized South Asian Men

I will be covering my capstone topic (Building Cultural Humility for Therapeutic Practice with Queer Racialized South Asian Men) and the research that I have conducted so far. An exploration into the potential intersectional challenges faced by queer South Asian clients, in order to broaden our perspectives as practitioners and challenge some of the subconscious biases we may carry. My hope for my presentation is that folks will walk away with a more nuanced view of this population and more possibilities to explore with queer South Asian clients they have in the future. The challenges and resiliencies that queer men may have, and the intersection with the diversity of backgrounds that South Asian folks may be showing up with.

Luis Zavala- (MC-Vancouver)

Psychological Effects of Problematic Internet Pornography Use

Analyzing the psychological effects of problematic internet pornography use. Specifically, the behavioural and neurobiological effects will be analyzed. The efficacy of behavioural therapies such as ACT and DBT will be researched.

Sage Stevenson- (MC- Vancouver)

Etuaptmumk: Healing Indigenous Ancestral Roots Through Group Circle

The purpose of this capstone project is to explore how folks with mixed Indigenous and Euro settler ancestry, disconnected from their Indigenous roots, and immersed in western culture, can connect to Indigenous ways of knowing and being to support healing, sense of self, and fostering allyship through group connection. Seeing through the lens of Etuaptmumk (two-eyed seeing), the objectives of this session is to explore cultural competency in counselling and to offer space to explore the impacts of colonialism on cultural connection and ways of being. My goal for what I plan to do in session in the session is discuss Indigenous history and trauma, touch on the research discovered in the literature review, ethical considerations between Western and Indigenous ways of counselling, explore how two-eyed seeing could be approached in group circle, and personal connection/ learnings, as well as what drove this capstone project. Takeaways I would appreciate are cultural and ethical considerations as appropriate to comment on and other ideas/ considerations for how to approach this group circle if it were to come to life some day!

Rosalind Christian (MC – Virtual)

Population Level Interventions, for Population Level Distress, in the Context of Wildfire and Climate Catastrophe

Numerous recent studies have shown that exposure to wildfires gives rise to very significant negative mental health effects, such as: PTSD, grief, depression, anxiety and substance/ alcohol use, suicidality, aggression and crime. Given the increasingly large numbers of people that are affected by wildfires, and given the disruption and displacement they cause, one-on-one mental health supports may not be available readily or in a timely way, nor be affordable. My goal is to try to discover what types of exercises, programs or interventions might be provided in such circumstances or such a setting, by whom, and what type of professional counselling guidance or instruction might be offered. I will look at this question in part through the lens of an anti-colonial, anti-capitalist perspective, that seeks solutions that are not grounded in neo-liberal, hierarchical, individualism.

Tina Li- (MC- Vancouver)

Scroll to Cope - The Relationship Between Problematic Social Media Use and Emotional Regulation

As the number of social media users proliferate, the rate of social media addiction begin to increase. I aim to present current research on social media addiction, its causes, risk factors, and functions. As well as present research on the link between social media addiction and emotional regulation. In addition, I will then present the current interventions on reducing social media use, and present general emotional regulation strategies to help individuals better regulate their nervous systems. The take away for this presentation would be to have a clearer understanding on the impact of social media on wellbeing, and grasp the scope of its inseparable presence with the modern life style, and hopefully to foster more awareness on developing a healthy relationship with social media and smartphones.

Sophie Nataros- (MC- Vancouver)

Gaps in approaches to women's health - eating disorders

This session will be an overview of gaps in approaches to current women's healthcare utilizing eating disorders as a field of reference. Learning objectives include barriers to mental health care for women, current best practices in eating disorder treatment, gaps in best practices, and recommendations to address the gaps. The session will consist of an overview of my research capstone and highlight avenues for clinicians to engage in research that includes lived experience.

Suzanne Wood- (MC Virtual- Alberta)

Psychogenic Non-Epileptic Seizures - When the Unconscious Presents as Neurological Disorder

Psychogenic non-epileptic seizures (PNES) are one of several conditions considered to be functional neurological symptom disorders (FNSD) in the DSM-5-TR. Disorders of this type were previously known as conversion disorders. Originating in the realm of psychoanalytic theory, conversion disorder was defined as unconscious psychic conflict being converted into physical symptoms. Meeting a recently diagnosed patient with PNES at the outset of my counselling internship sparked a curious interest about what PNES was, why it may develop, and how patients might best be supported in the therapy room. An overview of PNES and intervention strategies for treatment of this population will be shared as well as the reasons why research and treatment with this population can be complicated. Or might it be less complicated than it seems?

Sierra Birkett- (MC- Vancouver)

Romantic Partnerships in The Long Shadow of Childhood Trauma: dynamics, complexities and ways forward

The effects of trauma, particularly cumulative trauma, are insidious and can influence the trajectory of a survivor's whole life. Trauma caused by caregivers often has psychological, physiological, neurobiological, emotional and relational implications. In this talk I will explore how traumatic experiences in childhood may impact romantic partnerships in adulthood and I will propose a workshop series geared at couples in which one or both partners are survivors of child maltreatment and/ or cumulative trauma. Through the prism of attachment, I will investigate potential problematic patterns in adult relationships and common themes that emerge for survivors. I will also look at the neuropsychological implications of trauma for the individual, and how this may be reflected through maladaptive coping strategies, negative perception of self, deficiencies in social cognition and emotional dysregulation.

Ingrid Mesquita- (MC- Victoria)

Exploring the Radical Imagination Through Afrofuturism

This presentation will be a creative journey that centres on the use of the imagination as a tool of resistance and change. Focusing on Afrofuturism, this exploration will showcase how Afrofuturism critiques, rearranges, and dismantles the social construction of "blackness", while simultaneously being a conduit for joy and healing. The imagination has been an essential aspect of human's efforts to understand the world and shapes how we conceptualize our experiences. As a multimedia-storytelling experience, this will a visual representation of how the imagination can become radical by imagining different worlds, alternative stories, and possible futures.

Yalda Ravanbaksh- (MC- Vancouver)

Intergenerational Trauma Healing: An exploration of Select Somatic Therapies and Constructive Resilience

This session offers a brief overview of intergenerational trauma and the role of select somatic psychotherapies as avenues that lend themselves to the holistic landscape of trauma healing. The objectives of this presentation include exploring the pervasiveness of the hallmarks of trauma across generations from a bio/psycho/ social/spiritual perspective, the role of epigenetics in the expression of trauma over time, and the impact this can have on individuals, communities, and institutions/systems. A further purpose is to explore the neuroscience behind experiential approaches that aim to regulate the nervous system through the discharge and integration of internal constriction due to traumas. Additionally, this presentation will incorporate the concept of constructive resilience to create individual and social transformation in a way that is evolutionary, developmental and integrative.

Nidia Teran Esparza- (MC- Vancouver)

The Neurobiological and Clinical Consequences of childhood trauma: Consideration for treatment in psychology.

I explore the neurobiological and clinical impacts of childhood trauma, focusing on how it affects brain development, neuroendocrine function, and mental health. This will also examines effective treatment strategies in psychology, emphasizing trauma-informed care, evidence-based therapies, and holistic approaches. Finally, I highlight the importance of early intervention and preventive strategies to support affected children and families.

Manisha Bains- (MC- Vancouver)

Domestic Violence within the South Asian Community

My topic is focused on domestic violence within the south Asian community. I will be presenting on the key findings that have contributed to how domestic violence is perceived and the factors influencing the perpetuation throughout generations. I plan to present slides speaking on key ideas and contributors of domestic violence. My hope is to receive some feedback on my idea.

Kiran Dhaliwal (MC- Vancouver)-

Ketamine Along with Psychotherapy for Treatment Resistant Depression (TRD)

A high prevalence for Treatment Resistant Depression (TRD) among individuals presents the need for suitable and effective treatment. The purpose of this presentation is to bring awareness to the topic. To bring awareness, the presentation will begin with what TRD is, TRD environmental association, prevalence, suicide risk and comorbidities. Then, ketamine along with psychotherapy will be presented as a treatment option for individuals with TRD. Lastly, factors about ketamine along with psychotherapy will be discussed.

Sara Durand- (MC- Victoria)

Examining the Influence of Harmful Social Media Spaces on Men: Exploration of Developing Alternative spaces to Mitigate the risk of both Men and Women's Well-being.

Capstone not complete yet so I am not at a point where I have outlined my session.

Hilary Ison

Functional neurological disorder and emotion-focused treatment

Mind-body disorders are highly prevalent in the community and come with a high disability burden. Patients have often been invalidated by medical professionals, so the process of helping patients become open to a mind-body explanation must be conducted with care and consideration. In this session, I would like to draw upon the participants' expertise to generate ideas and perspectives about how to approach these initial conversations with patients. I hope to a) teach the participants a little bit about mind-body disorders, and b) generate practices and community wisdom about how to discuss it with clients in an effective and nonpathologizing way.

Ryan Gaskin
MC-Vancouver

Religious Trauma: Making Sense of, and Seeking Healing for Spiritual Wounds

This capstone seeks to discuss spiritual trauma as it relates to the North American Evangelical church. The objectives for this presentation are to connect the link between patriarchal/ colonial church structures and theologies to spiritual trauma for folks who are traditionally marginalized by such structures both in the church and larger society. Another objective is to suggest certain therapies and theologies that address these power imbalances within church cultures along with promoting healing for church trauma and abuse survivors. Finally, suggesting church community practices that foster trauma-informed, safe spaces that are preventative of spiritual abuse is a final aim of this discussion. The plan for this session is to largely discuss and pose reflective questions for participants as we process this phenomenon together. My hope is that this session can validate those who've survived adverse religious experience(s) and inform non-religious participants of dynamics their potential future clients may be coming from. A final hope to maybe envision a little what a decolonized church culture could look like. Ultimately, I aim for this discussion to connect and be accessible to all people regardless of having a religious affiliation or not.

Anja Hedji Milasin
(MC-Vancouver)

MDMA-Assisted Couples Therapy for Trauma Healing

I will be discussing the utility of MDMA-Assisted couples therapy for trauma healing, especially when one individual of the dyad who has a PTSD diagnosis. I'll explore the different impacts of trauma on the individual, as well as the relationship, and outline the ways current models of healing are limited in their capacity to create long lasting change. The learning objectives will be to familiarize ourselves with MDMA-Assisted Therapy (and PAT models in general), the research supporting them as tools for trauma healing in couples, and individuals, as well as the limitations and barriers of doing this kind of therapeutic work.

Dulce Castillo-
(MC- Vancouver)

Is a holistic therapy possible in a brief modality format?

1. Although there is no single definition of Holistic Psychotherapy, it is growing in acceptance. On the other hand, we see different therapeutic modalities adapted to brief modality therapy. For this reason, I found it relevant to explore a possible intersection of these two therapies. Based on my working concept of Holistic Psychotherapy, I will explain why a Holistic Brief Psychotherapy would harm the individual. Therefore, I conclude that it should not be considered. 2.- 2.- The session's objective is to explain my working concept of Holistic Psychotherapy, why holistic brief psychotherapy is impossible, and how it could harm the individual. 3.- I plan to: 1) Introduce myself, 2) Explain how I came up with this topic, 3) Explain my working concept of holistic therapy, 4) Explain only two reasons why holistic brief psychotherapy is impossible, 5) Explain how this option would harm the client from a social justice perspective. 4.- Take aways. Audience: 1) Invite people to think about their definition of Holistic Psychotherapy, 2) Offer one perspective about how counseling intersects with social justice.

Lea Hutcheon-
(MC- Victoria)

'We Move Together': Bringing Disability Justice to Counselling Practice for the Benefit of All Clients

Disability Justice is led by multiply-marginalized disabled people of colour, and is understood as an emergent framework, a movement, and a set of practices to create equity for all groups who seek it. First I will outline the ten principles of Disability Justice. Then I will briefly cover literature on disabled, neurodivergent, and mad people's firsthand experience of counselling, as well as select literature on therapy effectiveness for these clients. The majority of this session will focus on recommendations for disability-affirming practice, including suggestions for prioritizing collective access, deepening trauma-informed relational work with disabled clients, and highlighting disability culture as part of our culturally-competent practices. My hope is to be able to share this important work with the same warm, creative spirit of my disabled kin who dreamt up Disability Justice. My hope is also for the audience to leave this session with increased curiosity, affirming resources, and ideas about how these practices can be supportive to all clients regardless of disability experience.

Zöe Dagneault
MC-Vancouver

Where There is Tinder There is Fire

Exploring the red flags of dating apps through an attachment lens.

10:30 AM — TALK & TEACH Sessions

TEACH session
Breakout Room 1

Julia Folk
MC-Victoria

Treatment of Chronic Pain in the Therapy Room

This capstone project discusses the importance of exploring client's chronic pain needs in therapy, and how providers can prepare themselves professionally for these conversations, both with their clients and with other interdisciplinary providers.

TALK sessions
Breakout Room 2

Zane Jiwa
MC-Vancouver

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Impact on Emotional Regulation

Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBIs) have become one of the leading causes of neurological disabilities and death worldwide. TBIs have become a silent epidemic which has been neglected when considering patient recovery and the experiences which individuals face through symptom management, whether it is days, months or years. A major area which must be improved is navigating the social and emotional realms which often become affected for individuals who experience one or multiple TBIs. It has been found that 76% of people who experience persistent post-concussion syndrome (PPCS) report higher levels of depression and anxiety compared to the general population. Learning objectives: 1) TBI(s) are correlated with increases in depression, anxiety, apathy, difficulties controlling behaviour, problems with decision making, and substance use/abuse. 2) Following a diffuse axonal TBI, neuronal degeneration is likely to occur for months following the onset of the TBI; impact and symptoms are not immediate. 3) There is no one cure to fix persistent post-concussion symptoms; symptom management and a multidisciplinary approach to mental and physical health will best support recovery. My plan is to provide some psychoeducation surrounding TBIs, neurological functioning, and the impact on emotion regulation. This will be brief and more of an overview than an analysis, in which I will utilize simple PowerPoint or canvass slides. The goal is to start the conversation behind brain injuries and both the short- and long-term effects on behaviour. Another goal for myself is to gain experience presenting information in a concise and logical manner, while engaging the listeners in conversation following the short explanation of my capstone.

Michelle Heshka
MC-Vancouver

Ramp up Awareness: Psychological Impact of Acquired Lower Limb Amputations

Lower limb amputations are on the rise and there is very little support for this group of individuals. Amputation causes an identity shift that can be very difficult. Social stigma and lack of support are found to be some of the biggest barriers for people with disabilities and this is true for the amputee. For the session, I'd like to cover micro aggressions and the inner work they should be doing in order to work with this population

11:30 AM — TALK and BUILD sessions

BUILD session
Breakout Room 1

Finu Cherian
MC-Vancouver

Empowering Counsellors to Better Support Informal Caregivers to Prevent and Treat Caregiver Burnout

The impact of caregiving on informal caregivers is often invisible and undervalued. This has a significant negative impact on the caregiver's wellness and has opportunity costs for the caregiver. The objective of my Capstone is to raise awareness of caregiver burden, and caregiver burnout, as well as to design a training program for Counsellors. During the session I will present the impact of caregiving, and present my proposed training program to receive feedback from the community.

TALK sessions
Breakout Room 2

Samantha Oakes
MC-Vancouver

Life without Mom: Understanding Developmental Challenges

This capstone investigates the different experience of loss girls face in different ages of childhood and youth. Chapter 3 proposes a specialized therapeutic group for teen girls who have lost their mother. Learning objectives/ plan: share notable findings surrounding the experience of motherless daughters of various age groups, and share the benefits of providing a space such as a specialized therapeutic group for these girls.

Tara Snape
MC-Vancouver

Counsellor Recommended Resources: Considering Accessibility (and Social Media) When Referring Parenting Resources

Parenting brings with it many challenges that result in parents seeking outside help for their children. From basics like sleep troubles and fussy eating difficulties to behavioural challenges at school and emotional support during a divorce, there are many reasons why children attend counselling. I am interested in the interaction between the parents of children in counselling and the counsellor – specifically the resources that are screened and recommended to help support parents by their child's counsellor. How is accessibility for the client considered – including financial, time-based, and cultural sensitivity? In this presentation I explore parenting resources beyond the traditional published parenting books to include social media parenting experts, podcasts, and online pay platforms. What is the potential for parenting resources found on smart phones that nearly everyone has and spends time on each day? And what is the potential for so-called "low brow" accessible resources like social media to provide opportunities for interrupting parenting shame by destigmatizing and normalizing perceived parent missteps

1:00 PM TEACH session
Breakout Room

Tracy Laverty
MC-Virtual

miyoopimatishikh - Métis Wellbeing

Those that came before me in the field of Métis mental health. Once the path of the work is established, I will walk participants through the pitfalls of exploring Métis specific data within the broader data-set of Indigenous mental health research and why it is so important that we don't give in to the draw of a pan-Indigenous approach to wellness. Once this groundwork is established I will share the Métis medicines that I have gathered. Participants will walk away with an understanding of the power of grounded and specific understandings of mental health as well as a snapshot of the current research on Métis specific understandings of the path to wellness. This presentation will include a short opening grounding meditation, an overview of the research gathered through my capstone, a snapshot of a Métis specific approach to counselling and a short moment of reflection to close the session. As someone sharing my work for the first time, my deepest hope is that the work will resonate with counsellors hoping to hold space for Métis or Indigenous clients and that I will be able to see how the work lands with a diverse audience.

2:45 PM TALK sessions

TALK sessions Breakout Room 1	TALK sessions Breakout Room 2	TALK sessions Breakout Room 3
Chelsea DeFazio **MC-Vancouver** *Reducing Barriers to Treatment for Drug-Addicted Survivors of Human Sex Trafficking* This capstone project examines the relationship between human sex trafficking and drug use and identifies barriers that survivors face in accessing support services. I propose that the implementation of harm reduction and trauma informed approaches is essential to reduce barriers in accessing services and supporting survivors in their healing and rebuilding of their lives. After this session, you will: Be able to define human sex trafficking; describe how addictions are formed or maintained in survivors of human sex trafficking; and describe barriers that survivors face in accessing support services. I will discuss my research to date on these topics and then will open discussion with the audience. I hope to gain feedback about my research and receive recommendations for chapter 3.	**Hannah Jarvis** **MC-Vancouver** *The Ethics and Efficacy of Kink-Affirming Therapy* The aim of this capstone is to destigmatize kink practices and communities, illustrate the risks of ill-informed or harmful counsellor opinions/ bias, and explore the unique opportunities for client healing through the lens of BDSM. Learning objectives are to destigmatize and do some myth busting around kink, and to illustrate some of the unique opportunities for healing with a BDAM-informed practice. In the session I plan to talk through some of my research and give the audience some self exploration questions regarding their own assumptions and biases on the topic. I hope that the audience is able to have an open and curious mind regarding the topic and has a space to ask some questions that maybe they would feel shy to ask in another context.	**Aimee (Amy) Chan** **MC-Vancouver** *Enhancing Access to Mental Health and Substance Use Services for At-Risk Youth: A Community-Based Approach.* This research project focuses on evaluating intervention programs designed to improve access to community services for at-risk youth, specifically in the areas of mental health and substance use. This involves gathering information from current community service providers and collaborating with pertinent entities, including the Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT) through the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Youth Urgent Response Team (YURT) affiliated with Foundry North Shore. The goal is to identify barriers, bridge service gaps, and support the development of community-led crisis response teams.

Gabriela Rosales
MC - Vancouver

Using a Liberation Psychology Framework in Counselling LGBTQIA2S+ Clients

This session will explore how counsellors can utilize the principles of liberation psychology to support LGBTQIA2S+ clients in increasing resiliency and moving towards healing. Objectives:

1. Identity current frameworks used in counselling LGBTQIA2S+ clients, and some of critiques of these frameworks.
2. Identify foundational principles of liberation psychology and their relevance to counselling LGBTQIA2S+ clients.
3. Explore possible counseling interventions, grounded in liberation psychology, to support resilience and foster healing in LGBTQIA2S+ clients.

Rory Fisher
MC – Victoria

The Complexities of Defining and Treating Narcissistic Personality Disorder: A Psychoanalytic Perspective

Treating narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) is complex and requires a multifactorial approach. Therapists who treat the disorder must understand the varying degrees in which NPD pathology can present in a clinical setting. The severity of NPD pathology depends on where a client is on the NPD spectrum, comorbidities, and the clients presenting core structure and surface issues. Understanding the multifaceted presentation of NPD pathology can help therapists develop individualized treatment plans that tailor to the client's individual needs. NPD pathology can lead to behaviors that make treatment challenging for both the client and the treating therapist. People with NPD are prone to projecting their pathological behaviours onto their therapists. Therapists who aren't educated on NPD pathology can often react negatively to their client's transference. A clinician's response to a client with NPD's pathological behaviors directly impacts their ability to develop a robust therapeutic alliance.

More specifically, therapists who learn how to manage the common transference-countertransference patterns associated with NPD can build strong therapeutic alliances with their clients and foster more positive treatment outcomes. The goal of this paper is to examine each of these factors and how they can be used as tools that help therapists develop effective treatment plans that help clients with NPD manage their pathological behaviors

Eric Hadley
MC-Vancouver

Turning Toward Death: The Importance of Reflecting on Mortality in Therapy

This session will provide a brief overview of the theory and evidence surrounding the potential for death anxiety to be both a mechanism of pathology and a mechanism of meaningful change. Participants will be welcome to share their own perspectives on this topic which affects each of us both ubiquitously and uniquely.

John Moss
MC-Victoria

Mystical Attachment

The topic is exploring potential links between the mystical experience often occasioned in psychedelic assisted therapy and possible changes to attachment patterns. The objective is to review current research, present my findings and perspectives, and explore the perspectives of those present. In the session I will review my capstone highlighting both what has been found in research and the ways my theoretical orientations of social constructivism and social justice influence attachment theory, psychedelic assisted therapy, and the mystical experience. I hope to take away the feedback of those present and reflections on their perspectives and I hope the audience takes away something beneficial and new in considering possible links between attachment theory and psychedelic assisted therapy.

UnConference Session Descriptions - Sunday, June 9

10:50 AM	**UnConference Presentation sessions**

PATIO/HISTORY

Michelle Morris – Ritual and ceremony

Healing Trauma Through Community

My capstone involves the relationship between the body and trauma, and healing trauma, in community. My wish is to bring awareness to novice therapist how trauma can be healed through community, as well, what to look for and how to support clients with these presenting issues. This session will be less about my research and more about the profound impact of coming along side one another in healing. This topic is personal for me as I have battled cancer and lost my mom to cancer; whether trauma is the reason for the diagnosis or not, I have seen the impact of how community can lift on another in healing and hold one another through death. My wish is to have only those attendees who are interested in being an active participant join the session as we will be discussing trauma and or intergenerational trauma. I want to warn those individuals who will be taking part in this ritual that we will be asking you to share a personal trauma and or an intergenerational trauma of your family. Due to the sensitive material I think it is only fare to have individuals who are active in the ritual attend and have no bystanders due to the intimate material. Those who are open to joining this session will be surrounded by an equally vulnerable community holding and raising each other as we share our stories in community. My hope is that attendees will take away a feeling of being connected to one another and feel how those strings of connection could aide in healing trauma.

Michelle Miller – Teach and Explore session

Children at the Checkpoint: Promoting the Mental Health of Palestinian Children Living in the West Bank

The mental health of Palestinian children in the West Bank is impacted by the individual and collective violence they experience living under Israeli military occupation. This session will use storytelling to describe the daily lives of kids in the city of Hebron and the ways protective factors, including the children's use of agency, help them to survive and thrive.

JOYCE WALLEY

Olessia Axenova – Talk and Walk session

Therapeutic Alliance: Factors and Skills for Cultivating Presence and Repairing Ruptures

My capstone delves into the research surrounding therapeutic alliance and presence. The aim is to explore the factors and skills that novice therapists can utilize to cultivate an optimal environment for facilitating therapeutic change. Additionally, my paper includes a discussion on instances of ruptures and their subsequent repair within the therapeutic relationship. My research is still in progress. Thus, in the first portion of my presentation, I will share an overview of my findings. In the latter portion, I would love to have an interactive exchange with the audience, encouraging them to share their responses to the content presented. This includes any aspects that may have been overlooked, inaccurately represented, or areas that could be further explored. Essentially, I welcome feedback on my research and insights to enrich the conversation and further research.

Jess Tang – Talk and Walk session

Championship Mindset: working with high performance athletes as RCC's

What is the role that RCC's can have on the performance of high performance athletes? In the world of high performance sport, much attention is paid to an athlete's physical health and resources are heavily invested to ensure an athlete's physical health is maintained. However, there is a growing need for significant attention to be similarly applied to an athlete's mental health. Through this research, I hope to discover a positive link between therapeutic mental health interventions and performance outcomes for high performance athletes. I also hope that this research can contribute to the reduction of negative mental health stigma in sports, normalise mental illness and mental health challenges among high performance athletes, and help advocate for increased support and mental health resources for athletes.

Janine Binanitan – Play and Connect session

Continuation of Living: Maintaining Dignity and Quality of Life within the Process of Aging

My capstone project explores the challenges and changes that older adults experience as they age and how the dignity and quality of life become secondary as they go through those challenges and changes. My capstone project offers perspectives from humanistic approaches, particularly narrative and dignity therapy, which aims to maintain dignity and quality of life. My objective for my session is to build connections and tap into our own humanity and community in upholding and maintaining dignity and quality of life of older adults. My second objective is an invitation for the community to reflect how maintaining dignity and quality of life of older adults is our collective responsibility. During the session, I plan to provide a brief overview about what I learned in my research and engage participants in an experiential learning by utilizing some of the concepts from narrative art therapy (i.e., tree of life, life line).

2:30 PM UnConference Presentation sessions

PATIO/HISTORY

Oliver Wang – Talk and Walk session

Effect of Filial Piety on Complicated Grief

Many East Asian Cultures are influenced by Confucian ethics. In particular, the concept of filial piety is particularly relevant and has been for thousands of years. According to this concept, children have an obligation towards their parents which they must fulfill through caretaking, obedience, and respect. When East Asian Immigrants high in filial piety are unable to meet those obligations, possibly as a result of barriers relating to immigration, they may experience self-discrepancies. This in turn, may lead to negative affect and identity disruption, creating risk for complicated grief.

Katelyn Peterson – Teach and Explore session

Police, RCMP, and PTSD: Integrating the Before Operational Stress (BOS) Program into Detachments

My topic first focuses on trauma and the nature of police/RCMP workplace experiences. This is followed by discussing police/RCMP job stressors, risk factors, and PTSD prevalence. Finally, I cover treatment options and effectiveness for police/RCMP struggling with PTSD. I then provide a description and rationale for the Before Operational Stress (BOS) program. Learning objectives and take aways would be focused on understanding RCMP/police related experiences, impact of traumatic exposure, and treatment/prevention options. This would include learning about elements of the BOS program. I believe I would give a brief description of initial topics (i.e.: trauma, RCMP/police work place experiences) and more so focus on the BOS program. I would like to explore this more with my capstone supervisor.

JOYCE WALLEY

Luke Primus – Build and Grow session

Pills, Politics, and Propaganda: How Capitalism is Hijacking Mental Health

An exploration of the history and practice of psychiatric diagnosis and its relationship with the pharmaceutical industry, the advertising industry, and the politics of neoliberal capitalism. Participants will learn about the historical development of psychiatry and pharmaceuticals and its intersection with neoliberal values in the UK, the US, and Canada from the 1980s until the present day. I will review the literature briefly, discuss the implications for counselling practice, and offer a personal reflection on why I feel this matters for the future of my career and my profession.

Ankita Grewal
– Build session

Early life experiences and brain development

Exploring brain development through interactive play for early childhood years and understanding how this is influenced through varied life experiences and environment.

Jason Currier – Play and Connect session

Begin Again: Inspiration From a Friend to Pay Attention

My capstone involves the role of mindfulness in the training of the novice therapist along two interconnected paths: therapist self-care and the therapeutic relationship. This session is less about my capstone research, and more about how I chose this topic as a means of staying connected with a late friend and mentor. I invite attendees to engage with an experience of artifacts and visual storytelling related to mindful awareness and friendship. This session will involve silence, music, observation, contemplation, and discussion.

Jo Sawa – Talk and Walk session

Self-Sabotage in Romantic Relationships

Are Unconscious Cognitive Strategies of Self-Sabotage Hindering Relationship Success? Will explore the research on this topic, attachment injuries, and Relationship Sabotage Scale – a clinical tool designed to measure how individuals may employ self-defeating attitudes and behaviors within (and outside) of romantic relationships

Christina Chu – Build and Grow session

Individualism and Collectivism in Psychotherapy: Is therapy in North America individualistic? Exploring the infusion of collectivism into therapy practices

North American society is often viewed as individualistic, but is North American psychotherapy individualistic as well? Join me for an exploration into the intersection of individualism, collectivism, and psychotherapy in North American contexts. In this session, we will delve into the impact of these cultural ideologies on mental health and ways in which psychotherapy may be perpetuating individualistic ideals. After presenting key findings from my research on the influence of individualism and collectivism on mental health and therapy, I hope to have an interactive and collaborative discussion with the community to brainstorm ways in which collectivist principles can be integrated into therapeutic modalities.

Adam Shillington – Talk and Walk session

Integrating anti-oppressive practice into mobile crisis response

Mental health related emergencies represent a significant amount of calls to 911; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police respond to an estimated 10,000 calls per month, while one tenth of all police call outs in the United States involve mental health as a factor. The traditional system that dispatches fire fighters, police, and/or paramedics is not adequately equipped to deal with the mental health emergencies. Police are typically dispatched to attend such calls due to a perceived danger to first responders by the person in crisis. However, half of fatal police incidents in the USA have mental health problems as a factor and the risk of fatality for a person with untreated mental health issues during a police encounter is 16 times higher than the norm. This raises the question: how can emergency services support those with mental health crisis that require in person intervention? This session explores mobile crisis response through an anti-oppressive lens.

Gratitude to Laura Farres and Jalissa Schmidt

This is the 8th time we are gathering as a community to celebrate student work, and it offers us a great opportunity to reflect on where we have been, pause and make space to celebrate today, and to appreciate the journey and the people who championed the journey. This event would not be possible without Laura Farres and Jalissa Schmidt. As they are leaving CityU towards new and exciting opportunities, let us take a moment to share our gratitude for their impact on the UnConference as well as the CityU community.



Laura Farres championed the first student conference at CityU in December of 2020 with Chipo McNichols delivering the first welcome address, and Lisa Shopland-Black being the first student to present at the conference. It is so heartwarming to reflect on how Laura wanted to create space for connection and celebration during the time of the disconnect and the global pandemic. She was hoping to create an event that would be for students, with students, and by students. And here we are, 4 years and 7 unconferencing events later, celebrating students' work and connecting in meaningful ways. Without Laura's dedication to celebrating students, her passion for scholarship, and a dedication to meaningful work towards social justice, we would not have this beautiful event that connects people across programs and locations.

Jalissa Schmidt joined CityU as the Indigenous Campus Advocate in 2022 and joined our then small UnConference team of 2 faculty and 3 students right away, bringing her support and wisdom as we were passionate about meaningful reconciliation and expanding this event beyond academic constraints. Together, we worked towards more student-centred, thoughtful, and relational approaches that would help us and the event to embody the values of our UnConference community. Jalissa has brought to CityU her heartfelt dedication to students and to creating opportunities for them to thrive. It is not surprising that her favourite word is "community" as she offered her joyful approach to creating reflective spaces that would foster learning and connection for everyone in our CityU and UnConference community.



Messages from the Student Organizing Committee (2021-2023)

"Laura has been such an incredible advocate for the students of CityU, gently and deftly guiding us through the arguably daunting task of writing and presenting our capstone projects. She skillfully pulls out our strengths and supports our growth, all while maintaining a steady and compassionate approach in helping us cross the finish line. But she doesn't want us to just stop there. Laura makes us believe that completing a capstone project doesn't have to be the finish line. She recognizes that the capstone project can be so much more than a graduation requirement. She sees potential in her students that we can't see in ourselves, then shines a light on it. Her encouragement to consider where our new knowledge and experience can take us opens our minds to a future abundant with possibility and discovery.

Laura has been integral to creating the celebratory nature of the Capstone (Un) Conference. Her enthusiasm for students' accomplishments and our potential is immeasurable. She will be greatly missed. Thank you, Laura, for everything you have done to enhance the experience of the capstone project for students at CityU and giving us confidence in our futures." *Barb Baker*

"Laura was a greater instructor and coach than she realized, inspiring students to be brave in the face of adversity and challenging them to become their best selves when systemic adversities were greater than personal resources. She will be missed as a CityU faculty who inspired equality, feminism, and non-judgment." Marcus Narsaiya

"It was an absolute privilege to have the opportunity to work with Jalissa. Her ability to approach her work with such openness, authenticity, knowledge, and poise created safety and allowed for vulnerability. These qualities are essential for addressing colonial harm and making meaningful change towards decolonizing our practices. Plus, she's shown it's possible to do all of this while smiling and laughing together! Jalissa has left a lasting impression, one that evokes a sense of tranquility, comfort, strength, and delight. Thank you for all you have done, Jalissa!" Barb Baker

"Jalissa in her short but impactful time at CityU has inspired a spirit of inclusion, education, and holding space for others that cannot be replaced, despite the wildflowers that will blossom in the fertile soils she tended to. I look forward to all of the lives and systems she will continue to gift as she navigates her journey as a leader of our local communities." Marcus Narsaiya

It has been an absolute honour working with Laura and Jalissa who truly brought their hearts and souls into this work and have both had this impressive impact on the CityU Community. You can see their impact not only in the existence of the event, but also in more gentle but thoughtful ways in the theme and the logo created by students, in continuous dedication to meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities, in spaces for shared food and shared wisdom, in the interconnectedness across locations and programs, and in the joy and celebration that I hope everyone can experience when they attend the UnConference.



With much appreciation and admiration,

Kristina Berynets

UnConference learning

We would like to invite you to continue the learning journey by exploring more Indigenous resources. Carolyne Begin and the library team have created a list of resources that you can continue to explore.



Photo contributed by Charles Scott

[Indigenous Research and Ethics Resource Guide]

[Resources for the UnConference 2024]

UnConference Logo



As you may know, the UnConference logo was created by our MC student Jenny Chen for our June 2023 UnConference!

Here is what informed the creation of the logo:

"My inspiration for the logo is centred around the idea of deconstructing what we are familiar with (hence the scattered pieces) in order to embrace "different ways of knowing, being and doing" - leading to connection and inclusivity (circle)."

Jenny Chen

Post-UnConference links

Feedback

Thank you so much for joining! We really hope you enjoyed this event. Please share your feedback about your experience at the UnConference: Feedback survey

December 2024

We are already looking forward to the next UnConference in December 2024! If you would like to join the Student Organizing Committee or volunteer for the next UnConference, please reach out to unconference@cityu.edu





Photos contributed by Laura Farres