

CHANGING TIDES

2017 OARTY CONFERENCE

#OARTYConf

2017 OARTY Conference – An Overview

“I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to attend. I found the speakers to be very informative and the interactions with our partners to be excellent.” A 2017 OARTY Conference delegate

The theme for the 2017 OARTY Conference, Changing Tides, was a reflection on the changing legislative, policy, treatment and research landscapes in residential services and surrounding sectors. The numerous workshop sessions encompassed topics that focused on improving residential services and growing in this time of change by leveraging the extensive industry expertise available. Delegates gathered new tools and information, and left reenergized in their respective roles to help youth reach their potential.

Wednesday Sessions

1. **LGBT2SQ Youth in Care – Marcus Logan, Positive Space Educator**

Marcus shared his personal experiences as an adopted kid, LGBT2SQ identified, and as an adoptive parent and his professional experience working with LGBT2SQ kids in care. This emotional session helped to build a greater understanding of sexual and gender identities, leaving delegates with tools to build their capacity to better support LGBT2SQ youth in care.

2. **Black Youth in Care and the One Vision, One Voice Project – Kike Ojo, Project Lead, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS)**

Kike introduced delegates to the community led project One Vision One Voice: Changing the Ontario Child Welfare System to Better Serve African Canadians. Funded by MCYS and facilitated by OACAS, the project aims to address the over-representation of African Canadian/ Black youth in Child Welfare in Ontario. Delegates were walked through how and why African Canadian families are over-represented in child welfare, despite preliminary research showing that people of African descent do not have more incidences of child maltreatment than White people. Existing practices and unexamined biases/beliefs were explored, and the principles of equity which form the foundation of this project were examined in detail.

3. **Sexual Education for Youth with Complex Needs and Unique Considerations – Geraldine Crisci, Trainer, SafeGuards Training for Children and Adult Services**

Geraldine provided an overview of sexual education designed for youth and young adults with complex needs and other unique considerations including the impact of sexual trauma on forming and understanding healthy sexuality and relationships. Understanding that all individuals have a basic right to a sexual life and intimate relationships, providing appropriate sexual education is necessary to promote healthy socio-sexual functioning for youth living with these unique challenges. Geraldine also discussed how sexual behaviours are viewed in a negative manner due to the social impairments and related stereotypes associated with this population, and the public perception that these individuals and their caregivers must face.

Keynote Speaker

Following the reception and dinner, delegates were entertained by Kate Davis, A five-time nominee for the Canadian Comedy Awards who has opened for the likes of Bill Clinton and Barbara Walters, as well as the star of many television comedy specials. Kate left delegates inspired and laughing, and received a well-deserved standing ovation.



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Thursday Sessions

4. OARTY's Partners in Care Research – Educational Data – Robert Fulton, PRO.Files, OARTY Research Consultant

Robert introduced OARTY's detailed research, which includes a series of reports which provide a detailed profile of the youth in care of OARTY member agencies. Analysis on educational outcomes was provided, including a summary of the lessons learned as a result of this focused data analysis. Patterns help set parameters for the adoption of evidence based treatment, and in conjunction with knowledge gleaned from existing research literature, residential service providers can better define which methods are the best fit for different individuals in order to help their clients meet their full potential.

5. Concurrent Sessions

A - Analyze This! A Primer on Using Data to Drive Decisions - Warren Helfrich, WRH Consulting

Warren walked delegates through a step by step process for transforming their agency's data into information and how that information might inform decision making at a program and organizational level. It was acknowledged that residential service providers are not statisticians, and that it is not necessary to be in order to perform a basic level of analysis to better inform program decisions. Delegates also explored some of the more advanced forms of data analysis, and left encouraged to explore different ways to organize their agencies existing data for more effective reporting and better-informed decision making.

B- Domestic Sex Trafficking of Youth: Trauma-Informed Prevention & Intervention – Karly Church, East Metro Youth Services

Karly shared her personal experiences with commercial sexual exploitation, as well as her experiences providing support to women involved at all stages of human trafficking. Misconceptions, potential interventions, best practices for how and when to engage youth in discussions around consent, boundaries, and healthy relationships were explored. This at times emotional session left delegates better prepared to protect, prevent and intervene on behalf of the vulnerable children and youth in their care.

6. Concurrent Sessions

A - Engaging Younger Workers Through Innovation *Renée Gendron, Vitae Dynamics*

Renee explored how to begin expanding avenues of participation for new workers entering the caring profession, with particular tips for non-profit agencies. Delegates explored how to build upon the enthusiasm of younger workers, including the use of a relationship mapping tool that identifies underutilised relationships and opportunities for empowerment. Delegates were encouraged to help their younger employers stay engaged by creating openings for dialogue and innovation.

B - Human Trafficking in Ontario - Exploitation of Youth in the Sex Trade – Sergeant Ron Kapuscinski, Durham Regional Police, Human Trafficking Unit

Sergeant Kapuscinski emphasized the extent of the activity in Ontario, and the efforts made by police province-wide to prevent and counter this criminal activity. Data collected over the past four years on the characteristics of a trafficked victim as well as that of a trafficker were also presented. Across North America, the most at-risk individuals remain the most vulnerable youth – specifically those in care and run aways. Delegates were provided with additional warning signs for the youth in their care, and suggestions to ensure that communication remains open in order to identify the threat as quickly as possible.



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7. Concurrent Sessions

A - OARTY Talks Members Only Forum

OARTY members took part in a moderated dialogue on timely and relevant issues, driven by questions from the OARTY membership. Members were encouraged to share best practices and with their colleagues.

B - HR Law Update – Lisa Corrente, Torkin Manes

Lisa provided delegates with an outline of recent case law changes and other legislative developments as they relate to the unique workplaces of residential service providers. Topics covered included recent changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, new leaves under the Employment Standards Act, developments under the Human Rights Code and court decisions affecting employment contracts.

An Evening of Laughter

After a fulsome day of intensive professional development, delegates gathered after dinner for An Evening of Laughter with K. Trevor Wilson. K. Trevor Wilson is best known for his work as Squirrely Dan on Crave TV's Letterkenny, his five Just for Laughs appearances, and for competing on Comedy Central's Roast Battles. Delegates enjoyed a phenomenal performance, leaving many in tears of laughter.

Friday Sessions

Opening Remarks from the Ministry of Community and Social Services

Karen Eisler, Director for Central Region, presented opening remarks on behalf of the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

8. Advocating for Children, Youth and Young Adults – Diana Cooke, Director of Investigations and Trevor McAlmont, Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth

Diana and Trevor outlined the role of the Advocate's office in advocating for children and youth, and the role of the investigations unit in protecting Ontario's children and youth. Delegates also received a sneak peek into the preliminary results of the analysis of Serious Occurrence Reports that is being undertaken by the Advocate's Office.

9. Supporting Positive Development: Transitional Aged Youth – Shelley Smith, Senior Policy Analyst, Ministry of Children and Youth Services

Shelley provided an overview of Stepping Stones: A Resource on Youth Development, and evidence-based resource outlining the developmental continuum for youth aged 12 – 25 across cognitive, emotional, social and physical domains. Delegates were encouraged to explore new and emerging opportunities to further support the positive development of the youth in their care, in order to help them successfully transition to independence and adulthood.

Closing Remarks from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services

Deputy Minister Nancy Matthews presented closing remarks on behalf of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.