

NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY TOGETHER

THE ROLE OF PEER SUPPORT IN CHRONIC PAIN

Friday, May 23, 2025

9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Health Innovation Acceleration Centre

66 Pippy Place, St. John's, NL



SPOR Evidence Alliance
Strategic for Patient Oriented Research
Alliance pour des données probantes de la SRAP
Alliance de recherche axée sur le patient



NL Health
Services

Welcome

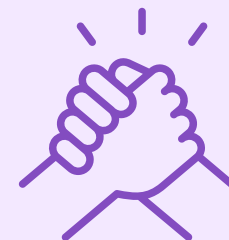
We are delighted to welcome you to ***Navigating the Journey Together: The Role of Peer Support in Chronic Pain***. This event brings together people with lived experience, clinicians, researchers, and community members to explore how peer support can transform the chronic pain experience.

Chronic pain affects 1 in 5 Canadians and presents unique challenges for both those experiencing it and the healthcare system. Today, we'll explore evidence-based approaches to peer support and practical strategies for building supportive communities.

With gratitude,

The Organizing Committee

*Jennifer Donnan, Virginia McIntyre,
Dalainey Drakes, Kati Whelan,
Julie Sullivan, Joshua Rash*



About This Event

Key Themes

- Evidence & Experience:**
Bridging research findings with lived experience perspectives
- Practical Skills:** Tools for effective peer support
- Building Connections:**
Creating sustainable support networks
- Systems Integration:**
Incorporating peer support into healthcare

Learning Outcomes

- Gain an understanding of current research
- Develop peer support facilitation skills
- Learn about available and local resources
- Networking opportunities

Who Will Benefit

- People living with chronic pain
- Healthcare providers
- Family members & caregivers
- Community support organizations

Event Highlights

- Systematic & Scoping Review**
Latest evidence on peer support effectiveness
- Interactive Workshop**
Practical peer support training
- Expert Panel**
Perspectives from local organizations in peer support
- Networking**
Connect with peers & professionals

Agenda

MORNING SESSION

9:00 - 9:10 AM

Welcome & Introductions

9:10 - 9:45 AM

Experts by Experience: Creating Connection Through Chronic Pain

Virginia McIntyre, BA, MRT(R)(MR) & Dalainey Drakes, MSc, PhD Student

9:45 - 10:30 AM

Untangling Pain: A Multidimensional Approach to Pain Management

Dr. David Flusk, MD

10:30 - 10:50 AM

Morning Break

MID-DAY SESSION

10:50 - 11:10 AM

From Patients to Partners: Research on Peer Support in Chronic Pain Care

Dr. Jennifer Donnan, PhD

11:10 - 11:30 AM

Hope in the Fog: Finding Resources & Support for Chronic Pain in NL

Julie Dwyer, MSc, PhD(c)

11:30 - 12:00 PM

Evolving Pain Care: Stepped Care 2.0 & the Future of Support in NL

Julie Sullivan, MN

12:00 - 1:00 PM

Lunch

AFTERNOON SESSION

1:00 - 3:00 PM

Peer Support Fundamentals Workshop

Facilitated by Lifewise

3:00 - 3:15 PM

Afternoon Break

3:15 - 4:15 PM

Live Panel Discussion

Featuring: Lifewise, Memorial Minds, People In Pain Network, & Smokers' Helpline NL. Moderated by Julie Sullivan

4:15 - 4:30 PM

Closing



Virginia McIntyre

BA, MRT(R)(MR)

President & Executive Director, People In Pain Network (Society)

Experts by Experience: Creating Connection Through Chronic Pain

9:10 - 9:45 AM

About

Virginia McIntyre is the President and Executive Director of the People In Pain Network (Society). Her dedication to improving pain management and raising awareness about chronic pain is evident in her active participation in numerous research projects and pain-related initiatives. She serves on several influential committees, including Pain Canada's National Advisory Committee and the US Association for the Study of Pain's PWLE Committee. Additionally, she chairs the Canadian Pain Society's Communication Committee and PWLE Committee. Virginia is notably the first Canadian with lived experience to be awarded the **Mayday Pain and Science Fellowship** (2023/24).

Virginia co-hosts a compelling new podcast, **Action On Pain**, that amplifies the voices of people living with pain and is grounded in Health Canada's Action Plan for Pain.

Her ongoing work as an international presenter, educator and advocate highlights her commitment to advancing the understanding of peer support and management of chronic pain. Virginia can be reached at VirginiaMcI@pipain.com.



Dalainey Drakes

MSc

Patient Partner & PhD Student, University of Ottawa

Experts by Experience: Creating Connection Through Chronic Pain

9:10 - 9:45 AM

About

Dalainey is a dedicated patient partner contributing to research on peer support for chronic pain. As a young woman living with rheumatoid arthritis, her lived experience shapes her daily life and sparks her passion to foster wellbeing and resilience in young adults. She channels her journey into purposeful advocacy, encouraging individuals to see beyond their diagnoses and embrace their full potential. Through one-on-one support and active engagement across social media and global health communities such as The Mighty, Dalainey offers peer support by providing guidance, sharing education, being candid about her own story, and empowering those navigating similar paths.

She is also completing her PhD in Clinical Psychology at the University of Ottawa. Dalainey brings experience conducting health psychology and clinical epidemiological research working with diverse groups across the lifespan. Her dissertation research strives to promote patient centred approaches and explores the impact of intolerance of uncertainty and anxiety among people living with chronic health and pain conditions. You can contact her at dalainey.drakes@uottawa.ca.



Dr. David Flusk

MD

*Medical Director, Atlantic Mentorship
Network Pain and Addiction*

Untangling Pain: A Multidimensional Approach to Pain Management

9:45 - 10:30 AM

About

Originally from Toronto, David Trained in both Ireland, and Newfoundland. He practices both pain medicine and anesthesiology in a community setting. He is a Clinical Associate Professor with the Department of Anesthesiology and the Faculty of medicine at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. David is also the clinical chief of anesthesia for the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services Rural Zone.

David is currently the Medical Director of the Atlantic Mentorship Network Pain and Addiction for Newfoundland and Labrador. This mentorship Network spans Atlantic Canada and collaborates with the Center for Effective Practice and Pain BC, creating a national network of health care professionals working in Mental Health, Pain and Addictions. The AMN is a multifaceted program of mentorship which is designed to create adaptable and accessible options for providers to seek support. Its objective is to deliver practical and focused continuing professional development opportunities for healthcare professionals based on identified learning needs.

With over 12 years of experience in cannabinoid medicine, David has been a subject matter expert in the field, teaching at undergraduate, postgraduate levels as well as an invited speaker at national conferences. David has also worked with the Association of Faculties of Medicine Canada as a Subject Matter Expert and contributing author on the AFMCs response to the opioid crisis project which has developed curriculum for both undergraduate and postgraduate medical programs across Canada. David is currently serving as a board member and treasurer for the Canadian Pain Society.



Dr. Jennifer Donnan

BScPharm, MSc, MBA, PhD

Memorial University of Newfoundland

From Patients to Partners: Research on Peer Support in Chronic Pain Care

10:50 - 11:10 AM

About

Dr. Jennifer Donnan is an Associate Professor with Memorial University School of Pharmacy. A pharmacist by training, her focus now is on cannabis policy and substance use prevention and harm reduction. She has expertise in knowledge synthesis, choice modelling and program evaluation.

Jennifer has co-developed the **Drug Education Centered on Youth Decision Empowerment** (DECYDE) strategy, focused on substance use prevention and harm reduction through classroom education.

Jennifer is also passionate about training the next generation of pharmacists to provide true patient centered care that challenges stigma, is culturally sensitive and trauma informed.

Jennifer can be reached at jennifer.donnan@mun.ca. More information about the DECYDE strategy can be found at www.DECYDE.ca





Julie Dwyer

MSc, PhD(c)

Memorial University of Newfoundland

Hope in the Fog: Finding Resources & Support for Chronic Pain in NL

11:10 - 11:30 AM

About

Julie Dwyer is a multi-passionate PhD candidate in psychology, specializing in organizational change and implementation science. With over a decade of experience across healthcare, research, and education, her work focuses on chronic pain, somatics, and health equity. She was named one of *Atlantic Business Magazine's* 25 Most Powerful Women (2025) and is the recipient of Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services' largest Quality Healthcare Award (2024).

To date, she has worked with over 30,000 individuals, delivering evidence-based, embodied strategies that support sustainable systems change and enhance performance. As a researcher, lecturer, and consultant, Julie helps individuals, teams, and organizations thrive. Her work is grounded in practical application, inclusion, and a commitment to human-centred approaches that meet people where they are.



Julie Sullivan

BN, MN

*Director, Strategic Health Network for
Complex Pain at NL Health Services*

Evolving Pain Care: Stepped Care 2.0 & the Future of Support in NL

11:30 - 12:00 PM

About

Julie Sullivan is the inaugural Director of the Strategic Health Network for Complex Pain at NL Health Services, spearheading transformative initiatives to enhance pain prevention and management within a learning health and social system. With close to 20 years of healthcare experience, Julie is dedicated to improving health outcomes and quality of life for individuals living with pain.

Known for her collaborative leadership and stakeholder engagement, Julie integrates evidence-based practices and fosters meaningful partnerships to deliver patient-centered care. She holds both a Master of Nursing and Bachelor of Nursing from Memorial University and is a Certified Health Executive, LEADS Facilitator, and Change Management Practitioner.

Julie's passion for innovation and collaboration drives her efforts to transform complex pain care, strengthen healthcare systems, and support healthier communities across Newfoundland and Labrador.

Workshop

Peer Support Fundamentals Workshop

1:00 - 3:00 PM



About Lifewise

Lifewise is a provincial organization created by and for individuals living with mental health and addiction issues. We exist to support and encourage individual recovery through self-determination, while working to break the stigma surrounding these issues in our province.

Peer Support Fundamentals

Adapted from the Lifewise Peer Support Certification program, Peer Support Fundamentals highlights key peer support concepts for community members who want to use their personal lived experience to help others in individual and group settings.

Topics Covered:

- Supportive Listening Skills
- Inclusive Language
- Group Facilitation Skills
- Ethical Guidelines
- Cultivating Compassion Satisfaction
- Effective Storytelling
- Goal Setting & Problem Solving
- Setting Healthy Boundaries
- Practice Scenarios
- Self-Care & Self-Reflection

Judy Squires

Workshop Facilitator

Lifewise Peer Support Trainer

lifewisenl.ca



Panel Discussion

Live Panel Discussion: Local Pain & Peer Support Resources

3:15 - 4:00 PM

This panel brings together representatives from local organizations providing peer support and resources for people living with chronic pain in Newfoundland and Labrador. Panelists will share insights from their experiences, discuss challenges and successes, and explore the future of peer support in healthcare.

Panelists



Judy
Squires



Emily
Halfyard



Virginia
McIntyre



Mary Lynn
Pender



Moderated by:

Julie Sullivan, BN, MN

Discussion Topics

Personal Journeys

Best Practices

Impact & Outcomes

Future Directions

Resources

Below is a collection of organizations and resources that provide support, information, and advocacy for people living with chronic pain.

Power Over Pain Portal

Comprehensive online resource hub with evidence-based information and tools.

poweroverpain.ca

SKIP

Solutions for Kids in Pain - resources for children with chronic pain.

kidsinpain.ca

Pain Canada

National advocacy organization for pain management.

paincanada.ca

Chronic Pain Network

National collaboration of patients, researchers, and professionals.

cpn-rdc.ca

Pain Connect

Platform connecting patients to pain research opportunities.

painconnect.ca

People in Pain Network

Delivers high-quality meetings led by certified peer facilitators who blend support and education.

pipain.com

Lifewise

Mental health and addiction peer support organization.

lifewisenl.ca

Canadian Pain Society

Network for pain research, education, and advocacy.

canadianpainsociety.ca

LivePlanBe+

Comprehensive pain education resource.

liveplanb.ca/pain-education

Notes

Notes

