

Integrated mental health care for transgender, non-binary, two-spirited, and gender-diverse people across the lifespan.



Department of Psychiatry
Gender Care Symposium 2026

FEBRUARY 3, 4, 5, 6, 2026

8:30 A.M. TO 12:30 P.M.

Presented virtually on Zoom



Gender Care Symposium 2026 Schedule *

February 03, 2026

8:30-9:00 Symposium opens on Zoom

9:00-9:05 Trans*Health Basics Welcome

S Zinck

9:05-9:45 Gender Dysphoria Myths and Controversies: a look at the Cass Review and McMaster Studies

S Zinck

9:45-10.00 Question and Answer Period

10:00-10:15 Break

10:15-11:00 Trans* voices panel & video on health care

Youth & Parents; R Bartlett

11:00-11:15 Question and Answer Period

11:15-11:30 Break

11:30-12:15 Advocating for youth at schools, camps and community activities: resources and approaches

The Youth Project; C Sweeney and C Upton

12:15-12:30 Question and Answer Period

Gender Care Symposium 2026 Schedule *

February 04, 2026

8:30-8:45 Symposium opens on Zoom

8:45-9:30 Supporting families and partnership in gender affirming care

AM Joyce, J. Davis and A. Kroon- Canning

9:30-9:45 Question and Answer Period

9:45-10:00 Break

10:00-11:00 Gender dysphoria 101

S Zinck

11:00-11:15 Question and Answer Period

11:15-11:30 Break

11:30-12:15 Endocrinological/Hormones treatment update for MH clinicians, pediatricians and primary care physicians

A Mokashi

12:15-12:30 Question and Answer Period

Gender Care Symposium 2026 Schedule *

February 05, 2026

8:30-8:45 Symposium opens on Zoom // Advanced Mental Health Concepts Welcome
S Zinck

8.45-9:45 Psychotherapeutic approaches for managing body dysphoria, disordered eating and imposter syndrome
S Zinck, AM Joyce and R Bartlett

9.45-10:00 Question and Answer Period

10:00-10.15 Break

10:15-11:00 Indigenous Gender Concepts: Understanding Two Spirit Health care
M Denny

11:00 –11.15 Question and Answer Period

11:15-11:30 Break

11:30-12:15 Gender identity and autism: common presentations and a guideline for providing treatment
S Zinck and AM Joyce

12:15-12:30 Question and Answer Period

Gender Care Symposium 2026 Schedule *

February 06, 2026

8:30-8:45 Symposium opens on Zoom

8:45-9:45 Surgical assessment of transgender teens and adults

M Lee

9:45-10:00 Question and Answer Period

10:00-10:15 Break

10:15-11:00 Clinician panel Q&A: How to write referral letters with samples

J Davis

11:15 -11:30 Question & Answer Period

11:30-11:45 Break

11:45-12:00 Peer supervision network: how it works and why to join

S Zinck and R Bartlett

12:00-12:30 Question and Answer Period // Thank you and Conference wrap up

S Zinck

Speaker Information

Speakers

Robert Bartlett

MSW, Clinician therapist, School Mental Health

Julien Davis

MSW, RSW, Advanced Practice Leader; Gender Affirming Care, PCTEL, WPATH GEI SOC8 Certified member

Alexa Kroon-Canning

MSW, Social worker, Halifax Community Mental Health

Mykel Denny

Gender and sexual wellness navigator - Wabanaki Two-Spirit Alliance

Matthew Lee

Family Physician, NSHA

Ann Marie Joyce

PhD, Psychologist, IWK Health Centre

Arati Mokashi

MD, FRCPC, Pediatric Endocrinologist, IWK Health Centre & Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Dalhousie University

Cynthia Sweeney

Consultant/Lead Inclusion Educator, Simply Good Form

Cameron Upton

MACP, CCC, RCT-C Education and GSA Coordinator with the Youth Project

Suzanne Zinck

MD, FRCPC, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, IWK Health Centre & Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Dalhousie University

Learning Objectives

Symposium Objectives

1. You will learn about the terminology and spectrum of gender expression
2. You will be able to describe the criteria for psychosocial assessment involved in diagnosis of gender dysphoria
3. You will understand the time course of gender variance and dysphoria
4. You will become familiar about local resources and supports for youth and families, advocacy resources for clinicians and educators. Also understand the evidence for treating gender-creative and transgender youth and families
5. You will learn the components of informed consent for hormone and surgical treatments
6. You will understand the differences of social determinants of Health and importance of weaving traditional Wabanaki medicine into primary care
7. You will understand what the prevalence of gender incongruence is in general population.
8. You will learn how to write referral letters for hormone and surgical treatments
9. You will learn key recommendations for providing gender affirming, trans-inclusive healthcare services, with themes drawn from the existing research on best practices and cultural competency for working with trans populations
10. You will become familiar with the referral path to services for these youth in N.S.

Learning Objectives

Introduction: Gender Dysphoria Myths and Controversies

S. Zinck

1. Recognize controversies about transition services for trans and non-binary youth
2. Identify the application of the 'Rule Out Bias in Systematic Reviews' -ROBIS- tool.
3. Comprehend the risk of bias in one set of influential international systematic reviews that assess the outcomes of four main transition services for youth
4. List the main recommendations for clinical practice currently

Trans*voices panel & video on health care

R. Bartlett; Youth & Parents

1. You will understand the time course of gender variance and dysphoria
2. You will understand the evidence for treating gender-creative and transgender youth and their families
3. Participants will learn examples and tangible information of what was NOT HELPFUL in their gender care journey from helping care professionals

Advocating for youth at schools, camps and community activities: resources and approaches

C. Sweeney, C. Upton; The Youth Project

1. You will learn about local resources and supports for youth & families in community
2. You will engage with first-voice experiences from community members and organizations about their advocacy work and resources for clinicians and educators
3. You will learn effective skills and tools to use to help advocate for youth at school, camps and community activities
4. Health care professionals will learn the importance of knowing other support services because they cannot be "all this to all people"

Supporting families in gender affirming care

AM Joyce, J Davis, A Kroon Canning

1. identify ways to create a safe space for families and partners to express their emotional responses, and when further intervention is needed
2. Describe effective interventions for families and partners
3. Explain how to support families and partners navigating gender affirming medical care and direct them to relevant and reliable resources.

Gender dysphoria 101

S. Zinck

1. You will understand the evidence for treating gender-creative and transgender youth and their families
2. You will become familiar with hormone and surgical treatments and mental health outcomes
3. You will become familiar with the referral path to services for these youth

Endocrinological/Hormones treatment update for MH clinicians, pediatricians and primary care physicians

A. Mokashi

1. You will become familiar with the eligibility for medical transition and the referral path to hormone therapy.
2. You will identify practical ways a primary care clinician can take to support TGD youth while awaiting consultation.
3. You will become familiar with options for hormone therapy, their common side effects and typical monitoring required

Psychotherapeutic approaches for managing body dysphoria

S. Zinck, AM Joyce, R Barlett

1. You will be able to describe criteria and psychosocial assessment involved in making a diagnosis of gender dysphoria
2. You will understand the time course of gender variance and dysphoria
3. You will understand the evidence for treating gender-creative and transgender youth and their families
4. You will become familiar with hormone and surgical treatments and mental health outcomes
5. You will learn how to identify presentations of body dysphoria and minority stress and differentiate them from primary anxiety and depression symptoms

Indigenous Gender Concepts: Understanding Two Spirit Health Care

M.Denny

1. 2S Trans Council: Raising the voice of our nation. Identifying the gaps in accessibility to gender affirming care
2. 2S Social Determinants of Health: Understanding the differences of Social Determinants of health for 2S Trans/Non- Binary individuals
3. Ceremony in Health Care: The importance of weaving traditional Wabanaki medicine into primary care. Knowledge sharing with 2S Trans/Non-Binary youth

Gender identity and autism: common presentations and a guideline for providing treatment

AM. Joyce, S. Zinck

1. You will comprehend what the prevalence of gender incongruence/dysphoria is in the general population?

2. Through discussion of cases you will recognize:

- How might gender diversity present in a youth with ASD?
- What are important factors to consider in treatment? With a focus on informed consent and capacity

3. You will comprehend:

- What are the needs of the family?
- What do the clinical practice guidelines say?
- What do youth and families say?

Surgical assessments of transgender teens and adults

M. Lee

1. You will become familiar with the names of surgical treatments and post-surgery mental health outcomes
2. You will become familiar with the referral path to funding and services for gender-diverse youth
3. You will learn the components of informed consent for surgical treatments

Clinical panel Q&A: How to write referral letters with samples

J. Davis

1. You will learn how to write referral letters for puberty blockers and gender affirming hormone treatments
2. You will learn how to write referral letters to accompany gender affirming surgical appointments
3. You will be provided various examples of formats to use for referral letters

Peer supervision network and how to join

R. Bartlett, S. Zinck

1. You will recognize the available peer supervision network
2. Membership criteria for participating schedule
3. How to sign up

Gender Care Symposium 2026

Planning Committee

Suzanne Zinck, MD, FRCPC (Chair)

Robert Bartlett, MSW

Julien Davis, MSW, RSW

Ann Marie Joyce, PhD, Psychologist

Matthew Lee, Family Physician

Reilly MacDonald, MSW, TL

Arati Mokashi, MD, FRCPC, Pediatric Endocrinologist

Spencer Sam, MSW

Debi Follett

Supriya D'Penha