

# HEADLINES



**ONE YEAR LATER:  
RAPID ACCESS AND STABILIZATION PROGRAM  
IMPROVES DIRECT ACCESS TO PSYCHIATRIC  
CARE BY OVER 1,000 PER CENT**



**DALHOUSIE  
UNIVERSITY**

Department of Psychiatry

# IN THIS ISSUE

## FEATURE

**ONE YEAR LATER:  
RAPID ACCESS AND STABILIZATION IMPROVES DIRECT ACCESS TO  
PSYCHIATRIC CARE BY OVER 1,000 PER CENT** *page 5*

## CONTENTS

- 3** Message from the Department Head
- 7** Research Report
- 8** Education Report
- 14** Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
- 16** Section of Geriatric Psychiatry
- 18** Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry welcomes research assistant Muhammad Ali Naqvi
- 19** Section of Forensic Psychiatry
- 19** Section of Community Psychiatry
- 20** Old books bring new insights into psychiatry's past
- 22** Department convenes for academic leadership retreat
- 23** Leadership safety rounds: Highlighting the importance of team cohesion in clients and staff safety
- 25** Humanities Corner
- 26** Department News
- 28** Faculty and Staff Changes
- 29** Awards & Honours
- 33** Residents' Corner
- 35** Photo Feature

---

This newsletter is published for the Department of Psychiatry at Dalhousie University.  
5909 Veterans' Memorial Lane  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Abbie J. Lane Building  
Halifax, NS B3H 2E2

**Editor:** Dr. Leigh Meldrum

**Compilation, Layout, and Design:**  
Penney Miller

Submissions should be sent to:  
[Penney.Miller@nshealth.ca](mailto:Penney.Miller@nshealth.ca)

# HEAD LINES

# Message from the Department Head

---

It's been a busy spring in the Department of Psychiatry. Between annual events, new initiatives, many meetings, gatherings, welcoming new staff and faculty and saying farewell to others, we continue to stay on task – implementing new aspects of our Transformational and Strategic Plan, maintaining cornerstone activities, and keeping an eye to the future.

On April 26, we held our annual W.O. McCormick Academic Day. This year's conference theme was Alcohol Use Disorders and Mental Health: An Update. Thank you to the speakers, organizers, and attendees for making this another successful event.

We were excited to launch the Dalhousie Global Mental Health Guest Lecture Series with its inaugural lecture on May 3. Dr. Shekhar Saxena, Professor, Practice of Global Mental Health, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health; and, Former Director, Mental Health and Substance Abuse, World Health Organization, joined us to deliver an informative lecture titled “Global mental health and sustainable development: challenges and opportunities.” We look forward to welcoming more global mental health experts as guest speakers. Stay tuned for details about upcoming lectures in the series.

The annual Year-End Celebration was held on June 7 where we recognized and celebrated another cohort of residents who have completed their



Dr. Vincent Agyapong

postgraduate training in psychiatry. This year, we also recognized those completing MSc. and PhD programs in psychiatry research.

Additionally, we were proud to recognize some faculty and residents during an annual awards presentation at the event. Congratulations to the following recipients of residents' choice and resident awards: Dr. **Kathleen Singh** (Teacher of the Year Award), Elle Waychesko (Above and Beyond Award), Dr. **Selene Etches** (PGY-5 Excellence Award), Dr. **Jason Morrison** (Junior Mentorship Award), Dr. **Mahmoud Awara** (Senior Mentorship Award), Dr. **Joe Saunders** (Junior Resident Professionalism Award), Dr. **Natasa Zatezalo** (Senior Resident Professionalism

Award), Dr. **Julie Munich** (Clerks' Choice Award), Dr. **Anthony Hinde** (Horizon Health Network Saint John Zone PGY-1 Resident of the Year Award), Dr. **Natasha Glover** (Dr. Charles J. David Memorial Prize in Psychiatry), Dr. **Kara Yeung** (Dr. Herb Orlik Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Resident Award), Dr. **Alec Watts** (Geriatric Psychiatry Resident Award), Dr. **Alison Toron** (Dr. Harris Lee Barton Scholarship), Drs. **Anastasia McCarvill**, **Jared Allman**, and **LeAnne Revell** (Dr. Robert and Stella Weil Fund in Psychiatry Prize), Drs. **Nadine Nejati** and **Madeline Ferracuti** (Dr. W.O. McCormick Award), and Drs. **Niamh Campbell** and **Julia LeBlanc** (Alexander H. Leighton Resident of the Year Award).

A number of our MSc. students along with one PhD student will

be defending their theses this summer. This is the first defense in our PhD program. I wish everyone defending their thesis well. Current and incoming graduate students are also successful in receiving external funding. Congratulations to: **Pierre-Olivier Couture, Zachary Hubshman, Bala Harri, Dr. Jasmyn Cunningham,** and **Holly Carbyn.** Congratulations also to **Gerald Agyapong-Opoku** who received a NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award.

On the research front, several department members secured grants and published papers. Congratulations to Dr. **Cheryl Murphy,** Dr. **Michelle MacDonald,** **Mandy Eslinger,** Dr. **Kara Dempster,** Dr. **Phil Tibbo,** Dr. **Derek Fisher,** Dr. **Ejemai Eboeime,** Dr. **Raquel Dias,** Dr. **Cinera States,** and Dr. **Lori Wozney** on the grants they received, and to Drs. **Ian Mackay,** **Keri-Leigh Cassidy,** and Sean McWhinney on their recent publications.

Two research chairs in the department were renewed. Congratulations to Dr. **Sherry Stewart,** Tier 1 CRC in Addictions and Mental Health, and to Dr. **Sandra Meier,** Tier 2 CRC in Developmental Psychopathology and Youth Mental Health.

The Rapid Access and Stabilization Program (RASP) completed one year of operation in April. RASP continues to improve access to psychiatric care in the central zone and has been an all-around success. Thank you to everyone on the RASP team for embracing this innovative program.

On May 10, leaders in the Dal Department of Psychiatry convened for an academic leadership retreat about strategic planning. The retreat included a special focus on social policy and advocacy, equity, diversity, and inclusion, wellness, and distributed research and education. I'm grateful to everyone who participated in and organized this event. Gathering and sharing our perspectives and experiences helps us move forward in setting the future direction of our department.

Two staff members departed in the spring to pursue other career opportunities. We said farewell to **Ariann Greenidge,** my administrative assistant, and to **Michelle LeBlanc,** administrative manager for the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. We wish them both well in their future endeavours.

We were pleased to welcome the following new department members: faculty members Drs. **Christian Hahn, Ajai Sharma, Diepriye Tariah, Hussein Ibrahim, Sukhcharan Singh, Sunny Singh, Zaki Shullaih,** and **Olubunmi Adebowale,** and new staff members **Bharti Chauhan,** who joined as my acting administrative assistant, and **Rajkumar Kanniappan,** who joined as acting HR coordinator.

Department members continue to be recognized for their research, academic, and teaching success, as well as their service to the department.

Two psychiatry research graduate students were recognized with Faculty of Medicine Excellence in Research Awards. Congratulations to the

recipients **Nick Murray** (MSc. level) and **Ashley Francis** (PhD level).

We were honoured to present departmental dedicated service, leadership, special recognition, and mentorship awards at the bi-annual meeting to some very deserving recipients. Congratulations to Drs. **Miroslaw Bilski-Piotrowski, Amy Bombay,** and **Normand Carrey** on their Dedicated Service Awards; to Drs. **Lourdes Soto-Moreno, Jonathan Brake, David Lovas,** and **Andrew Harris** on their Leadership Awards; to **Theresa Halliday** on her Special Recognition Award; and to Dr. **Sanjana Sridharan,** the recipient of the 2024 Dr. Aidan Stokes Mentorship Award.

Thank you and congratulations to the following recipients of the department's Extra Mile Award: Dr. **Julia Gibson,** Dr. **Ngozi Ezeanozie,** and **Jen Brown.**

Three faculty members were also honoured with Faculty of Medicine Awards presented at the annual faculty meeting. Congratulations to Dr. **David Gardner,** recipient of the Award of Excellence in Education; Dr. **Rudolf Uher,** recipient of the Excellence in Clinical Research Award; and Dr. **Sandra Meier,** recipient of the Excellence in Research Mentorship — Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Award.

Congratulations also go to Dr. **Patricia Lingley-Pottie** who was named top 50 CEO by Atlantic Business Magazine.

**Dr. Vincent Agyapong**  
Head, Department of Psychiatry  
Dalhousie University  
Chief, Department of Psychiatry  
NSHA Central Zone

## On the **Cover**

---

# One year later: Rapid Access and Stabilization Program improves direct access to psychiatric care by over 1,000 per cent



The RASP team in April 2023. From left to right: Dr. Vincent Agyapong, department head; Dr. Sherry James, former RASP team member; Dr. Sanjana Sridharan, head, Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry; Dr. Barani Sambandan, Dr. Shiloh Gossen, former RASP team member; Dr. Anthony Pianosi, Dr. Ngozi Ezeanzie, RASP's clinical academic leader; Dr. Jason Morrison; and Matt White, Co-Director, MHAP central zone.

One year since its launch in April 2023, the Rapid Access and Stabilization Program (RASP) continues to improve access to psychiatric care for adults in Nova Scotia's central zone.

RASP is an innovative mental health care delivery model. Patients are referred to the program via the Mental Health and Addiction Program Central Intake System by primary care providers for diagnostic

clarification, medication consult, and treatment plan formation, and assessed by a psychiatrist.

After the comprehensive assessment, which includes the use of eight standardized rating scales, patients are either returned to the care of the primary care provider with a detailed treatment plan or referred to another clinical service if needed. A limited number of follow-up appointments and telephone

consultations with primary care providers are also offered as part of the program based on need.

The program is a partnership between the Department of Psychiatry and Nova Scotia Health's central zone Mental Health and Addiction Program.

"Prevention through early intervention is at the program's core," says Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**, Dal's

head of Psychiatry and chief of Psychiatry for Nova Scotia Health's central zone. "If we can reduce wait times and see patients sooner, we have the potential to address their mental health concerns before they deteriorate, and treatment becomes more intensive and expensive."

Support in the form of text messages is also available. All patients attending RASP have the option to subscribe to the Text4Support program — an evidence-based e-mental health intervention that offers six months of diagnosis-specific Cognitive Behavioural Therapy-based supportive text messages and follow-up mental health assessments. Text4Support is funded by the QEII Foundation.

With 960 unique clients assessed by psychiatrists within the program's first year, RASP is making strides in achieving its goal to reduce wait times for psychiatric care in the central zone to four weeks. The number of primary care patients directly assessed by a psychiatrist in the central zone has increased by over 1,000 per cent when compared to the previous fiscal year. This comes without adding extra physician investment or resources and reduces excessive burdens to inpatient and emergency psychiatric services. After a psychiatric consultation, most appointments resulted in a transfer back to a primary care provider only (66 per cent of appointments) or care was transferred to a community mental health association for therapy (14 per cent of appointments).

The program continues to show high levels of satisfaction. It scores an average of 9.22

out of 10 from over 500 RASP patients who rated their overall satisfaction of the services.

Patient feedback from the satisfaction survey includes appreciation for the timely access to care as well as gratitude and hope:

"Access to RASP was incredibly amazing and fast. Personalized, looked at my entire situation not just today's problems. Didn't make me feel bad for wanting to self-harm, made me feel that there may be a way to get better."

"I have been dealing with the mental health system for a long time in Nova Scotia, this is the first time I've ever been seen in a timely manner and connected with the person who would be helping me. I found solutions and hope for the first time, and I think that is incredibly valuable. I hope others feel the same with this program!"

"The severity of my current depressive episode/suicidality was addressed w/ both seriousness and compassion, which can be rare when our (mental) healthcare services stretched so thin. I genuinely believe that being assessed and then seen promptly by a CMH psychiatrist (all in the same week) was incredible harm reduction. I genuinely cannot say if a trip to the ER would have been enough to keep me alive. RASP is an unbelievable program, and I really, really hope it remains funded and operational."

"A good number of the patients we saw in RASP had been waiting to be assessed by psychiatrists for about one to three years," says Dr. **Ngozi Ezeanozie**, RASP's clinical

academic leader. "The vast majority of the patients we saw were very grateful and appreciative of the detailed, efficient, and empathetic psychiatric care that they got from us. Through RASP, a lot of patients that had not previously had access to quality psychiatric care now have access to it. These are wonderful outcomes and a massive encouragement to the entire RASP team that we're definitely on the right track."

Working in RASP has also been well-received by the psychiatrists.

"It's been fun working in RASP and doing general psychiatry again after several years of doing only schizophrenia care," says Dr. **Jason Morrison**. "It's making me update my knowledge in areas I haven't thought about for several years, and with four consults a day, it is sharpening my efficiency in interviewing and documentation. Most of the people we see have had symptoms and disability for years but have never seen a psychiatrist or been offered mental health care. It is gratifying when my intervention with them can move the needle on their wellness."

The program is also providing opportunities for medical learners. The undergraduate psychiatry program is expanding its educational offerings by adding RASP as an outpatient site. RASP is slated to supervise clerks starting September 2024.

"RASP continues to evolve positively and I'm happy to be a part of it," says Dr. Ezeanozie. "It's been a great journey so far and it's only going to get better and better over the coming years."

# Research Report

---

## GRANTS

- Dr. **Cheryl Murphy**, Dr. **Michelle MacDonald**, and **Mandy Eslinger**: *Exploring “Teacher” as part of Professional Identity in the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry*, Living Laboratory Grant, Continuing Professional Development, Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University.
- Dr. **Kara Dempster**. Co-Investigators: Drs. **Phil Tibbo** and **Derek Fisher**. *Exploring the Use of Mismatch Negativity on EEG and Anterior Cingulate Cortex Glutamate as Prospective Markers of Treatment Resistant Schizophrenia*, Research Nova Scotia.
- Drs. **Vincent Agyapong** and **Ejemai Eboeime** (Co-PIs), and Drs. **Raquel Dias** and **Cinera States** (Co-Applicants): *Exploring Multifactorial Barriers and Resources for Accessing Equitable Mental Health Care Among African Nova Scotians (EMBRACE-ANS)*, QEII Foundation Translating Research Into Care (TRIC) grant.

## CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS

Two research chairs in the department were renewed. Congratulations to Dr. **Sherry Stewart**, Tier 1 CRC in Addictions and Mental Health, and to Dr. **Sandra Meier**, Tier 2 CRC in Developmental Psychopathology and Youth Mental Health.

## PUBLICATIONS

- Dr. **Keri-Leigh Cassidy** published the paper “Optimizing Older Adult Mental Health in Support of Healthy Ageing: A Pluralistic Framework to Inform Transformative Change across Community and Healthcare Domains” in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21060664>
- Dr. Sean McWhinney, a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Tomas Hajek’s lab published the article “Principal component analysis as an efficient method for capturing multivariate brain signatures of complex disorders – ENIGMA study in people with bipolar disorders and obesity” in *Human Brain Mapping*: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/hbm.26682>

## STUDENT AWARDS

- **Gerald Agyapong-Opoku** received a NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award
- Dr. **Jasmyn Cunningham** received the following awards:
  - Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarship, Doctoral
  - Canada Graduate Scholarship, Doctoral
  - 2024 Patton Medical Research Scholarship (the Faculty of Medicine Graduate Studentship)



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**RESEARCH DAY 2024**

**Friday, Nov. 1, 2024**

**9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**Atlantica Hotel Halifax**

**Watch for more details.**

# Education Report

---

## UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION NEWS

### **Join us as a tutor for 2024/2025 undergraduate sessions**

We're on the lookout for enthusiastic tutors to join our team for the upcoming undergraduate teaching sessions. If you're interested in participating or haven't yet added your preferences to your IPP, there's still time to sign up! Reach out to us at [Psych.Undergrad@dal.ca](mailto:Psych.Undergrad@dal.ca) to get involved.

### **Summer Internship in Psychiatry (SIIP) welcomes 12 Med 1 students**

From May 21 to 25, 2024, we were delighted to host 12 Med 1 students from both campuses of Dalhousie's Medical School for our annual Summer Internship in Psychiatry (SIIP). Throughout the week, these students had the invaluable opportunity to delve deeper into the field of psychiatry. They engaged with psychiatrists from various specialties, interacted with psychiatry residents, and connected with allied health professionals. The program included interactive educational sessions, interview skills practice, clinical elective placements, and social events with our residents. A special thank you goes out to the resident planning committee for their outstanding effort and dedication in organizing this enriching experience!

### **Finalizing the master rotation schedule for 2024/2025**

We're excited to announce our master rotation schedule for the 2024/25 academic year is now finalized. With an increase in the number of Med 3 students expected for the upcoming year, we're gearing up for an enriching and dynamic learning experience. We'll have four active distributed sites — Amherst, Kentville, Truro, and Yarmouth — providing diverse and comprehensive educational opportunities.

### **Important update for Dalhousie Med 4 students**

Dalhousie Med 4 students need to follow a new procedure for submitting their elective requests this year. All elective requests must now be submitted through the AMFC portal, similar to visitor electives.



## POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION NEWS

We would like to acknowledge and thank all our residents for their efforts this year in covering call and supporting the double cohort of residents (PGY4s and PGY5s) who sat their Royal College exams.

### Year-End Celebration



The graduating class of psychiatry residents at the Year-End Celebration on June 7, 2024. From left to right: Drs. Vincent Agyapong, department head; Ali Manning, associate director of postgraduate education; Nadine Nejati, Kyle Godden, Shaheem Abid, Natasa Zatezalo, Alex Whynot, Matthew McAdam, Aditya Nidumolu, and Deborah Parker, director of postgraduate education.

The annual Department of Psychiatry Year-End Celebration was held on June 7 at the Prince George Hotel. The event is a celebration of postgraduate education and an opportunity to honour teachers and learners in the department.

#### Residents' Choice Awards

Teacher of the Year Award:  
**Dr. Kathleen Singh**

Above and Beyond Award:  
**Elle Waychesko**

PGY-5 Excellence Award:  
**Dr. Selene Etches**

Junior Mentorship Award:  
**Dr. Jason Morrison**

Senior Mentorship Award:  
**Dr. Mahmoud Awara**

Junior Resident Professionalism Award: **Dr. Joe Saunders**

Senior Resident Professionalism Award: **Dr. Natasa Zatezalo**

## Resident Awards

Clerks' Choice: **Dr. Julie Munich**

Horizon Health Network Saint John Zone PGY-1 Resident of the Year Award: **Dr. Anthony Hinde**

Dr. Charles J. David Memorial Prize in Psychiatry: **Dr. Natasha Glover**

Dr. Herb Orlik Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Resident Award: **Dr. Kara Yeung**

Geriatric Psychiatry Resident Award: **Dr. Alec Watts**

Dr. Harris Lee Barton Scholarship: **Dr. Alison Toron**

Dr. Robert and Stella Weil Fund in Psychiatry Prize: **Dr. Anastasia McCarvill, Dr. Jared Allman, and Dr. LeAnne Revell**

Dr. W.O. McCormick Award: **Dr. Nadine Nejati** and **Dr. Madeline Ferracuti**

Alexander H. Leighton Resident of the Year Award: **Dr. Niamh Campbell** and **Dr. Julia LeBlanc**

We would like to congratulate our graduates:

- Dr. Shaheem Abid
- Dr. Kyle Godden
- Dr. Matthew McAdam
- Dr. Nadine Nejati
- Dr. Aditya Nidumolu
- Dr. Alex Whynot
- Dr. Natasa Zatezalo



Dr. Alison Toron is the inaugural recipient of the Dr. Harris Lee Barton Scholarship. From left to right: Drs. Deborah Parker, director of postgraduate education; Alison Toron, psychiatry resident; and Vincent Agyapong, department head.

---

## PSYCHIATRY RESEARCH GRADUATE PROGRAM NEWS

Our program is in its seventh year already! Our graduating students have gone on to begin other degrees (e.g., Medicine, Clinical Psychology, Pharmacy, and other graduate degrees), or to work in research. We are very pleased for all our graduates and proud of their accomplishments.

We have an incoming MSc. cohort starting in September with eight students. As well, we will be joined by four new PhD students including our first psychiatry resident. Our incoming students have been

very successful in securing external funding:

- **Pierre-Olivier Couture** (supervisor: Dr. **David Gardner**) has received the CIHR CGS-M award.
- **Zachary Hubshman** (supervisor: Dr. **Rudolf Uher**) has received the NSGS-M award.
- **Bala Harri** (supervisor: Dr. **Ejemai Eboreime**) has received the NSGS-D award.
- **Jasmyn Cunningham** (supervisor: Dr. **Abraham**

**Nunes**) has received the NSGS-D, CIHR CGS-D, and an honorary Faculty of Medicine Graduate Studentship.

Our upper year students are also doing well in securing external support:

- **Holly Carbyn** (supervised by Dr. **Sandra Meier**) has received a Faculty of Medicine Graduate Studentship.

More funding announcements (e.g., MSSU and Scotia Scholar Awards) are expected in the coming weeks.

Our first-year MSc. students are busy collecting data and formalizing their research projects. Two first-year students (**Mikaela Ethier-Gagnon**, co-supervised by Drs. Sean Barrett and **Sherry Stewart**; and **Julia Fraiha**, supervised by Dr. **Tomas Hajek**) have completed their data collection and thesis writing and will be defending their theses this summer. Julia will begin her PhD in Psychiatry Research and Mikaela will begin her PhD in Clinical Psychology, both at Dalhousie in the fall.

Our second-year MSc. students are all on track to complete their theses and defend before August 31 of this year.

One of our PhD students, **Sarah DeGrace**, will be defending her dissertation this summer. This will be the first defense in our PhD program. She is supervised by Dr. **Sherry Stewart**. Our other PhD students are all doing well, completing their comprehensives and writing up their findings. PhD student **Ashley Francis**, co-supervised by Drs. **Phil Tibbo** and **Derek Fisher**, is the Faculty of Medicine 2024 Excellence in Research Award winner!

MSc. student **Nick Murray** is the Faculty of Medicine 2024 Excellence in Research Award winner at the MSc. level.

We eagerly anticipate a summer full of successful defenses (eight MSc. and one PhD defenses)! It is worth noting that all defenses are open to our faculty and staff. If anyone is interested in attending a defense, please contact **Anila Balakrishnan**, Research Coordinator (**Psych.Research@dal.ca**) for further information.



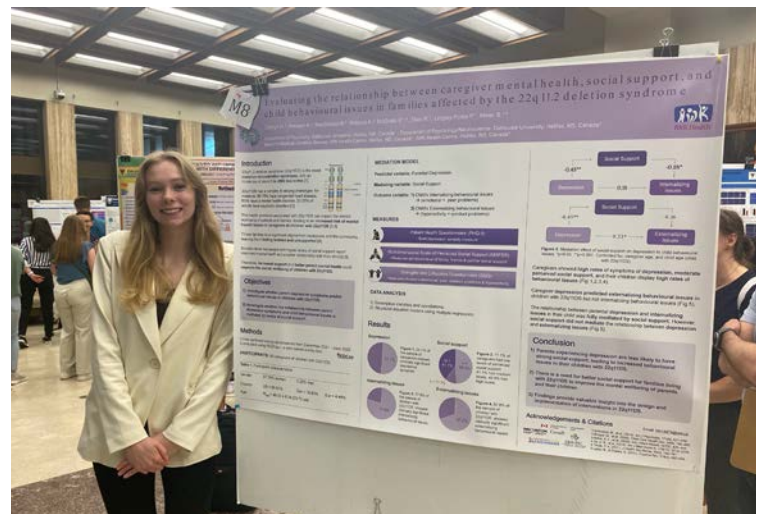
Graduate students completing their MSc. or PhD in psychiatry research were recognized at the Year-End Celebration held on June 7, 2024. Mikaela and Julia will be defending their MSc. theses after only one year of MSc. study and both are off to start their PhDs in the fall – Mikaela at Dal for clinical psychology with Dr. Sherry Stewart and Julia at Dal for psychiatry research with Dr. Tomas Hajek.

From left to right: Mikaela Ethier-Gagnon, MSc. student; Julia Fraiha, MSc. student; and, Dr. Sherry Stewart, graduate program coordinator.



We celebrated Ashley Francis winning the FoM Excellence in Research Award at the PhD level at the Year-End Celebration. Ashley is co-supervised by Drs. Phil Tibbo and Derek Fisher.

From left to right: Dr. Sherry Stewart, graduate program coordinator; and Ashley Francis, PhD student.



Holly Carbyn presenting at a conference. Holly is supervised by Dr. Sandra Meier and won a FoM graduate scholarship for next year.

# CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEWS

## 2024 W.O. McCormick Academic Day



A panel of the day's speakers concluded the 2024 W.O. McCormick Academic Day. From left to right: Dr. Cheryl Murphy, conference chair, and speakers: Dr. Pamela Arenella, lived experience panelists Tasha Taylor and Jeff Garrison, Dr. Ronald Fraser, and Dr. J.J. Rasimas. Missing from photo: Scott Janssen.

The 2024 W.O. McCormick Day was held on April 26 at the Westin Nova Scotian Hotel.

Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**, department head, welcomed over 100 attendees to the event.

Dr. **Samuel Hickcox**, physician consultant, Office of Addictions and Mental Health, Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness; physician, NS Health Mental Health and Addictions; and, director, Atlantic Mentorship Network for Pain and Addictions, along with **Dorothy Edem**, co-director of Mental Health and Addictions Program (Central Zone), provided

opening remarks. Dr. **Cheryl Murphy**, director of Continuing Professional Development and conference chair, introduced the format and provided an overview of the day. The conference was educationally approved/co-sponsored by Dalhousie University Continuing Professional Development and Medical Education.

This year's theme was Alcohol Use Disorders and Mental Health: An Update. The day consisted of a full schedule of informative presentations related to the theme.

Presentations included:

- Alcohol Use Disorder: The Forgotten Canadian Epidemic, presented by Dr. Ronald Fraser
- Pharmacology of Alcohol Use Disorder and Co-Occurring Conditions, presented by Dr. Ronald Fraser
- Beyond Benzodiazepines: A Practical Guide to Challenging Dogma in the Management of Alcohol Withdrawal Across Treatment Settings, presented by Dr. J.J. Rasimas

- I'm a Health Professional. I Know Stuff. Why Won't They Listen To Me?, presented by Scott Janssen
- Clinical Skills to Enhance Therapeutic Alliance, presented by Dr. Pamela Arenella
- Individuals with Lived Experience Panel

The day concluded with a panel featuring the day's speakers to take questions from the audience.

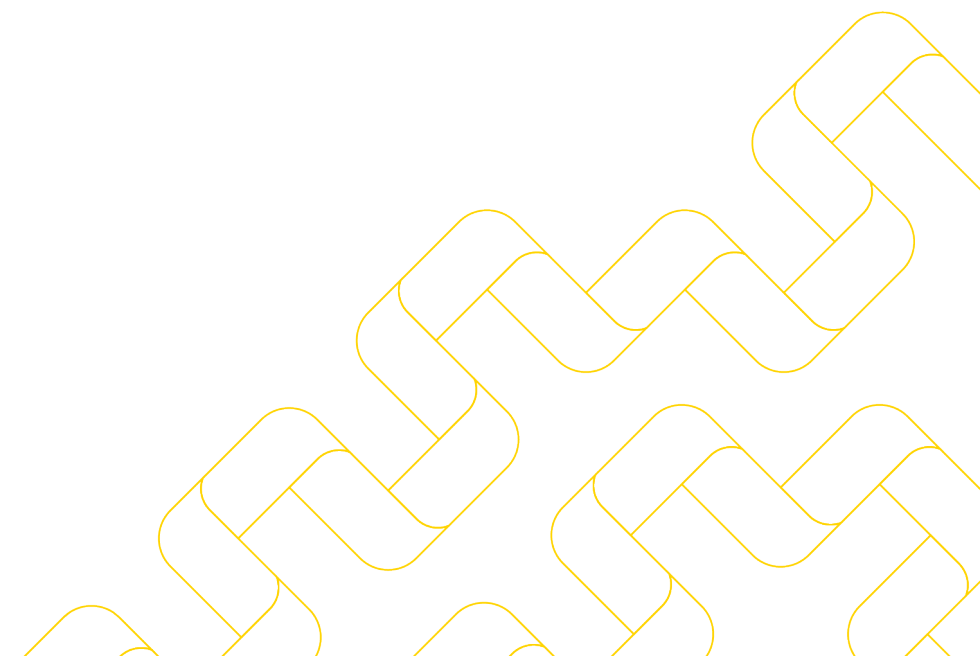
A feedback survey was circulated to all event attendees. Thank you to everyone who attended the event, provided feedback, and thank you to our speakers!

---

## **R.O. Jones Memorial Lecture**

On May 29, 2024, Dr. Declan McLoughlin presented the R.O. Jones Memorial Lecture titled "Effects of Childhood Maltreatment and Personality Difficulties on ECT for Depression." Dr. McLoughlin is a Research Professor of Psychiatry in St. Patrick's University Hospital and Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.

Named in honour of the late Dr. Robert Orville Jones, who among his many achievements, founded the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry in 1949 and was the charter president of the Canadian Psychiatric Association, the R.O. Jones Memorial Lecture is held annually in conjunction with the Atlantic Provinces Psychiatric Association annual conference.



## FELLOWSHIP AND SUBSPECIALTY TRAINING NEWS

### INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM

The program has welcomed international fellows in various subspecialties. Recently, the department has expanded its offerings to include Addiction Psychiatry and Transcultural Psychiatry, leading to a surge in applications for training in Addiction Psychiatry.

The International Fellowships Program remains committed to its mission of disseminating knowledge and expertise to bridge gaps in mental health services worldwide. A special thanks is due to the clinical supervisors, whose unwavering dedication to training

international fellows has sparked interest among these individuals and positioned the department as a global leader in delivering advanced psychiatric training.

## Division of **Child & Adolescent Psychiatry**

---

### CAP SUBSPECIALTY PROGRAM

Congratulations to Drs. **Courtney Hanford** and **Kate Stymiest** who graduated from the CAP subspecialty program.

### IN THE MEDIA

Dr. **Sabina Abidi** participated in the CCEIP podcast Parallel Realities: Cannabis and Psychosis which is a two-part series that takes a closer look at the role substance use has in the development of psychosis, with particular attention to the unique role cannabis plays.

[Read more and listen](#) to the podcast episode.

## CAP RESEARCH

### Community-based research to fuel new mental health support for youth in Nova Scotia

The Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) has awarded a \$1.45M grant to the Integrated Youth Services team in Nova Scotia for their project *Generating Resilience on Our Way to Integrated Youth Services (GROW-IYS)*. There are a number of Psychiatry faculty on the project.

Dr. **Lori Wozney** (Scientific Lead) and Daphne Hutt Macleod (Director) will be collaborating with a diverse team of youth, caregivers, researchers, and IYS partners to connect innovative health science to real-world services.

Recently announced, IYS sites will bring free, walk-in mental health and social services to youth and caregivers in eight locations across Nova Scotia —

with the first two sites expected to open in early 2025. IYS makes earlier intervention possible, changing the trajectory for young people before mental health and addiction concerns escalate.

Over five years the research team will use citizen science (involving the public in conducting research) to explore:

- youth voice in health service planning in different communities
- staff experiences in integrated service models
- community-based indicators of success and;
- new approaches to economic evaluation planning

Results will inform service delivery locally and give Nova Scotia greater voice in the Pan-Canadian and international youth mental health research community.

[Read more.](#)



On June 3, 2024, the federal government announced an investment in the Integrated Youth Services Network of Networks (IYS-Net) initiative to strengthen and expand this innovative model of care across Canada.

### Mobile sensing app provides a valuable bridge between patients and mental health care

The Predicting Risks and Outcomes of Social InTeractions (PROSIT) research study, led by Dr. **Sandra Meier**, Canada Research Chair in Developmental Psychopathology and Youth Mental Health, was recently featured by IWK news.

[Read more](#) about the PROSIT app.

# Section of Geriatric Psychiatry

---

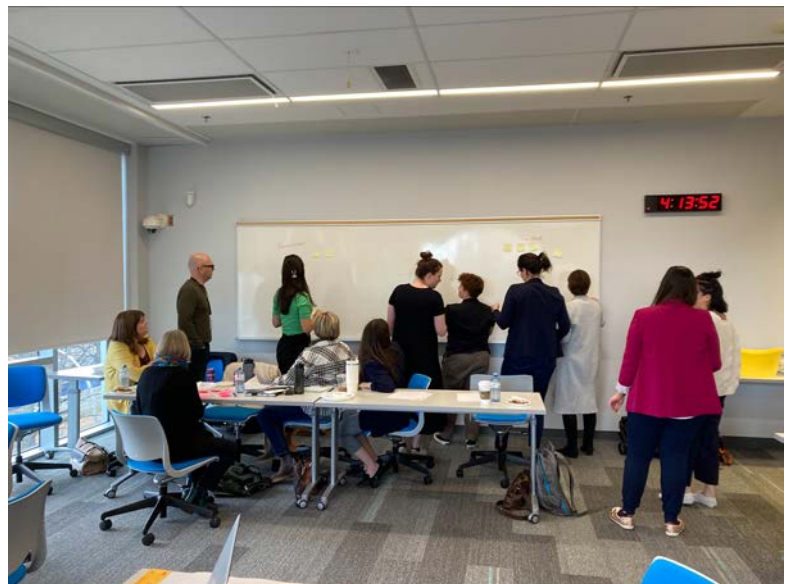
## National Representation

- Dr. **Mark Bosma** has accepted the role of chair of the Royal College Geriatric Psychiatry Specialty Committee starting July 2024, a role which he previously held from July 2016 to June 2022.
- Dr. **Kathleen Singh** has accepted the role of co-chair of Geri-COPE, the committee representing Canadian Geriatric Psychiatry program directors, starting February 2024.
- Dr. **Mark Bosma** and Dr. **Cheryl Murphy** represented the Department of Psychiatry as examiners on the Royal College Psychiatry Examination Board from May 13-17, 2024.
- Dr. **Sameh Hassan** is a member of the organizing committee for the CAGP 2024 ASM in Vancouver, BC, set for September 27-28, 2024.

---

## Section Education

The section of Geriatric Psychiatry held a successful interprofessional team education half day on April 16, 2024. Topics presented included Neuroimaging in Geriatric Psychiatry (Dr. Ian MacDonald), Neuropsychiatric Presentations in Parkinson's Disease (Dr. **Mark Paramlall**), and an Introduction to Quality Improvement (NSHealth Representatives). Many thanks to Dr. **Kathleen Singh**, who coordinated organization of this event.





---

## Social Events

The Halifax Geriatric Psychiatry Team held a waffle party to celebrate the upcoming maternity leave of Ms. Caitlin Wright, RN, who will be taking a 15-month maternity leave starting May 2024. As anyone who has worked with the team knows, food and socializing are a very important aspect of team culture.



---

## Research & Publications

- Ms. Osob Regal, the section's research assistant, will be leaving her role at the end of July 2024. Osob moved here one year ago from Toronto, and will be returning to pursue different career opportunities. She has been a wonderful addition to the section, and will be greatly missed.
- Dr. **Ian Mackay**, a section member who provides clinical care to patients in Eastern and Northern Zone, is one of the authors on a recent publication (see below):  
  
Adams, M. S., Sokoloff, L. G., Checkland, C., Sodums, D. J., Santiago, A. T., Feldman, S., ... Conn, D. K. (2024). Evaluating

the impact of a national geriatric mental health ECHO educational program on healthcare providers' practice. *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education*, 1-15.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02701960.2024.2344680>

---

## Geriatric Psychiatry Subspecialty

The Geriatric Psychiatry Program is finalizing the training experience for our international fellow starting in September and will include the following:

- Inpatient rotation on Geriatric Psychiatry Acute Inpatient Unit
- Outpatient/outreach at Nova Scotia Hospital and Abbie J. Lane
- Inpatient consultations

- Neurostimulation
- Subspecialty Teaching Curriculum

The Geriatric Psychiatry Program is currently preparing to join the 2025 Medicine Subspecialty Match through CaRMS this summer.

Dr. **Mackenzie Armstrong's** abstract, titled "Referral criteria of geriatric psychiatry services across Canada" has been

accepted for presentation at CAGP conferences. Joining Dr. Armstrong as authors are Osob Regal and Drs. **Mark Bosma**, **Gail Eskes**, and **Cheryl Murphy**. Their findings will be showcased as a poster presentation in the fall.

Congratulations to Dr. **Mackenzie Armstrong** who graduated from the geriatric psychiatry subspecialty program.

# Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry

---

## Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry welcomes research assistant Muhammad Ali Naqvi



Muhammad Ali Naqvi is the research assistant for the Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry.

In 2023, the Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry welcomed **Muhammad Ali Naqvi** as the section's research assistant.

Appointing research assistants for each of the Department of Psychiatry's clinical academic sections/division was part of the department's Transformational Plan.

Originally from Toronto, ON, Muhammad moved to Summerside, PEI in grade nine. After completing high school, he

headed to Halifax, NS to pursue a Bachelor of Medical Sciences at Dalhousie University.

"During my high school and university years, I had the privilege of working alongside my father at his clinic as a medical office assistant," says Muhammad. "This hands-on experience not only reaffirmed my passion for medicine, but alongside my coursework at Dalhousie, also ignited an interest in medical research. Eager to expand my skills and knowledge, I began applying for research positions."

In his role Muhammad helps clinicians by supporting them throughout the research process and helps to bridge the gap between ideas and research.

This helps ensure their insights and ideas for improving patient outcomes are heard, and their valuable knowledge contributes to a better understanding of our community's needs, he says.

He is excited by the prospect of the work having a direct impact on the community, and addressing issues the community faces through policy changes, new programs, and raising awareness.

"The opportunity to translate our findings into real-world solutions and make a meaningful difference is incredibly rewarding," he says.

"I am passionate about inspiring and supporting more healthcare professionals to actively engage in research, aiming to foster advancements that benefit both patients and the broader healthcare community."

## Section of **Forensic Psychiatry**

---

We are facing increased acuity and numbers for assessments from the courts. We are unsure why that is happening but we are investigating. A new stream appears to be with many admissions for people who are suffering from homelessness and the inability to receive consistent care in the civil system. Another stream appears to be those who are suffering from cognitive deterioration either dementia type limitations or substance induced sequelae.

We keep wondering if a system/ service that is similar to ACT teams, might be of benefit in the civil system.

We currently have an international fellow in forensic psychiatry that is enjoying his time so far. But we are still suffering from low numbers in forensic psychiatrists.

## Section of **Community Psychiatry**

---

The Section of Community Psychiatry completed its second year of operation at the end of March 2024. Updates on its activities and accomplishments include:

1. Collaborative efforts with other Section Heads to enhance the transfer of care to Geriatric Psychiatry and integrate this subspecialty into General Adult mental health services. Appointing psychiatrists with specialized experience and training in geriatric psychiatry allows for comprehensive service delivery to both senior patients and the general
2. Working with Acute Services to improve direct versus (PES) admissions for patients requiring acute services.
3. Initiatives are underway to address service gaps in Community Psychiatry by exploring the potential to advocate for a care model that includes physician assistants and case managers for patients requiring such services.
4. The NSOSIC report highlights notable advancements, including extending mental health services to the Western Zone and ongoing support for the PEI OSI clinic. Research efforts have intensified, leading to significant output, including a highly recognized publication in 2022. The team will be strengthened by a new full-time psychiatrist joining in May 2024 and an international fellow from Saudi Arabia starting in July 2024.

# Old books bring new insights into psychiatry's past



Alex Myrick, a History PhD candidate at the University of Ottawa, studies the collection of books in the "Jones Library."

In a small library located in the Department of Psychiatry's conference room, lives a "treasure trove" of historical texts that shed light on how the field of psychiatry has reformed throughout the twentieth century.

For Alex Myrick, a History PhD candidate at the University of Ottawa, this collection has proven valuable in exploring the discourse and insights among key historical figures in psychiatry, such as our founding department head, Dr. R.O. Jones.

Alex estimates the bulk of the books in the "Jones Library" were published between the years 1920 and 2000. "Although they may have long since passed into medical irrelevance, every one of these books is historically

significant because each text is a distillation of the ideas that were prevalent in psychiatry at the time of its publication," he says. "When observed as a larger whole, the entire collection depicts the many gradual transformations in the specialty as ideas, theories, diagnostic categories, treatment approaches, and trends in psychiatry changed over time."

A philosophy of science course during his bachelor's degree in history opened Alex's eyes to the ways scientific ideas and theories develop. Subsequently, two stories he worked on while completing his Journalism degree sparked his interest in healthcare and medicine. Both experiences led him to complete a master's degree in the history of medicine.

Alex first learned of Dr. R.O. Jones during a meeting with Dr. Peter Twohig, an historian of medicine at Saint Mary's University.

"He proposed that I might want to study Dr. Robert O. Jones, the founder of the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry, and the role he might have played in the development of deinstitutionalization in Nova Scotia," says Alex.

Dr. Twohig also introduced Alex to another scholar, Dr. Susan Lamb at the University of Ottawa, who is now Alex's PhD supervisor. Dr. Lamb had published a book on the Johns Hopkins psychiatrist Dr. Adolf Meyer, in which she confirms Meyer was a leading reformer in the specialty during the first half of the twentieth century. Since Jones was once a student of Meyer's, Dr. Twohig thought examining the connections between the two would yield enough material for a good master's thesis, says Alex.

Alex's current project aims to explain in a new way how psychiatry modernized in the twentieth century through the reform ideas of Johns Hopkins University Medical School psychiatrist Adolf Meyer and the diaspora of his colleagues and students such as Jones.

He first learned of the books in the conference room after Dr. Lamb gave a grand rounds presentation to the department a few years ago. A discussion about Meyer, Jones, and the

links between his and Dr. Lamb's research with some department members followed the presentation, says Alex.

"Dr. Jason Morrison, who was acting department head at the time, mentioned that the department's board room is named after Jones and that they have an unorganized set of books that Jones collected over the years, and that were donated to the department after his passing in 1984," says Alex.

"After that, Dr. Morrison and I stayed in touch, and I also got to know Dr. Lara Hazelton as well, and gradually they put a small group together and we organized the library in the spring of 2022."

At this point, Alex could only identify a few historically significant books, but with a newfound familiarity about the other 274 people in Meyer's Johns Hopkins cohort, he returned to the "Jones Library."

"Over the course of my two recent trips to the Jones Library, I've found a treasure trove of material by many of the leading figures from this Meyerian cohort such as Franklin G. Ebaugh, Oscar Diethelm, and David Henderson, as well as many other prominent figures from psychiatry's past like Flanders Dunbar, and Karl Menninger, and internationally renowned Nova Scotian psychologist Donald O. Hebb," says Alex.

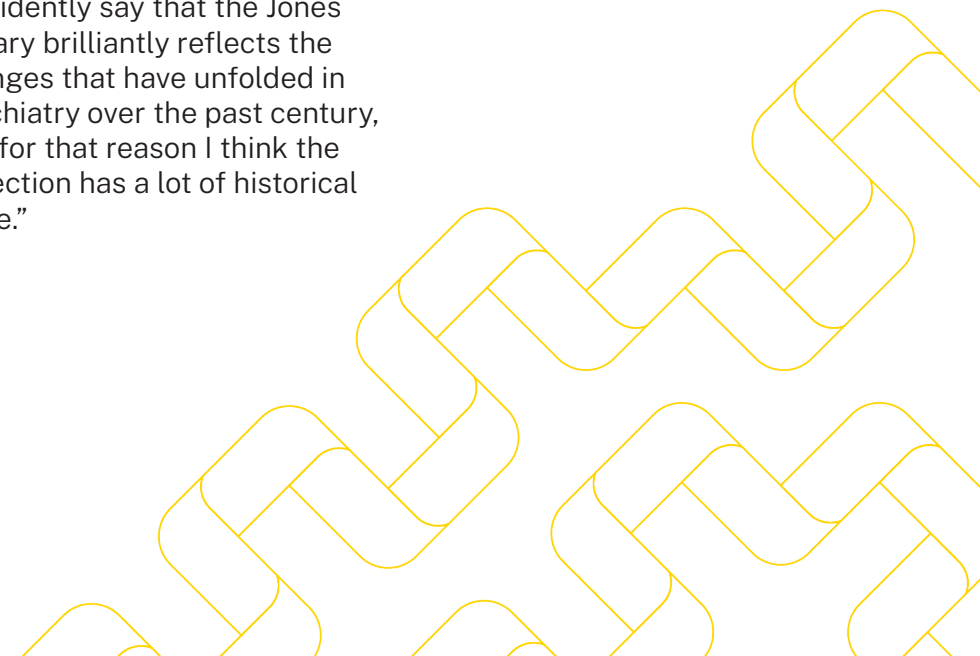
"Perhaps the most surprising thing has been the realization that these books serve as physical pieces of evidence that show the dissemination of ideas into Dalhousie from other people

and places in the psychiatric world."

Within these texts, Alex is aiming to find out how Meyer's ideas were spread, adapted, or abandoned over time. His dissertation will demonstrate the value of Meyer's psychobiological approach to modern practitioners. Historically, the field of psychiatry has sought to determine the cause of mental illness. However, Meyer argued a multitude of factors likely caused mental illness and disorder, with effective treatment requiring a pluralistic, pragmatic, and individualized approach, says Alex.

"Through my research and in discussions with department members, it seems that because of Jones's influence, Dalhousie maintained a Meyerian character over time, and this means that Dalhousie has a very unique position within the history of psychiatry, and I think this is worth calling attention to," says Alex.

"From my estimations, I can confidently say that the Jones Library brilliantly reflects the changes that have unfolded in psychiatry over the past century, and for that reason I think the collection has a lot of historical value."



# Department convenes for academic leadership retreat

---



Dal Department of Psychiatry leaders convened for an academic leadership retreat on May 10, 2024.

On May 10, 2024, Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry leaders convened for an academic leadership retreat about strategic planning. Participants comprised members of the executive team, chiefs of psychiatry from other health zones, clinical academic leaders including those from distributed learning sites, and staff operations leadership.

The retreat included a special focus on social policy & advocacy, a new pillar of the department's strategic plan, and with it the areas of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) and wellness.

Leaders were given an orientation package with information and resources about these topics and how they could support them in their areas of oversight. A survey about integrating EDIA into department activities was also sent to invited participants before the event.

Participants heard presentations about EDIA and why it matters, microaggressions, barriers and facilitators to distributed education and research in NS, and current distributed education and research models, and reflections on EDIA within the department. The format also included group work

about incorporating EDIA into department activities, and large group discussion about barriers and facilitators to distributed education and research, and zonal updates and brainstorming.

Thank you to the speakers for their insightful presentations, to the planning group for organizing an impactful event, and to all the participants for reflecting on these important topics as we plan future strategic directions for the department.

# Leadership safety rounds: Highlighting the importance of team cohesion in clients and staff safety

Written by: Lianne Nixon, MHAP CZ Quality Lead

Leadership Safety Rounds (LSR) exists at Nova Scotia Health as an important tool for Leadership and Frontline staff to discuss safety concerns. This often includes concerns regarding the physical space of the service, the acuity of illness among clients, and the ongoing challenges of staffing. The staff at Connections Halifax recently met with MHAP CZ Co-Director Matthew White and Head of Psychiatry Dr. **Vincent Agyapong** for LSR. The team at Connections Halifax discussed how safety has been improved significantly since moving to their current space at Park Lane Mall and how this change has benefitted both staff and clients. What became obvious throughout the discussion is how cohesive the team is and the impact of team cohesion on staff safety.

Connections is a recovery-focused program that provides supports and opportunities to adults living with severe and persistent mental illness, and who also experience substantial functional challenges in their day-to-day lives. There are three teams based out of Halifax, Dartmouth, and Sackville. Staff reported that many of their clients also experience psychosocial stressors such as homelessness, financial struggles, and food instability. Team members support clients in the community and often visit clients at their homes, at shelters, and at homeless encampments.



The potential safety concerns for visiting clients in the community are numerous and often unpredictable. Staff are often relying on the client's description of their living environment to assess how safe it will be to visit them there. For clients living in shelters and homeless encampments, the risk increases as there is less knowledge regarding the others living among the clients.

The staff at Connections Halifax identified these issues as potential risks to client and staff safety and explained how much they value the trust and unity they share as a team. There were many examples of how quick team members are willing to support their colleagues by joining them on community visits, debriefing after a difficult situation, and

stepping into to support during an emergency. Team members reported how much they learn from each other and that they feel confident in their colleague's clinical decision making. When asked how the team became so cohesive, they responded by saying that Connections Halifax is a very respectful environment that encourages learning and skill building. New employees receive a thorough orientation and are connected with a mentor. RN, Mythily Johnson reflected on her experience at Connections Halifax and stated, "the benefits of working in a team that is so cohesive has shown that we can deliver safe, compassionate & comprehensive care to our clients who continue to face so many challenges. With many team members with years of experience in various settings, we are able to use our individual and combined

clinical skills to collaborate and support our clients in a timely manner. As one of the newest members of this team, I recognize the importance of strong communication through trust, respect, and openness among the team members to enhance patient-centered care as well high level of work and job satisfaction among the team members. In my personal experience, I have learned a lot from each team member who has contributed to improved knowledge, confidence in my skills and my ability to deliver safe and effective patient care.” Connections Halifax is proud to be a team that has an open door, any question is valid perspective, and an approachable manager and leadership team. Staff also reported that they believe that for all these reasons, they have low staff turnover and feel that their roles are fulfilling and meaningful for the clients they serve and the colleagues they work with every day.



## Recruiting Participants

**Do you own an Android phone? Interested in evaluating a suicide prevention app? Join our research study!**

We are evaluating perceptions of LifeLink, a mobile application for suicide prevention in Canadian youths and adults. The study will last 1 week during which you will be asked to use our app on your device and provide feedback via a survey and optional interview.

**Participants will enter a lucky draw to win 1 of 5 Amazon gift cards worth 50\$ each**

Eligible participants must:

- Be 16 years of age or older
- Live in Canada
- Be proficient in English
- Own an Android phone
- Have supported or are supporting an individual experiencing suicidal thoughts



**To sign up to participate, please email Smriti Jha at [smriti.jha@dal.ca](mailto:smriti.jha@dal.ca)**

For more information, contact the lead researcher: [smriti.jha@dal.ca](mailto:smriti.jha@dal.ca)  
Research Supervisor: Dr. Rita Orji  
Dal REB 2024-7043

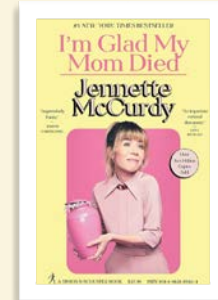




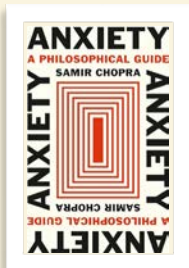
## Medical Humanities Book Club

First Book: **“I’m Glad My Mom Died”** by Jennette McCurdy  
Recommended Viewing: **Quiet on Set: The Dark Side of Kids TV** (2024, Netflix)

Email [louisea.moodie@nshealth.ca](mailto:louisea.moodie@nshealth.ca) or [natasha.glover@nshealth.ca](mailto:natasha.glover@nshealth.ca) to receive updates. Our first meeting will take place in late summer/early fall. All are welcome!



## Summer Reading List



**“Anxiety: A Philosophical Guide”** by Samir Chopra

Link to a Washington Post article & review of the book: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/books/2024/04/26/anxiety-samir-chopra-review/>

Fong Yan, A., Nicholson, L.L., Ward, R.E. *et al.* **“The Effectiveness of Dance Interventions on Psychological and Cognitive Health Outcomes Compared with Other Forms of Physical Activity: A Systematic Review with Meta-analysis”**

OPEN ACCESS LINK: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40279-023-01990-2>

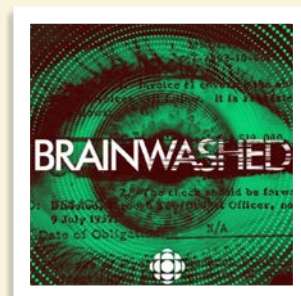
## Summer Listening

**Brainwashed (CBC):** An oldie but a goodie! Brainwashed is a multi-part investigative podcast exploring the CIA's covert mind control experiments conducted at the Allan Memorial Institute, a psychiatric facility affiliated with McGill University.

**TD Halifax Jazz Festival: July 9-14, 2024**

Suggested highlight: Charlotte Day Wilson, a Canadian contemporary R&B singer/songwriter.

More information on the Jazz Festival can be found here: <https://www.halifaxjazzfestival.ca>



For more information on the Department of Psychiatry Medical Humanities program, please contact Dr. Leigh Meldrum, Medical Humanities Coordinator, at [margaret.meldrum@nshealth.ca](mailto:margaret.meldrum@nshealth.ca).

## Medical Humanities annual student writing competition

The submission period for the writing competition has now closed and that the winners will be announced in early September 2024.

## Department News

---

### Global Mental Health Guest Lecture Series launch

On May 3, we launched the Dalhousie Global Mental Health Guest Lecture Series with its inaugural lecture. Dr. Shekhar Saxena, Professor, Practice of Global Mental Health, Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health; and, Former Director, Mental Health and Substance Abuse, World Health Organization, joined us to deliver an informative lecture titled “Global mental health and sustainable development: challenges and opportunities.”

Our thanks to Dr. Saxena, and to Dean Anderson for bringing remarks on behalf of the Faculty of Medicine, and to Dr. Joshua Edward, manager, research development, research, innovation & discovery, for bringing remarks on behalf of Nova Scotia Health.



The Dalhousie Global Mental Health Series launched on May 3, 2024. From left to right: Drs. David Anderson, dean, Dal Faculty of Medicine; Vincent Agyapong, head, Department of Psychiatry; Shekhar Saxena, inaugural guest lecture series speaker; and, Joshua Edward, manager, research development, research, innovation & discovery, NS Health.

---

## Department head engages with learners and staff

For the second year, Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**, Dal's head of psychiatry, is engaging with residents, graduate students, and staff in the Department of Psychiatry to learn about their experiences and how they can feel supported, and their suggestions for the future.



Dr. Agyapong with staff members of the education team.



Dr. Agyapong with graduate students in the Psychiatry Research MSc. and PhD programs.



Dr. Agyapong with third-year psychiatry residents.



Dr. Agyapong with fourth-year psychiatry residents.

---

## Farewell to Ariann Greenidge

In May, the Department of Psychiatry said farewell to **Ariann Greenidge**, former administrative assistant to the department head, who left the department to pursue another career opportunity. We thank Ariann for her two years of service with the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry and wish her well.

Back row, left to right: Rajkumar Kanniappan, acting HR coordinator; Adrienne McCarthy, education and research coordinator, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; Dr. Lara Hazelton, director of education; Jen Brown, operations manager; Petra Corkum, postgraduate education coordinator; Jana Tamm, education coordinator; Linda Ford, administrative assistant; Dr. Vincent Agyapong, department head.

Front row, left to right: Penney Miller, communications coordinator; Parisa Abdi Sabouhi, undergraduate education coordinator; Anila Balakrishnan, research coordinator; Ariann Greenidge, former administrative assistant to the department head; Bharti Chauhan, acting administrative assistant to the department head; Dr. Sanjana Sridharan, head, Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry; and, Huanhong Xie, chief operating officer.



---

## Farewell to Michelle LeBlanc

In June, the Department of Psychiatry said farewell to **Michelle LeBlanc**, former administrative manager for the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, who left the department to pursue another career opportunity. We thank Michelle for her 14 years of service with the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry and wish her well.



Michelle LeBlanc (left), former administrative for the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; and, Adrienne McCarthy (right), education and research coordinator, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the 2023 Year-End Celebration.

---

## FACULTY & STAFF CHANGES

### Arrivals

- Dr. **Christian Hahn** a psychologist, has joined the department as an adjunct faculty effective May 1, 2024. Dr. Hahn is located in Bridgewater, NS. Dr. Hahn can be reached at **Christian.Hahn@nshealth.ca**
- Dr. **Ajai Sharma**, a psychiatrist, has joined the department as a lecturer, effective May 1, 2024. He is located in Sydney, NS. Dr. Sharma can be reached at **Ajai.Sharma@nshealth.ca**
- Dr. **Diepriye Tariah**, a psychiatrist, has joined the department as a lecturer, effective May 1, 2024. He is located in Sydney, NS. Dr. Tariah can be reached at **Diepriye.Tariah@nshealth.ca**
- Dr. **Hussein Ibrahim**, a psychiatrist, has joined the department as a lecturer, effective May 1, 2024. He is located in Sydney, NS. Dr. Ibrahim can be reached at **Hussein.Ibrahim@nshealth.ca**
- Dr. **Sukhcharan Singh**, a psychiatrist, has joined the department as a lecturer, effective May 1, 2024. He is located in Sydney, NS. Dr. Singh can be reached at **Sukhcharan.Singh@nshealth.ca**
- Dr. **Sunny Singh**, a psychiatrist, has joined the department as a lecturer, effective May 1, 2024. He is located in Sydney, NS. Dr. Singh can be reached at **Sunny.Singh@nshealth.ca**
- Dr. **Zaki Shullaih**, a psychiatrist, has joined the department as a lecturer, effective May 1, 2024. He is located in Sydney, NS. Dr. Shullaih can be reached at **Zaki.Shullaih@nshealth.ca**
- Dr. **Olubunmi Adebowale**, a psychiatrist, has joined the department as an assistant professor, effective May 1, 2024. He is located in Truro, NS, and can be reached at **Olubunmi.Adebowale@nshealth.ca**
- **Jana Tamm** joined the department as the education coordinator, effective May 6, 2024. Jana can be reached at **Psych.Education@dal.ca**

- **Bharti Chauhan** joined the department as acting administrative assistant to department head, effective May 13, 2024. Bharti can be reached at [Bharti.Chauhan@nshealth.ca](mailto:Bharti.Chauhan@nshealth.ca)
- **Rajkumar Kanniappan** joined the department as acting HR coordinator, effective May 21, 2024. Raj can be reached at [Rajkumar.Kanniappan@nshealth.ca](mailto:Rajkumar.Kanniappan@nshealth.ca)

Welcome to you all!

## Departures

- **Ariann Greenidge** resigned from her role as administrative assistant to department head to pursue another career opportunity, effective May 24, 2024.
- **Michelle LeBlanc** resigned from her role as administrative manager, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, to pursue another career opportunity, effective June 10, 2024.

We wish you well!

## AWARDS & HONOURS

### Department members honoured with Faculty of Medicine Awards

The following Department of Psychiatry members were recognized with Faculty of Medicine awards presented at the annual faculty meeting on May 28, 2024. Congratulations!

Faculty of Medicine Award of Excellence in Education: Dr. **David Gardner**

Faculty of Medicine Excellence in Clinical Research Award: Dr. **Rudolf Uher**

Faculty of Medicine Excellence in Research Mentorship – Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Dr. **Sandra Meier**

Congratulations!

[Read more](#) about the recipients and their accomplishments.



Drs. Rudolf Uher and David Gardner were presented with Faculty of Medicine Awards at the annual faculty meeting on May 28, 2024. From left to right: Drs. Rudolf Uher, Sabina Abidi, Selene Etches, and David Gardner.

---

## Dr. Patricia Lingley-Pottie named top 50 CEO by Atlantic Business magazine

Dr. **Patricia Lingley-Pottie** has been selected as one of the Top 50 CEOs by Atlantic Business Magazine for 2024 marking her second selection for this award (winner 2018).

The gala event, held on May 9, 2024 in St. John's NL, was a celebration of achievement and leadership in Atlantic Canada. Dr. Pottie, alongside other outstanding CEOs, was honoured for her significant contributions to Strongest Families and the broader community.

Congratulations!

[Read more](#) about Dr. Pottie's achievement.



---

## Department members honoured at bi-annual meeting

We are excited to announce the recipients of the following departmental awards that were presented at our bi-annual meeting on May 7.

### 2024 Dr. Aidan Stokes Mentorship Award

This annual award recognizes and honours a faculty member who has demonstrated exceptional mentorship and leadership in their work with the department. The award is named in honour of Dr. Aidan Stokes who dedicated his career to fostering a culture of strong leadership and mentorship within the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry.

The 2024 Dr. Aidan Stokes Mentorship Award recipient is: Dr. **Sanjana Sridharan**.

### Special Recognition Award

This award was presented in recognition of the recipient's dedicated support and providing interim chief operating officer coverage for our department for the last 12 months.

The Special Recognition Award recipient is: **Theresa Halliday**.

### Dedicated Service Award

The Dedicated Service Award was established to recognize departing department members who have served the department for at least 10 years.

The Dedicated Service Award recipients are: Drs. **Mirosław Bilski-Piotrowski**, **Amy Bombay**, and **Normand Carrey**.

### Leadership Award

The Leadership Award was established to recognize department members who have served in a leadership role with the department for at least five years, and are leaving their roles.

The Leadership Award recipients are: Drs. **Lourdes Soto-Moreno** (for the role of Physician Co-Lead, Sackville Community Mental Health Clinic, IWK), **Jonathan Brake** (for the role of Physician Lead, Garron Centre, Inpatient Unit, IWK), **David Lovas** (for the role of Physician Co-Lead, EMHAS, IWK), and **Andrew Harris** (for the role of Clinical Academic Leader for the Consultation-Liaison Service).

---

## Extra Mile Award recipients

Congratulations to the following recipients of the department's Extra Mile Award!

The Department of Psychiatry's Extra Mile Award has been created to recognize exceptional contributions by faculty and staff who have truly gone "the extra mile" in service to the department by advancing its mission in the areas of education, research, clinical care, and advocacy.

**Recipient:** Dr. Julia Gibson

**Nominated by:** Dr. Alexa Bagnell

Dr. Julia Gibson joined Department of Psychiatry in 2022 moving from BC back to Nova Scotia. She has been a strong and effective advocate for child and adolescent mental health care in her leadership role with the child clinic in Kentville. She is also the site lead for child and adolescent psychiatry resident rural rotation. Most recently she has consulted and advocated on behalf of physicians and clinicians in NS concerned about the impact of universal mental health initiatives negatively impacting our public system and decreasing access and quality of care for our young people. She led an advocacy letter representing rural child psychiatrists and pediatricians in NS – with a well-articulated letter to government outlining risks and concerns with OAMH legislation changes. Her advocacy and support of public mental health care access supported increase attention to concerns about loss of skilled

clinicians in public mental health settings – and outlined in this [CBC article](#). She is well respected for her dedication to clinical care and advocacy for fairness in our provincial public mental health services support and goes the extra mile in her advocacy.

**Recipient:** Dr. Ngozi Ezeanozie

Dr. Ezeanozie is a new member of our faculty and CAL for RASP. She managed to steer the RASP program to success under her fearless leadership. She has consistently gone the extra mile to make the service work. She has led by example and worked very hard to answer questions from skeptics and improve the program. She has mentored her staff and worked long hours to make everyone settle into a routine. She literally moved furniture to the RASP clinic (team were waiting for dates

from the movers) so that clinics were not cancelled. She has also seen five new patients a day when there are urgent referrals. With true girth and conviction, she has stood up a successful program.

**Recipient:** Jen Brown

**Nominated by:** Ariann Greenidge

Jen has been instrumental in leading our staff for the last 11 months, while we were without a Director of Administration/COO. She has done such an amazing job supporting staff and ensuring that we have all we need to succeed in our roles. She has been an advocate in times of uncertainty and a rock in times of instability. Thank you, Jen for your leadership.

### UPCOMING AWARD

#### Royal-Mach-Gaensslen Prize for Mental Health Research

The prestigious Royal-Mach-Gaensslen Prize for Mental Health Research is awarded each year to an outstanding rising star researcher in the field of mental health, to recognize, encourage and support them as they pursue their research interests and goals.

**Granting body:** The Royal

**Nomination submission deadline:** July 15, 2024, 11:59 p.m.

For more information about the award, eligibility, and how to submit a nomination, visit: <https://www.theroyal.ca/research/about-research/awards-conferences/royal-mach-gaensslen-prize-mental-health-research>

If you have questions for or would like to request assistance from the Awards Committee, contact Penney Miller at [Penney.Miller@nshealth.ca](mailto:Penney.Miller@nshealth.ca)

## Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry's Extra Mile Award

If you would like to nominate someone for the Department of Psychiatry's Extra Mile Award, submit your nomination to the Awards Committee via this link: <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/department-sites/psychiatry/news-publications/extra-mile-award-nomination-form.html>



### Dalhousie University Department of Psychiatry Extra Mile Award Terms of Reference

#### **Purpose:**

The Department of Psychiatry's Extra Mile Award has been created to recognize exceptional contributions by faculty and staff who have truly gone "the extra mile" in service to the department by advancing its mission in the areas of education, research, clinical care, and advocacy.

Examples may include taking on additional duties when colleagues are on leave or during position vacancies, or any other way you feel someone has stepped up or gone above and beyond the call of duty!

#### **Eligibility:**

All Dalhousie department faculty members, staff, and allied health professionals are eligible for this award.

**Frequency:** Up to quarterly.

Candidates for this award will be considered on a quarterly basis.

#### **Criteria:**

- Candidates can be an individual or team, including allied health professionals and non-department members.
- Candidates can only win once every two calendar years.
- Multiple awards may be given out each cycle (e.g., every three months).

#### **Nomination:**

Faculty, staff, learners, and stakeholders of the department may submit a nomination to the Awards Committee via this link: <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/department-sites/psychiatry/news-publications/extra-mile-award-nomination-form.html>. The nomination should include a brief (less than 200 words) statement describing the nominee's exceptional contribution. This statement will also be used for communications and recognition purposes in the department's newsletter. The Awards Committee will review nominations and select the recipients. Multiple recipients may be selected at each iteration.

#### **Recognition:**

Recipients will be recognized in *Headlines*, the department's newsletter, and will be sent a certificate.



---

## Recognizing our administrative staff

### Do you know a Dalhousie University Psychiatry administrative employee who deserves to be recognized for their extra efforts?

Let us know by filling out the form on the homepage of [dalpsychiatry.ca](http://dalpsychiatry.ca).

Dr. Agyapong and department managers in the Department of Psychiatry have launched a new employee appreciation program that will recognize employees regularly for their contribution to the academic, research, and clinical work of the department.

This is a great way to recognize staff who make sure services are staffed, learners feel supported, research is productive, and budgets are balanced.

#### Questions or issues with the form?

Contact [jen.brown@nshealth.ca](mailto:jen.brown@nshealth.ca)



---

## Residents' Corner

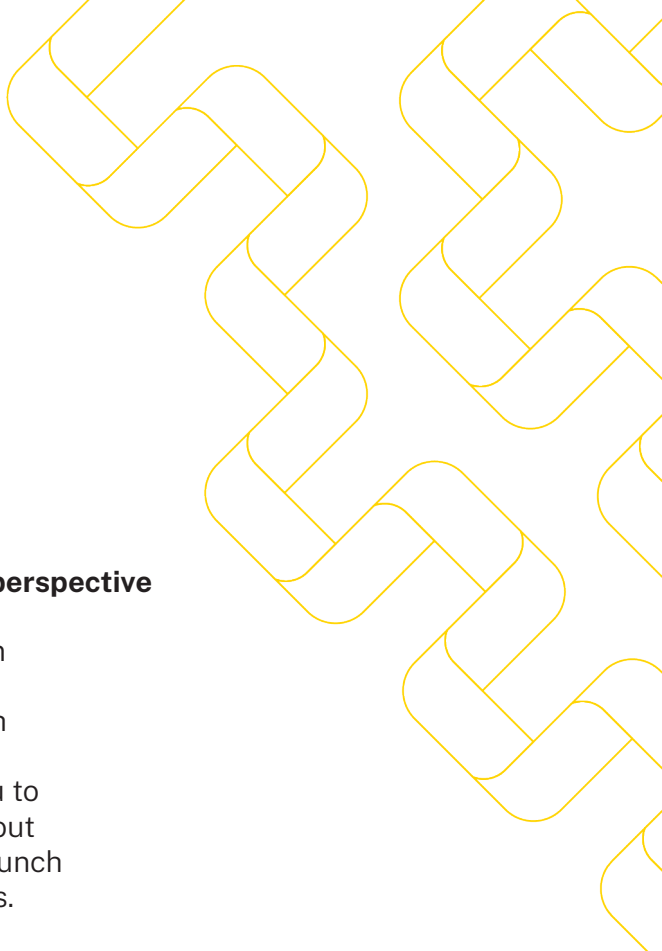
### RESIDENT WELLNESS COMMITTEE UPDATES

#### “Things I wish I knew” part 1: Life after death — moving forward after patient suicide

Drs. **Sabina Abidi**, **Selene Etches**, **Shiloh Gossen**, and **Jason Morrison** sat on a panel and answered questions from residents about how to cope with and move through experiences of patient suicide. The conversation took place at a private location off-site, which served to facilitate an open and vulnerable discussion amongst the group. Thanks to all who attended, and especially to the staff, all of whom were so generous with their stories and their time.



From left to right: Drs. Selene Etches, Shiloh Gossen, Jason Morrison, and Sabina Abidi stand for a photo following the “Life after death” panel discussion.



## Yoga series

A series of four guided yoga practices were arranged and offered to all members of the resident body free of charge. Sessions took place at a local studio (On The Mat) in the West End of Halifax and were facilitated by a certified yoga teacher.

## “Things I wish I knew” part 2: Tips and tricks — the junior staff perspective

During the May timeslot of the Dalhousie Psychiatry Residents Association, Drs. **Cody Sherren**, **Chelcie Soroka**, **Cinera States**, and **Michelle MacDonald** joined to discuss helpful strategies and advice they have picked up during their early years of

practice. Topics ranged from financial advice and family planning all the way through to enhancing administrative efficiency. A huge thank-you to all staff for taking the time out of their busy days (on their lunch hour!) to meet with residents.

## Bluenose Marathon Team Relay

Dalhousie psychiatry residents entered two teams into this year’s Bluenose Marathon Team Relay Race — with a few gaps filled by family, PES staff, an incoming PGY1, and an out of zone staff psychiatrist. In the end, the Serotonin Seekers were able to maintain a slight edge over the Dopamine Dashers, with each team finishing the combined 42 kilometers in 25<sup>th</sup> of 60 (4hrs) and 30<sup>th</sup> of 60 (4hrs4mins), respectively. Thanks to all who came out to run, as well as those who showed up to support! It was a ton of fun, and we are hoping to make this an annual tradition moving forward.



From left to right (top): Dr. Emilie Comeau (PGY1), Brady Richards (husband of Dr. Natalie Chartrand, PGY2), Dr. Jay Toulany (PGY2), Dr. Cameron Taylor (PGY3), Dr. Julia Leblanc (PGY3), Abbey MacLellan (incoming PGY1), Dr. Michael Malek (PGY1). From left to right (bottom): Dr. Lilly Lines (staff psychiatrist), Dr. Lauren Miller (PGY2), Heather Sommerfeld (PES RN). Relay team members not present for photo: Dr. Louise Moodie (PGY1), Dr. Talia Bond (PGY2), Dr. Alison Toron (PGY4), Dr. Jared Allman (PGY4), Dr. Matthew McAdam (PGY5).

On behalf of all residents, the Resident Wellness Committee would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for The Dalhousie Psychiatry Kilpatrick Fund, without which these events would not be possible.

---

## Residents' trip to the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park



## Photo Feature

---



**Flowers** – a still life featuring spring flowers and antiques Dr. Hazelton has collected.

Photo by Dr. **Lara Hazelton**.

All are welcome to submit their picture of nature for the newsletter to **Penney Miller** at [Penney.Miller@nshealth.ca](mailto:Penney.Miller@nshealth.ca)

## HEADLINES **SUBMISSIONS**

**Headlines** provides a forum for the exchange of information, ideas, and items of general interest to the faculty, fellows, students, and staff of the Department of Psychiatry.

The next issue of **Headlines** will be distributed in **September 2024**.

Please send all submissions to [Penney.Miller@nshealth.ca](mailto:Penney.Miller@nshealth.ca)



**DALHOUSIE**  
**UNIVERSITY**

Department of Psychiatry