

HEADLINES



SUMMER CELEBRATION AT ST. MARY'S BOAT CLUB



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

Department of Psychiatry

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HEAD LINES

Message from the Department Head



I hope you're enjoying the first days of fall with the crisp air and cooler temperatures.

In early September we released a [progress report](#) on our Transformational and Strategic Plan and a [video](#) sharing reflections and looking forward to our next plan. As we conclude our current plan, I want to thank everyone who made it a success. We are in the midst of the strategic planning process for 2026-2030. Thank you to everyone who joined our virtual town hall on September 11 and to all those who shared their feedback.

Each fall we host our annual Research Day, highlighting student research and showcasing the wide range of expertise within our department. This signature event will be held on Friday, November 7 this year and I hope department members will be able to join us.

With summer behind us, I also want to thank and acknowledge the 2025 DPRF summer students: **Yanna Kachafanas** and **Lee-Ann Olmstead** (who join us as students in the MSc in Psychiatry Research program), **Sam Hawkins**, **Disha Sharma**, and **Kelly Meaney** along with their faculty supervisors Drs. **Barbara Pavlova**, **Kara Dempster**, **Sherry Stewart**, **Phil Tibbo**, and **George Robertson**.

Department members continue to be successful in securing grants and publishing papers. Congratulations to Drs. **Lori Wozney**, **Linda Liebenberg**, **JianLi Wang**, **Rudolf Uher**, **Martin Alda**, **Alexa Bagnell**, **Emily Howes Vallis**, **Abraham Nunes**, **Barbara Pavlova**, **Lukas Propper**, **Phil Tibbo**, **Candice Crocker**, **Jasmyn Cunningham**, **Jill Chorney**, **Lara Hazelton**, **Kathleen Singh**, **Sabina Abidi**, **Belinda Agyapong**, **Ejemai Eboreime**, and graduate students **Gloria Obuobi-Donker** and **Samuel Obeng Nkrumah**.

Congratulations also to Dr. **Abdullah Alghanmi** who completed an international fellowship in Addiction Psychiatry.

On the clinical side, the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry saw the launch of the first Integrated Youth Services Site at the end of April and the official launch of the African Nova Scotian Service in June.

In September, the Social Policy and Advocacy Committee held a celebration lunch to recognize the projects that have been supported by the committee's initiatives fund and their work with community in closing gaps with equity-deserving groups. These projects demonstrate how a small investment can make an impact.

Over the summer we welcomed our new cohort of PGY-1 residents, and in September, a new cohort of eight MSc and three PhD students into the Psychiatry Research graduate programs.

We also welcomed the following new faculty members: Drs. **Belinda Agyapong**, **Matthew McAdam**, **Jeffrey MacDonald**, and **Abdulmohsen Al-Humoud** as well as operations team member **Eleanor Kumahia**, my new administrative assistant. In welcoming these new department members, we also said goodbye and well wishes

to operations team members **Neha Singh** and **Anila Balakrishnan**, faculty member Dr. **David Lovas** and retiring faculty members Dr. **John Aspin** and Dr. **Malgorzata Rajda**. We also prepare to say farewell to Dr. **Laura Downing**, associate director of postgraduate education, as she returns to her home province of Newfoundland.

Our members continue to be recognized for their outstanding work and contributions to the department. Congratulations to Dr. **Malgorzata Rajda**, recipient of the department's Dedicated Service Award; Dr. **Aaron Keshen**, recipient of the Canadian Psychiatric Association's C.A. Roberts Award for Clinical Leadership; Dr. **Ejemai Eboreime**, recipient of the Dalhousie University President's Research Excellence Award – Emerging Investigator and for being listed as a finalist for the Discovery Award in Science and Technology – Emerging Professional; Dr. **Joseph Sadek** for being invited to deliver lectures to the United Nations Conference and the judiciary of Malaysia; Dr. **Chelcie Soroka**, recipient of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Subspecialty Residency Program Supervisor of the Year Award; Dr. **Penny Corkum** for being named Distinguished Research Professor, and Dr. **Mutiat Sulyman** and Dr. **Laura Downing**, recipients of the department's Extra Mile Award.

As we move into the fall season, I look forward to continued collaboration across our department.

Dr. Vincent Agyapong
Head, Department of Psychiatry,
Dalhousie University
Head, Department of Psychiatry,
Nova Scotia Health Central Zone

Summer Celebration at St. Mary's Boat Club

Department members and their families came out for the third annual Summer Celebration. The event was held at St. Mary's Boat Club on July 20, 2025. Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**, department head, welcomed everyone to the event and along with Dr. **Sherry Stewart**, graduate program coordinator, introduced some of the new department members. Dr. **Zenovia Ursuliak**, director of wellness, who organized the event, also spoke to attendees and let them know about the day's activities.

A variety of activities were available to everyone, including arts & crafts, board games, lawn games, and even kayaking lessons! The children's art was led by Dr. **Pippa Moss**. Camp counsellors were on hand to keep younger attendees entertained.

Supper included a BBQ as well as Nigerian, Indian, and Vietnamese food. Following the shared meal, adults were treated to live theatre. A Beginner's Guide to the Night Sky, put on by the Villains Theatre, took the audience through an observational astronomy class that moved through music, memory, and magic to teach us about what we can see from our tiny place in the universe. A puppet show was held for younger audience members.

We were also honoured to present the Extra Mile Award to Dr. **Mutiati Sulyman**, director of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility, at the event.

The celebration concluded with the music of DJ Suly — a psychology grad and mental health advocate who blends Afrobeats, Amapiano, and global sounds that bring people together.



More than just a fun day, the Summer Celebration also aligns with our guiding principles, fostering a sense of belonging and community and celebrating the rich diversity within our department.

It was again wonderful to see so many department members and their families come out to this event to meet new people and enjoy the activities and the beautiful day. Thank you to everyone who attended and we hope to see you next summer!



Transformational and Strategic Plan progress

Progress report

The Department of Psychiatry released a [progress report](#) on its Transformational and Strategic Plan in early September. The report outlines progress made in key areas:

- Transformative and inclusive leadership
- Valuing the health, well-being and professional development of department members
- Expanding access to clinical care and closing treatment gaps
- Extension of our research and education activities
- Expansion of our global reach

Thank you to everyone who made the plan a success!

As we near the conclusion of the department's current plan, we thank

all department members, partners, stakeholders, and the many others who have contributed to its success.

Charting our new course

The department is preparing to launch our new Strategic Plan for 2026-2030 in the coming months. Along with our progress report, department leaders also contributed to a [video](#) sharing reflections and looking forward to our next plan.

Strategic plan town hall and next steps

On September 11, the department hosted a virtual town hall on strategic planning. Thank you to all department members who attended the town hall and to all those who have shared their feedback. Your voice is important to this process as we determine new shared strategic directions and priorities for our department.

The new plan will be discussed at an upcoming executive meeting as we continue to refine it. As we move toward the next strategic phase, we remain committed to building on our foundation — advancing clinical excellence, education, research, and health equity, both locally and globally.

[View the Transformational and Strategic Plan Progress Report 2021-2025.](#)



View the Reflections on the Transformational and Strategic Plan video

[Watch here.](#)

Research Report

RESEARCH DAY

We're excited to invite you to the 35th Annual Dalhousie Psychiatry Research Day!

This event highlights student research and showcases the wide range of expertise within the Department of Psychiatry to the university and local community.

Event details

Date: Friday, November 7, 2025

Time: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Location: Atlantica Hotel Halifax

Keynote speaker:

Dr. Joshua Rosenblat

University of Toronto psychiatrist and researcher, Dr. Rosenblat specializes in treatment-resistant depression and is leading cutting-edge clinical trials on new treatments like ketamine and psilocybin. [Learn more about Dr. Rosenblat](#)

REGISTER NOW!

Registration is open until **October 30, 2025**. Space is limited, so register early at: <https://dalpsychiatry.ca/rd>

Questions?

Email us at Psych.Research@dal.ca

GRANTS

CIHR Grants:

- **Wozney, Lori M**; Hutt-MacLeod, Daphne; Lane, Jennifer E (PIs); Black, Robyn; Catsaris-Sheppard, Darius J; **Chorney, Jill E**; Hundert, Amos; Sheppard, Tanya; Grant, Amy K; **Liebenberg, Linda**; Plourde, Vickie; Snow, Stephanie; Stewart, Samuel A; Sylliboy, Mallery A; **Wang, JianLi**; Woodgate, Roberta L (Co-Investigators); *GROUND-IYS NS: Guiding Real Outcomes through United and Novel Approaches to Data*; CIHR Other: IYS-Net Phase 2-Provincial Stream Grants
- **Uher, Rudolf**; Oore, Sageev S (PIs); **Alda, Martin**; **Bagnell, Alexa L**; **Howes Vallis, Emily L**; Kieffe, Michael; **Nunes, Abraham J**; Palaniyappan, Lena K; **Pavlova, Barbara**; **Propper, Lukas**; Rudzicz, Frank (Co-Investigators); *Early identification of risk for major depressive disorder from parent and youth speech*; CIHR Project Grant
- Jutras-Aswad, Didier; Abdel-Baki, Amal M; Crockford, David N; Roy, Marc-André; **Tibbo, Philip G** (PIs); Côté, José; **Crocker, Candice E**; Lachance-Touchette, Pamela; L'Heureux, Sophie; Ouellet-Plamondon, Clairelaine (Co-Investigators); *A clinical trial of CHAMPS, an app-based cannabis harm reduction intervention for young adults with first episode psychosis who do not seek to reduce cannabis use*; CIHR Project Grant

PUBLICATIONS

- Léger S, Guinard C, Singh S, Becker S, **Cunningham JEA, Alda M**, Newman AJ, Trappenberg T, **Nunes A**. A New Measure of Mnemonic Discrimination Applicable to Recognition Memory Tests With Continuous Variation in Novel Stimulus Interference. *Brain Behav.* 2025 Jun;15(6):e70303. doi: 10.1002/brb3.70303. PMID: 40566902; PMCID: PMC12198479.

Thank you to DPRF Summer Students!



Top left: Yanna Kachafanas and Dr. Barbara Pavlova

Top middle: Kelly Meaney and Dr. George Robertson

Top right: Lee-Ann Olmstead and Dr. Kara Dempster

Bottom left: Disha Sharma and Dr. Phil Tibbo

Bottom right: Dr. Sherry Stewart and Sam Hawkins

2025 Psychiatry Summer Studentships recipients:

- **Dr. Barbara Pavlova** and **Yanna Kachafanas** (incoming MSc in Psychiatry Research student — fall 2025 intake)
Project title: *Sleep and perseverative thinking in people with mood disorders*
- **Dr. Kara Dempster** and **Lee-Ann Olmstead** (incoming MSc in Psychiatry Research student — fall 2025 intake)
Project title: *Exploring the Use of Mismatch Negativity on EEG and Anterior Cingulate Cortex Glutamate as Prospective Markers of Treatment Resistant Schizophrenia*
- **Dr. Sherry Stewart** and **Sam Hawkins**
Project title: *How and For Whom Does Gambling-Specific Cyberloafing Explain the Links of Problem Gambling Severity to Adverse Work and Mental Health Outcomes?*
- **Dr. Phil Tibbo** and **Disha Sharma**
Project title: *Assessing Fidelity to Care in Early Intervention Services for Psychosis in rural and urban NS.*
- **Dr. George Robertson** and **Kelly Meaney**
Project title: *Metabolic Mechanisms Responsible for Ibogaine-Induced Brain Repair*

Thank you to the DPRF Summer Students for your contributions to the department this summer. We wish you well in your future endeavours!

A special thanks also goes to the faculty supervisors.

Dr. Lori Wozney receives CIHR funding through the Integrated Youth Services Network of Networks (IYS-Net).

Dr. **Lori Wozney's** (PI) recently funded CIHR project "GROUND-IYS NS: Guiding Real Outcomes through United and Novel Approaches to Data" is part of a [recent federal funding announcement](#) where the Government of Canada is investing more than \$30 million over four years to strengthen and expand the existing Integrated Youth Services Network of Networks (IYS-Net) across the country. This investment will be made through the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) and Indigenous Services Canada, and their partners including the Graham Boeckh Foundation (GBF) and Bell-GBF partnership.

Department members Drs. **Jill Chorney**, **Linda Liebenberg**, and **JianLi Wang** are co-investigators.

About GROUND-IY NS

GROUND-IY NS outlines a comprehensive plan to enhance data capacity and literacy within the IYS-NS network. The project

aims to empower IYS sites and the backbone team to navigate their data ecosystems effectively, adapt to new data strategies, and bridge the existing data skills gap through hands-on learning. This initiative is a critical step toward improving

outcomes for youth aged 12 to 25, particularly Indigenous youth, by making services more accessible, coordinated, and responsive to their needs.

[Read more.](#)

"Data becomes powerful when it's not just collected, but collectively understood. The most meaningful insights aren't found in spreadsheets — they're discovered in dialogue, in connection between researchers and community, and in the courage to ask what matters most."

— Dr. Lori Wozney, Sun Life Chair in Youth Mental Health

UNITE launches survey

A promotional poster for the UNITE survey. It features a purple and orange background. On the left, white text reads "Help us improve youth mental health navigation in Nova Scotia." Below this is a white button with the text "TAKE THE SURVEY". On the right, there are two circular images: the top one shows three young people smiling, and the bottom one shows a group of four young people. At the bottom left is the Research Nova Scotia logo, and at the bottom right is the UNITE logo with the tagline "Unifying Networks to Innovate".

Help us improve youth mental health navigation in Nova Scotia.

TAKE THE SURVEY

RESEARCH NOVA SCOTIA

UNITE
Unifying Networks to Innovate

Dalhousie University Research Ethics Board; 2025-7853

Support Youth Mental Health in Nova Scotia!

Have you helped someone aged 15–25 with mental health challenges in the past year? Your experience matters!

Take a 10-minute survey from UNITE to help improve youth mental health and addiction services in Nova Scotia. You could win a gift card!

Start the survey: <https://surveys.dal.ca/opinio/s?s=80866>

Dalhousie REB #2025-7853

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION NEWS

As we wrap up the 2024/25 undergraduate academic year, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to our faculty for their ongoing contributions to teaching and supervising our medical students. Your dedication is truly appreciated.

During the 2024/25 academic year:

- **114** core clinical clerks rotated through our Dalhousie Medicine Nova Scotia (DMNS) sites:
 - 88 completed their rotations in the Halifax Regional Municipality.
 - 16 completed their rotations at a distributed traditional block clerkship site (Amherst, Kentville, Truro, and Yarmouth).
 - 10 completed their rotations at a longitudinal integrated clerkship site (Sydney and South Shore).
- **33** core clinical clerks rotated through our Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick (DMNB) sites:
 - 16 completed their rotations in Saint John.
 - 17 completed their rotations at a longitudinal integrated clerkship site (Fredericton, Moncton, Miramichi, and Upper River Valley).
- We had 65 completed Med 4 electives (53 home electives and 12 visitors).
- We successfully placed 22 MPAS (Master of Physician Assistant Studies) students for the year 2025.
- Annually, the department recognizes a resident for their outstanding teaching efforts, which may be didactic or clinical in nature. The winner is based solely on nominations and feedback provided by the clinical clerks throughout the year. We would like to congratulate Dr. **Lousie Moodie** for being the 2024/25 Clerks' Choice Award winner!
 - Overall, our residents received 99 nominations from the clerks — a testament to how much the clerks value our residents. Thank you to our residents for providing such a positive experience to our medical students!
- Our Undergraduate Education Committee would like to thank the resident representative, Dr. **Julia Leblanc**, and the various medical student representatives for their contributions to the committee over the past year.
- To date, we have successfully placed 67 home electives and visitor electives across various services in HRM, reflecting an increase in elective approvals.
- We are in the process of finalizing the schedule for 24 MPAS (Master of Physician Assistant Studies) students for 2026.
- The Undergraduate Education Committee welcomed resident representative Dr. **Elycia Monaghan** to the committee.

For the upcoming 2025/26 academic year:

- We have successfully recruited all our tutors for this year. Thank you to everyone who has signed up to tutor.
- The annual Med 2 Skilled Clinician interviewing skills unit will run in three blocks of four weeks. Sessions started on Aug. 28, 2025, and will continue on Thursday afternoons until Nov. 13, 2025. The 'Hearing Voices' simulation has its own dedicated session on a Tuesday morning during each block.

MEDICAL EDUCATION NEWS

Medical education publications:

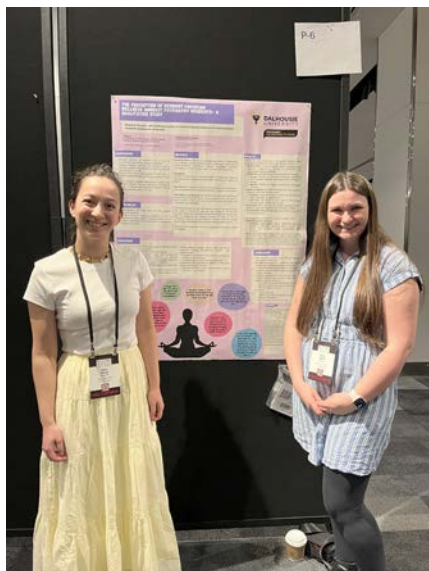
- Taylor, V., **Hazelton, L.**, & **Singh, K.** (2025). Seven ways to get a grip on requests for trigger warnings in medical education. *Canadian Medical Education Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.36834/cmej.79544>

Have you published medical education scholarship?

Send the citation to **Mandy.Esliger@nshealth.ca** to have it included in a future issue of Headlines.

POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION NEWS

Resident research spotlight



Drs. **Talia Bond** and **Kara Yeung** (PGY-5) presented their research project *The Perception of Resident Physician Wellness Amongst Psychiatry Residents – Qualitative* at the International Congress of Academic Medicine, in Halifax, Nova Scotia on Saturday, April 5, 2025.

New PGY-1 cohort

In July, we welcomed our new PGY-1 cohort. They have finished their Transition to Discipline training and at the end of August started their Foundations of Discipline. We are looking forward to the upcoming academic year.

Dr. Abbey MacLellan on ICAM Panel — DocsWithDisabilities Podcast

Dr. **Abbey MacLellan** (PGY-2) was on the podcast DocsWithDisabilities, ICAM Panel — Facing Ableism in Medicine: What's Our Role in Building Inclusion. You can find the full episode [here](#).

PSYCHIATRY GRADUATE PROGRAM NEWS

The Department of Psychiatry is please to welcome eight Master's and three PhD students to our Psychiatry Research program in September:

MSc in Psychiatry Research

- **Ian Armstrong** (BA Psychology and Music, Acadia University) will be working with Dr. **Patrick McGrath** and Dr. **Sherry Stewart**.
- **Somtoo (Rita) Henry** (BSc Human Physiology, Nnamdi Azikiwe University) will be working with Dr. **Ejemai Eborieme**.
- **Chelsea Ingham** (BA Psychology, University of Western Ontario) will be working with Drs. **Aaron Keshen** and **Susie Gamberg**.
- **Yanna Kachafanas** (BA Psychology, St. Francis Xavier University) will be working with Dr. **Barbara Pavlova**.
- **Cameron MacGillivray** (BSc Psychology and Chemistry, Acadia University) will be working with Dr. **Tomas Hajek**.
- **Lee-Ann Olmstead** (BA Psychology and English, Mount Saint Vincent University) will be working with Dr. **Kara Dempster**.
- **Sarah Petkau** (BA Psychology, McGill University) will be working with Dr. **Rudolf Uher**.
- **Christina Simms** (BA Psychology, York University) will be working with Dr. **Sherry Stewart**.


PhD in Psychiatry Research


- **Zachary Hubshman** (fast tracked from MSc Psychiatry Research, Dalhousie University) will continue working with Dr. **Rudolf Uher**.
- **Samuel Obeng Nkrumah** (MSc Psychiatry Research, Dalhousie University) will continue working with Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**.
- **Damilola Onietan** (MPH Health Promotion and Education, University of Ibadan) will be working with Dr. **Ejemai Eborieme**.

BIPOC Graduate Student Mentoring Academy


A platform for BIPOC student success

Facilitating **mentorship** between BIPOC graduate students and professionals

 **DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY** | FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES



Become a mentor



Become a mentee

Apply by Tuesday, September 30, 2025
Questions? Email us at bipocmpd@dal.ca

Centre for Global Mental Health welcomes Parliamentary staff delegation from Ghana

In the spring, the director of Dalhousie's Centre for Global Mental Health, Dr. Agyapong, received a request from the Parliamentary Service of Ghana to visit the centre on a week-long study tour to gain knowledge and insight into best practices in mental health programming. Dr. Vincent Agyapong welcomed the five-member staff delegation in late July.

The delegation included members of the Psychology Unit of the Ghanaian Parliamentary Service, established in 2017 to enhance the well-being of members of Parliament, staff, and their families.

Global collaborations and mental health equity drive the mission of Dalhousie's newly launched Centre for Global Mental Health, making the study tour an opportunity not to be missed. It follows in the footsteps of the established Memorandum of Understanding between Dalhousie University and the University of Ghana Medical School and the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons to facilitate training opportunities for Ghanaian Psychiatrists and psychiatry residents from Dalhousie.

The eventful study tour was the result of much planning and preparation to curate a meaningful and beneficial experience for the delegation. It was facilitated by Dr. David Anderson, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Dr. Balakrishnan Prithiviraj, Associate Vice-President Global Relations, and Megan Chipp, Director for Global Partnerships. Members of the Department of Psychiatry operations team provided planning and logistical support.

Institutions, services, and presenters covering a wide range of topics in clinical care, education,



The delegation met with members of the IWK Mental Health and Addictions Program team and the Department of Psychiatry.

training, research, advocacy, and accessibility were carefully selected to share knowledge and best practices with the delegation. A tour of Province House, the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly, was also organized.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada, Nova Scotia Health, IWK Health, Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology, and Dalhousie University contributed to the study tour.

Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

- Congratulations to Dr. **Celia Robichaud** for receiving the Junior Mentorship Award, chosen by DPRA (Dalhousie Psychiatry Residents Association), at the Year-End Celebration, June 13, 2025.
 - Congratulations to Dr. **José Mejía** for receiving the PGY-5 Excellence Award. Recipients are chosen by the PGY-5s to recognize contribution to initiatives that improve resident teaching, participation & mentorship, June 13, 2025.
 - Congratulations to Dr. **Chelcie Soroka** for receiving the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Subspecialty Residency Program Supervisor of the Year Award, June 21, 2025.
-

Dr. **John Aspin** retired from the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry on June 27, 2025 after close to a quarter century of service. A retirement party celebrating John and his contributions to clinical care and teaching was held on July 24, 2025. Dr. Aspin will continue to provide clinical supervision with Family Therapy clinic over the next year.



CAP CLINICAL HIGHLIGHTS

IWK Integrated Youth Services (IYS) NS launch first site - Anchor Cumberland in Amherst, NS April 30, 2025

An IYS site is a one-stop-shop with walk-in access providing a safe, inclusive place and access to a range of services supporting mental health issues, addictions, and other needs for youth 12-25 years. Sites are led by community organizations with IWK MHA as backbone organization and NS government has funded eight sites across the province (two in each zone).



IWK African Nova Scotian Service (ANSS) officially launched at North End Community Library June 6, 2025

ANSS is a program designed to provide historical African Nova Scotian children, youth and their families with culturally responsive mental health and addictions services. This service is embedded within the IWK MHA program.



CAP PRESENTATIONS

- Dr. **Suzanne Zinck** presented at Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine Clerkship Directors retreat on “Changes in Accessibility in Medicine: Where are we in 2025?” May 8, 2025.
- Dr. **Selene Etches** presented at Nova Scotia Health's Provincial Center for Training, Education & Learning during their monthly rounds, on the topic “MAiD and mental illness” May 30, 2025.
- Dr. **Selene Etches** presented at IWK Pain Team Away Day on “Somatization and Functional Neurological Disorders” June 4, 2025.
- Dr. **Selene Etches** chaired the 3rd Annual Nova Scotia Adolescent Concurrent Disorders Conference June 13, 2025.
- Dr. **Celia Robichaud** presented a two day CACAP course on “Youth Mental Health Assessment and Treatment” June 14-15, 2025.
- Dr. **Selene Etches** presented at Justice, Mental Health and Addictions Conference, hosted by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw Chiefs and Tajikeyimik First Nation Health Authority, Delta Hotel, Dartmouth “Cannabis Use in Adolescents” June 17, 2025.
- Dr. **Selene Etches** presented IWK Nursing Rounds “Cannabis Use in Adolescents” June 19, 2025.
- Dr. **David Lovas** presented at APCAP, White Point on “Developing Minds: From Fragmentation Back to Wholeness and Resilience” June 21, 2025.
- Dr. **Celia Robichaud** presented at APCAP, White Point on “Resilience Recommended: Curated Coping for Colleagues” June 21, 2025.
- Dr. **Kyle Godden**, CAP resident presented at APCAP, White Point on “Sad, Angry, and Isolated: Engaging Young Men Lost in the Manosphere,” co-presented with Colin Morrison, MSW, PhD student June 22, 2025.
- Dr. **Sabina Abidi** presented at APCAP, White Point on “Schizoid PD in a Youth Presenting with Somatic Concern-Countertransference as a Barrier to Efficacy,” co-presented with Marcie Balch, PhD student June 22, 2025.
- Dr. **Lukas Propper** collaborated with **Hubshman Z**, Adepalli N, Freeman K, Nazarova A, Wang M, Lowey A, Cumby J, **Uher R** on the abstract “Sleep quality in childhood as protective factors against major depressive disorder among youth” which was presented at the 21st international Congress of the European Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in Strasbourg, France June 30, 2025.

CAP GRANTS

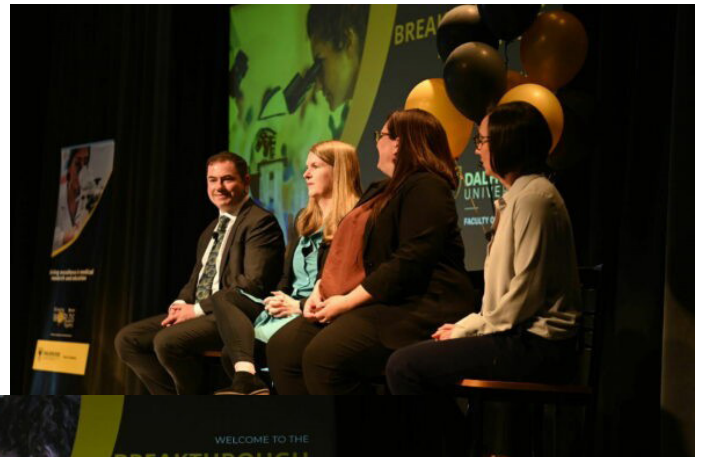
- **Rudolf Uher** and Sageev Oore (Co-Principal Investigators): **Martin Alda, Alexa Bagnell, Emily Howes Vallis**, Michael Kieffe, **Abraham Nunes**, Lena Palaniyappan, **Barbara Pavlova, Lukas Propper**, Frank Rudzicz (Co-Investigators) “Early identification of risk for major depressive disorder from parent and youth speech” Canadian Institute of Health Research grant. \$1,009,800 for four years; 2025-2029 received on July 17, 2025.
- **Jill Chorney** (Principal investigator): **Sabina Abidi, Alexa Bagnell**, Maureen Brennan, Amos Hundert, Madeline Nugent, Stephanie Snow, **Lori Wozney** (Co-investigators) “Measurement to Meaning: Implementing Measurement Based Care in Child and Adolescent Mental Health” Dept of Psychiatry Research Fund award. \$20,000. for one year; 2025-2026 received on July 21, 2025.

CAP RESEARCH

Dalhousie Advancement Breakthrough Breakfast Youth Mental Health

Drs. **Jill Chorney, Lori Wozney, Rudolf Uher**, and **Sandra Meier** presented at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 “Early Interventions for Youth Mental Health: Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine Breakthrough Breakfast” June 3, 2025.

This event highlighted Dalhousie Researcher’s cutting-edge advancements in areas including digital apps co-designed with youth to promote wellness and motivate behavioural change, youth centred approaches to care, the importance of translating research into clinical best practices, and early intervention and diagnosis. It provided insight into how this pioneering research helps improve and support systems for young people facing mental health challenges.



CAP research highlight

Dr. **Sandra Meier**, associate professor in the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Dalhousie and IWK Psychologist, was interviewed on CBC Listen's "This is Nova Scotia" podcast on June 26, 2025.

Dr. Meier spoke about the work of her Dalhousie research group, the **PROSIT Lab** (Predicting Risks and Outcomes of Social InTeractions), and its aim of better understanding how the different ways parents use their mobile devices affect their young children, both positively and negatively.

In the interview, Dr. Meier talks about the group's "Parental

Smartphone Study," where participating parents download an in-house app which tracks cellphone usage through mobile sensing. The study also involves a series of questionnaires, surveys, as well as a visit to the IWK Health Centre and six-month follow-up survey.

"We think that depending on what apps they (parents) use, for example, when they watch YouTube videos together with their kids... is really good for mental health, and it helps for a common experience with kids. Other things, when parents use their smartphone to scroll on the internet and don't pay attention to their kid, it can be that this has a more negative effect on the child."

You can find the full interview recording on CBC Listen's "On Demand" archive, titled "How does the way parents use their phones affect their young children", or by clicking [here](#).

Dr. Meier's work is on-going, with her research group most recently having met with the Read to Me! early reading program at the IWK to inform parents directly about early screen use with toddlers. Find out more about Dr. Meier and the PROSIT lab's work, as well as how to participate in one of the lab's research studies, on their website: <http://prosit.meierlab.info/>

CAP PUBLICATIONS

Lodewyk K, Courtney DB, **Bagnell A**, Newton AS. Adverse event monitoring, assessment, and reporting in nutraceutical and phytoceutical trials for pediatric neuropsychiatric conditions: A systematic review. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*. 2025;0(0). doi:10.1177/02698811251344683. Published on July 13, 2025.

Obuobi-Donkor G, Shalaby R, **Agyapong B...** **Wozney, L**, et al. Impact of a supportive text messaging program (Text4Support) for mitigating psychological problems in patients receiving formal mental health services: A randomized controlled trial. *DIGITAL HEALTH*. 2025;11. Published on July 23, 2025.

Adu, M.K.; Nkrumah, S.O.; Agyapong, B.; Obuobi-Donkor, G.; Eboreime, E.; Wozney, L.; Agyapong, V.I.O. Association Between Patient Sociodemographic and Clinical Characteristics and Acute Mental Health Service Utilization Within One Year Following Enrollment in the Rapid Access and Stabilization Program in Nova Scotia. *J. Clin. Med.* 2025, 14, 5241. Published on July 24, 2025.

Dimitropoulos, G., Nicula, M., Krishnapillai, A., **Wozney, L.** et al. Transitions for youth and young adults with eating disorders and/or other mental health conditions: a Canadian guideline. *J Eat Disord* 13, 158 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40337-025-01343-6>. Published on July 28, 2025.

Couturier, J., Nicula, M., Webb, C., **Wozney, L** et al. Pandemic impact, mitigation strategies and peer support: a qualitative analysis of youth, parent, clinician and administrator perspectives. *J Eat Disord* 13, 157 (2025). Published on July 28, 2025.

CAP EDUCATION

Nova Scotia Adolescent Concurrent Disorders Conference

The 3rd Annual Nova Scotia Adolescent Concurrent Disorders Conference was held in Halifax on June 13, 2025. The theme of this year's conference was "Psychosocial therapy for substance use: experiential exercises from engagement to behaviour change." The conference was well attended with presentations given by Dr. Wip Lamba and co-facilitators Edwin Wey and Megan Mulcahy.



Atlantic Provinces Child and Adolescent Psychiatry conference

The 17th annual Atlantic Provinces Child and Adolescent Psychiatry conference (APCAP) was held at White Point from June 20-22, 2025. The theme of this year's conference was "The power of resilience in overcoming adversity in youth mental health." The conference was well attended with presentations given by child and adolescent psychiatrists, residents, and key speaker Starr Cunningham.



CAP subspecialty program updates

Welcome to Drs. **Talia Bond**, **Julia LeBlanc**, and **Kara Yeung**, who started their Child & Adolescent Psychiatry subspecialty residency training in July and August. A welcome party was hosted by program director Dr. **Celia Robichaud** in August, where division members celebrated our subspecialty residents.



Section of Community Psychiatry

Farewell tribute to Dr. Laura Downing

It is with both gratitude and sadness that we share the news that one of our own psychiatrists, **Dr. Laura Downing**, will be leaving Connections Dartmouth to return to her home province of Newfoundland. While we will miss her tremendously and feel the profound loss of her presence, Newfoundland is truly gaining an extraordinary physician.

It is a privilege to recognize Dr. Downing for her exceptional contributions to psychiatry and patient care. She is not only an outstanding psychiatrist but also one of the most dedicated and compassionate physicians we have had the honor of working alongside.

Laura's professionalism, clinical expertise, and deep empathy are unmatched. She possesses a rare ability to see the whole person — not just the illness — while applying the highest standards of evidence-based care. Her skill in managing even the most complex cases, distinguishing between psychiatric and organic causes of illness, and employing the appropriate diagnostic tools with precision has been a tremendous asset to our team. Her written work is meticulous, her follow-up is timely, and her care is always comprehensive.

What truly sets Laura apart is her unwavering commitment to her patients. One extraordinary example stands out: on the very day she gave birth to her second child, Laura remained with her patients until 8:00 PM, ensuring every one of them received proper care before delivering her baby just one hour later. This remarkable act reflects

her profound dedication and sense of responsibility to those who depend on her.

Laura's impact has extended well beyond her patients. She is also a gifted educator, inspiring residents and medical students alike. Trainees consistently remark on how she challenges them to think more deeply, reason more rigorously, and approach psychiatry with both science and humanity. She models excellence in clinical practice while fostering growth in the next generation of psychiatrists.

Among her colleagues, Laura is deeply respected; among her patients, she is trusted; and among her learners, she is admired. Her humility, consistency, and quiet perseverance have earned her the reputation of being not only an exemplary clinician but also a role model of professionalism and compassion. It is no surprise she was honored with the Outstanding Clinician Award, a recognition that reflects her exceptional skill and the profound impact she has on her patients, colleagues, and trainees.

Dr. Laura Downing truly embodies the very best of our profession. Her professional excellence, dedication, and humanity will leave a lasting legacy at Connections Dartmouth. Though we are sad to see her go, we are grateful for the time, care, and wisdom she has shared with us.

Please join us in wishing Laura and her family all the best as they begin this exciting new chapter back home in Newfoundland.

Dr. Abdullah Alghanmi completes international fellowship in Addiction Psychiatry

Congratulations to Dr. **Abdullah Alghanmi** who completed an international fellowship in Addiction Psychiatry in August 2025. We hope he disseminates his acquired knowledge and skills to his scientific community in Saudi Arabia.



Section of Geriatric Psychiatry

MHCC Report: Transforming health-care, social care and community landscapes to optimize the mental health of older adults in Canada

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) released the report “Transforming health-care, social care and community landscapes to optimize the mental health of older adults in Canada.”

Dr. **Keri-Leigh Cassidy**, director of Social Policy & Advocacy and a geriatric psychiatrist, served on the MHCC’s Older Adults Advisory

Committee in 2022/23 when the report was initiated.

The report highlights the findings of a study conducted for the Mental Health Commission of Canada to take the pulse of older adults, caregivers, health-care providers, and other key partners on the mental health of older adults in Canada. It is intended

to foster change in communities across Canada, support efforts to improve mental health care and resources for older adults in clinical, educational and advocacy activities and to make our country a better place for older adults to live in.

View the report [here](#).

Healing from attachment trauma: Virtual treatment shows real results

By Dr. Jacqueline Kinley & Sandra Reyno

People who have lived through repeated or long-term attachment trauma often face challenges that go far beyond typical PTSD. Alongside the usual symptoms — such as flashbacks, anxiety, or avoiding reminders — many also struggle with overwhelming emotions, deep shame, and difficulties in relationships. This is known as Complex PTSD.

To help, we developed the Dynamic attachment-focused Relational Treatment (DaRT) program. Originally run in person, DaRT was adapted into a virtual format during the pandemic, making care more accessible and continuous.

How DaRT helps

The DaRT program doesn't ask people to relive every painful detail of their trauma. Instead, it focuses on what matters most:

- Looking at the present – exploring how past trauma shapes beliefs, emotions, and relationships today.
- Reframing the story – helping people move away from seeing themselves as “damaged” toward recognizing their strengths and resilience.
- Challenging negative patterns – teaching skills to shift unhelpful thinking into healthier, more balanced perspectives.
- Building coping strategies – giving participants practical tools to handle distress and improve relationships.

What we found

Two recent studies looked at the DaRT virtual program:

1. What predicts struggle?

People who reported the most difficulty often struggled with negative self-worth, relationship challenges, and avoidance. These areas are critical to address in treatment.

2. What improves with treatment?

Participants reported clear improvements in depression, anxiety, emotion regulation, and beliefs about themselves and others. These gains were still present three months later.

Why it matters

These results show that even virtually, trauma treatment can be both effective and lasting. For individuals with Complex



PTSD, focusing on self-worth, relationships, and avoidance is especially important.

For clinicians and staff, the takeaway is encouraging: with the right focus, we can help patients move beyond trauma — not by reliving the past, but by reshaping how they see themselves and connect with others in the present.

Quick take for clinicians

- Key predictors of struggle: Negative self-worth, relationship difficulties, and avoidance are the strongest challenges for people with Complex PTSD.
- Effective outcomes: Virtual DaRT groups improved depression, anxiety, emotion regulation, self-beliefs, and PTSD symptoms — with gains lasting three months.
- Clinical takeaway: Focus treatment on self-concept, relationships, and avoidance to support meaningful, lasting recovery.

Nova Scotia Health's Recovery Support Centres offer low-barrier community setting for people seeking addictions help

Submitted by Remo Zaccagna, senior communications advisor, Mental Health and Addictions Program

More than three years ago, Nova Scotia Health's Mental Health and Addictions Program (MHAP) opened its first Recovery Support Centre (RSC) in Dartmouth.

Since then, several more RSCs have been launched across the province, in places like Amherst, New Glasgow, Middleton, Yarmouth, Sydney and, most recently, Truro.

These sites offer Nova Scotians living with substance use and gambling disorders a place to seek help in an outpatient setting, with the MHAP team striving to continue to build an equitably accessible, low-barrier model based in the community.

"Care is most successful when it occurs near where a person lives and in a more welcoming, less sterile environment. Institution-based care can be intimidating for people who find it difficult to take the first step," said Dr. David Martell, Physician Lead in Addiction Medicine at the MHAP, who also works in the Lunenburg RSC.

The sites are staffed by a multi-disciplinary team of physicians, nurses, pharmacists, social workers and administrative staff, who collaborate to learn more about the situation and support needs of everyone who walks through the door.

Staff at the centres can link people to care based on their individual needs. This could include withdrawal management, opioid-use disorder treatment, community mental health and addictions programs, or other supports available within their respective communities.



Open house at the Recovery Support Centre in Truro on Aug. 25, 2025. In the photo are Dr. Dave Martell and nurse practitioner Rob Kennedy, staff from the Truro RSC, including nurses, social workers, and administrative personnel, along with the Honourable Dave Ritcey, Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage; Cathy Hinton, Mayor of Truro; and Alana Hirtle, Member of Parliament for Cumberland Colchester.

It's something that has been appreciated by clients and families alike, said nurse practitioner Robert Kennedy, who works at the RSC in Truro.

"What I hear from clients and families is how thankful they are for quick and timely access to care, a collaborative and holistic approach, and responsiveness to questions and reassessments," he said.

"Clients have reported feeling safe and heard when interacting with the RSC, knowing they will not be judged or penalized for changes in their health care trajectory, but rather be included in their care to reach their goals."

Prior to launching its first centre in January 2022, the MHAP team conducted a national and international review to figure out the best way to offer treatment to people struggling with addictive disorders, learning that 80 per cent of people who needed care could safely get it in an outpatient setting.

And with half of the Nova Scotia population living in a rural environment, the next step was finding the right location for these sites which would be vital to their success.

"We wanted care to be equitable, so geography was important," Dr. Martell said. "We wanted to really

be intentional about trying to bring this care out to [rural] areas and not require people to drive for hours to access this kind of care.”

Depending on the location, centres are available five to seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to at least 4:30 p.m. The MHAP team is working toward having all centres open for 12 hours a day; some RSCs have already achieved that level of access.

People can access RSC services in several ways, including contacting the centre closest to them directly, they can self-refer by calling the Mental Health and Addictions Intake Service at 1-855-922-1122 or book online at prebooking.nshealth.ca, or they can visit YourHealthNS.ca or download the YourHealthNS app to learn more about what’s available.

People are also encouraged to simply walk in, and they will be seen almost immediately.

Observing firsthand the difference this collaborative, low-barrier and accessible approach makes in people’s lives is what keeps Kennedy coming back each day.

“I find this area of work extremely rewarding, as the supports we provide can sometimes make rapid progress in someone’s recovery,” he said. “Clients feel they are a part of their care here and have a say in developing a recovery plan. Many have voiced how the collaborative team approach allows for multiple goals to be addressed in the same building.”

Social Policy & Advocacy

Social Policy & Advocacy Celebration Lunch

On Sept. 15, 2025, the Social Policy & Advocacy Committee hosted a celebration lunch to recognize some of the social policy & advocacy projects our department members are engaging in with community to help close gaps in serving equity-deserving groups. These projects were supported by the [Social Policy & Advocacy Initiatives Fund](#). The lunch showcased the achievements of six SP&A Initiatives Fund recipients, celebrated growing collaborations between the Department of Psychiatry and community partners, and raised awareness of future funding opportunities.

Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**, department head, welcomed everyone to



SP&A Initiatives Fund recipients, community partners, SP&A Committee and Department of Psychiatry members at the Celebration Lunch on Sept. 15, 2025.

the event and shared a brief background about this new strategic pillar for the department. Dr. **Keri-Leigh Cassidy**, director of SP&A, spoke about the committee's strategy and action plan, highlighting its operational focus areas and guiding principles. Wayne Marsh, community representative on the SP&A committee, spoke about the Initiatives Fund and how it connects to building trust with and growing partnerships with community. He also highlighted three projects supported by the fund whose applicants could not attend.

Dr. **Zenovia Ursuliak**, director of wellness, **Bala Harri**, PhD candidate in Psychiatry Research, and **Daniel Basso**, MSc candidate in Psychiatry Research, each spoke about their projects that received funding support and highlighted how the small amount of funding helped engage the community in their projects.

Thank you to all who attended, our speakers, and the grant recipients for sharing their impactful projects.

Social Policy and Advocacy Initiatives Fund

The Social Policy & Advocacy Initiatives Fund is an internal funding opportunity that encourages academic initiatives in the areas of education, clinical care, or research to close gaps in serving and engaging equity-deserving populations in our community. All members of the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry are eligible. A limited amount of funding is available per grant for up to 10 grants per fiscal year. [Learn more](#) about the Social Policy and Advocacy Initiatives Fund and email **SPAC@dal.ca** to receive application materials.

Social Policy & Advocacy Initiatives Fund

Funding is available for academic initiatives in the areas of education, clinical care, or research to close gaps in serving and engaging equity-deserving populations in our community.

The Social Policy & Advocacy Initiatives Fund is available to all members of the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry including residents, fellows, AFP physicians, graduate students, research faculty, cross appointed and adjunct faculty, and administrative staff.

LEARN MORE & APPLY



DALHOUSIE
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Department of Psychiatry

Department **News**

Department head staff lunches

Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**, department head, held his annual small-group lunch meetings with the Dal Psychiatry operations team. These informal gatherings offer valuable insight into the diverse experiences and meaningful contributions of our exceptional team.



Farewell to Dr. Dawn Veinot, psychiatry resident

The PGY-4s held a goodbye BBQ for Dr. Dawn Veinot who left the residency program to transfer to Queen's University.



Drs. Jason Morrison and Tanya Tulipan support their daughters at the Canada Games

Drs **Jason Morrison** and **Tanya Tulipan** travelled to St John's Newfoundland in August to support their daughters who were competing at the Canada Games on Nova Scotia's Artistic Swimming team (also known as synchronized swimming).

The finale routine was to a Tina Turner song hence the wigs. Let's go Team NS!



FACULTY & STAFF CHANGES

Arrivals

- Dr. **Belinda Agyapong** joined the department as an adjunct effective July 1, 2025. She is located on the 8th Floor, AJLB and can be reached at **Belinda.Agyapong@dal.ca**
- Dr. **Matthew McAdam** joined the department as an assistant professor effective July 1, 2025. Dr. McAdam is working in the Sleep Clinic, RASP, and Mood Disorders. Dr. McAdam can be reached at **MatthewK.McAdam@nshealth.ca**
- **Eleanor Kumahia** joined the department's operations team as administrative assistant to the department head in July 2025. Eleanor can be reached at **Eleanor.Kumahia@nshealth.ca**

- Dr. **Jeffrey MacDonald** joined the department as an assistant professor effective August 1, 2025. Dr. MacDonald is located at the Dartmouth Community Mental Health Clinic and East Hants Community Mental Health Clinic. Dr. MacDonald can be reached at **jeffreyX.macdonald@nshealth.ca**
- Dr. **Abdalmohsen Al-Humoud** joined the department as an assistant professor effective August 4, 2025. Dr. Al-Humoud is located at the East Coast Forensic Hospital, Dartmouth, NS. Dr. Al-Humoud can be reached at **abdalmohsen.alhumoud@nshealth.ca**

Welcome to you all!

Departures

- Dr. **John Aspin** retired from the department effective June 27, 2025.
- **Neha Singh**, physician resource manager, left the department to pursue another career opportunity in July 2025.
- **Anila Balakrishnan**, research coordinator, left the department to pursue other opportunities in July 2025.
- Dr. **David Lovas** resigned from the department effective August 31, 2025
- Dr. **Malgorzata Rajda** retired from the department effective August 31, 2025

We wish you well!

Meet a new department member: Dr. Abdalmohsen Al-Humoud

Dr. **Abdalmohsen Al-Humoud** joins Dalhousie University as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry. He is a Clinical and Academic Adult and Forensic Psychiatrist, board-certified in Psychiatry and Forensic Psychiatry by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

A graduate of University College Dublin Medical School, Dr. Al-Humoud completed his psychiatry and forensic psychiatry residency training at the University of Toronto and holds a master's degree in health law from Loyola University Chicago School of Law. Previously an Assistant Professor at Queen's University, he served as Head of Forensic Mental Health Services at the Kuwait Center for Mental Health, the nation's only forensic

and correctional psychiatry service. He has extensive experience in developing and leading private mental health services, as well as establishing forensic psychiatry services across the Middle East.

His academic and policy work focuses on legal mental health and forensic psychiatry, with a strong commitment to advancing mental health legislation and professional education.

AWARDS & HONOURS

Dr. Malgorzata Rajda receives Dedicated Service Award



Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**, department head, had the honour of presenting a Dedicated Service Award to Dr. **Malgorzata Rajda**, a distinguished educator, clinician and scholar, who retired from the Dalhousie University Department of Psychiatry after more than two decades of educational leadership and contributing significantly to clinical service delivery and training of medical students, residents and fellows. Arriving in Canada from her native country Poland in 1995, Dr Rajda completed her psychiatry residency at Dalhousie University. She then joined the department as a staff member and assumed the role of fellowship director in 2003. Shortly after she became

the psychiatry residency program director for eight years and then the Director of Education for the department for close to a decade. After that, she assumed the role of Co-Director for the Sleep Fellowship Program which she worked diligently with her colleague to establish and secured Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada accreditation. Dr Malgorzata Rajda has indeed gone above and beyond in service to patients, learners and the Dalhousie University Department of Psychiatry. We wish her a comfortable retirement.

Dr. Aaron Keshen receives CPA's C.A. Roberts Award for Clinical Leadership

Congratulations to Dr. **Aaron Keshen**, who received the 2025 C.A. Roberts Award for Clinical Leadership from the Canadian Psychiatric Association.

This award is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Charles A. Roberts and is presented annually to a

psychiatrist-clinician who has contributed significantly to improving patient care. Past award recipients are outstanding CPA member clinicians who have been instrumental in developing new treatment approaches, creative program design or administrative innovations, or who have been

recognized for consistently providing superior quality psychiatric care to patients.

Dr. Ejemai Eboeime receives Dalhousie University President's Research Excellence Award – Emerging Investigator and is a finalist for the Discovery Award in Science and Technology – Emerging Professional

Congratulations to Dr. **Ejemai Eboeime**, the winner of the 2025 Dalhousie University President's Research Excellence Award – Emerging Investigator category. The Emerging Investigator award

honours early-career faculty who are already making significant contributions to Dalhousie's research community and beyond.

[Read more.](#)

Dr. Eboeime has also emerged among the top three finalists of the Discovery Award in Science and Technology – Emerging Professional category. The final winner will be announced at the Awards ceremony at the Halifax Convention Centre on November 20.

Dr. Penny Corkum named Distinguished Research Professor

Congratulations to Dr. **Penny Corkum** (cross-appointed to the Department of Psychiatry) on being named a Distinguished Research Professor. Dalhousie's highest research honour, Distinguished Research Professorships are reserved for faculty whose careers have been defined by scholarly excellence and enduring impact.

[Read more.](#)

Dr. Vincent Agyapong awarded M. Andrew Padmos International Collaboration Award

Congratulations to Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**, recipient of the 2025 M. Andrew Padmos International Collaboration Award. Presented by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, this award recognizes exceptional leadership in advancing postgraduate medical education and residency training outside Canada. Dr. Agyapong is recognized for his outstanding contributions to psychiatry education, particularly in Ghana,

where his work has strengthened international collaborations and supported the Royal College's vision to improve health care for all. He'll be presented with the award at a ceremony in Ottawa in October.

[Read more.](#)

Dr. Joseph Sadek delivers lectures to the United Nations Conference and to the judiciary of Malaysia

Dr. **Joseph Sadek** was invited by the United Nations to provide a lecture on the importance of mental health in judicial effectiveness. The lecture was well received by the delegates in a United Nations Conference Port Moresby, PNG.

He also provided a lecture to the judiciary of Malaysia.



Dr. Joseph Sadek delivers lecture at the United Nations Conference.

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 department members who have truly gone "the extra mile" in service to the department by advancing its mission in the areas of education, research, clinical care, advocacy, wellness, and EDIA.

Recipient: Dr. Mutiat Sulyman

Nominated by: Dr. Zenovia Ursuliak

Mutiat has consistently made members of the department feel welcomed and included. She is kind to every person she interacts with. Some examples include offering support to new faculty members and making her clinical team members feel valued. Her actions support the Wellness and EDIA mandate.

Recipient: Dr. Laura Downing

Nominated by: Dr. Mahmoud Awara

Dr. Laura Downing was nominated as an exceptional psychiatrist and a dedicated and compassionate physician. Her professionalism, clinical skills, and empathy are second to none. She has a rare ability to see the whole person in front of her, not just the illness, while applying the highest standards of evidence-based care. She can untangle the most complex presentations, skillfully distinguishing between primary psychiatric disorders and organic causes of illness, and she uses the right diagnostic tools to get there. Her written work is meticulous, her follow-up is timely, and her care is always thorough.

But what truly sets Laura apart is her unwavering commitment to her patients. One moment stands out above all others: on the day she gave birth to her second child, she stayed with her patients until 8:00 PM,

making sure each one was cared for, before delivering her baby just one hour later at 9:00 PM. That single act says more about her dedication than any award citation ever could — it was not about personal recognition, but about being there for the patients who depended on her.

Laura's contributions extend beyond patient care. She is a gifted teacher, someone who inspires trainees by sharing her knowledge generously and presenting it in a way that is both structured and practical. Her residents and medical students often remark on how she challenges them to think more deeply and to approach psychiatry with both rigour and humanity.

She is deeply respected by her colleagues, trusted by her patients, and admired by her learners. Laura embodies the very essence of going the extra mile, quietly, humbly, and without expecting anything in return.

EXTRA MILE AWARD

**Do you have a colleague who deserves to be recognized for going "the extra mile?"
Consider nominating them for the Extra Mile Award!**

The Department of Psychiatry's Extra Mile Award recognizes 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.

LEARN MORE & MAKE A NOMINATION [HERE.](#)

Leadership PRN Podcast - Accessibility in Medical Education with Dr. Scott Milligan

In the following episode of the Leadership PRN podcast, Dr. **Lara Hazelton** speaks with Dr. Scott Milligan about accessibility in medical education. Listen to the episode [here](#).

Leadership PRN is Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine’s podcast for leaders whether formal or informal, established or emerging.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Let’s Keep Talking

Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia Event

Let’s Keep Talking

Event details

WHEN: October 7, 2025 | 6-8 PM

WHERE: Presentation Theatre, NSCC Ivany Campus, 80 Mawiomi Place, Dartmouth, NS

REGISTRATION: Free

Featuring special guest Caitlin Morrison, Executive Director of Matthew Perry House.

REGISTER [HERE](#) TO RESERVE YOUR SEAT.

About

Let’s Keep Talking, presented by Bell Let’s Talk, is an annual public event created to educate, inspire and celebrate the achievements of outstanding Nova Scotians who

either live with mental illness or addiction or support those who do. This year, we’re pleased to welcome Caitlin Morrison, the Executive Director of the Matthew Perry House and loving sister of the late Canadian actor known for his role as Chandler in *Friends*.

For more information, visit: <https://www.mentalhealthns.ca/lets-keep-talking>

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27th Mosaic for Mental Health “Gratitude”

Canadian Mental Health Association
Halifax-Dartmouth Event

27th Mosaic for Mental Health “Gratitude”, Art Exhibition and Sale

October 16-28, 2025

The Craig Gallery, Alderney Landing

All-Resident Med Humanities Seminar Highlights Person-Centered Teaching

On August 28, 2025, the Department hosted an all-resident Medical Humanities seminar on person-centered teaching of trauma and stressor-related disorders, co-developed and co-taught by **Dr. Margaret (Leigh) Meldrum** and **Sarah Lefurgey (RCMP Cpl., ret.)**, in partnership with **Dr. Abraham Rudnick**. This quality improvement initiative, supported by the Department's **Curriculum Development Fund**, combined clinical expertise with lived experience to highlight practical strategies for centering personhood, language, and shared decision-making in everyday care.

Early feedback has been very positive and strongly supportive of the initiative. Full evaluation results are currently being analyzed—**stay tuned** for the upcoming paper detailing outcomes and next steps for advancing person-centered approaches across the residency curriculum.



Left: Sarah Lefurgey (RCMP Cpl., ret.)
Right: Dr. Margaret (Leigh) Meldrum
Photo credit: Dr. Abigale MacLellan

Annual Writing Competition Update

All submissions for the Department of Psychiatry's annual writing competition are now in the hands of our judging panel, who are carefully reviewing the entries. We anticipate announcing the winners in early October, and the winning piece(s) will be featured in the next edition of *Headlines*.



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 **November 2025**.

Please send all submissions to **Penney.Miller@nshealth.ca**



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