



Psychedelics and the Use in Treatment of Mental Health

PANELISTS

Dr. Prachi Soneji • Dr. Monique Moller • Dr. Sabrina Akhtar

WITH

Dr. Stephanie Zhou • Dr. Nikki Bozinoff



Mental Health
and Addictions

Please introduce yourself in the chat!

Your name,
Your community,
Your X (Twitter)
handle

Interested in becoming a
speaker at our CoPs?
Send us an email with your
name & topic(s) of interest to
practisingwell@ocfp.on.ca

@OntarioCollege
#PractisingWell

Your Panelists: Disclosures

Dr. Monique Moller

- Relationships with financial sponsors (including honoraria): OCFP Practising Well CoP speaker

Dr. Prachi Soneji

- Relationships with financial sponsors (including honoraria): OCFP Practising Well CoP speaker

Dr. Sabrina Akhtar

- Relationships with financial sponsors (including honoraria): OCFP Practising Well CoP speaker

Disclosures

Dr. Stephanie Zhou @stephanieyzhou

Relationships with financial sponsors (including honoraria):

- Ontario College of Family Physicians – Practising Well Scientific Planning Committee
- Canadian Medical Association – Honoraria for practice management lectures
- Department of Family and Community Medicine (University of Toronto)
- Toronto Public Health – Board of Directors member

Dr. Nikki Bozinoff

Relationships with financial sponsors (including honoraria):

- Ontario College of Family Physicians – Practising Well Implementation Group Member, CoP Speaker
- META:PHI for guideline review (OUD)
- Womenmind
- Department of Family and Community Medicine (University of Toronto)
- CFPC
- CAMH Foundation
- CIHR

Mitigating Bias

Disclosure of financial support



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Potential conflicts



N/A

Mitigating potential bias



The Scientific Planning Committee (SPC) has control over the choice of topics and speakers.

Content has been developed according to the standards and expectations of the Mainpro+ certification program.

The program content was reviewed by the SPC.

Practising Well Self-Learning Program

The Practising Well CoP is certified for self-learning credits!

Earn **1-credit-per-hour** for reviewing the recording and resources from **past CoP sessions**. The self-learning program is certified for up to 63 Mainpro+ credits.



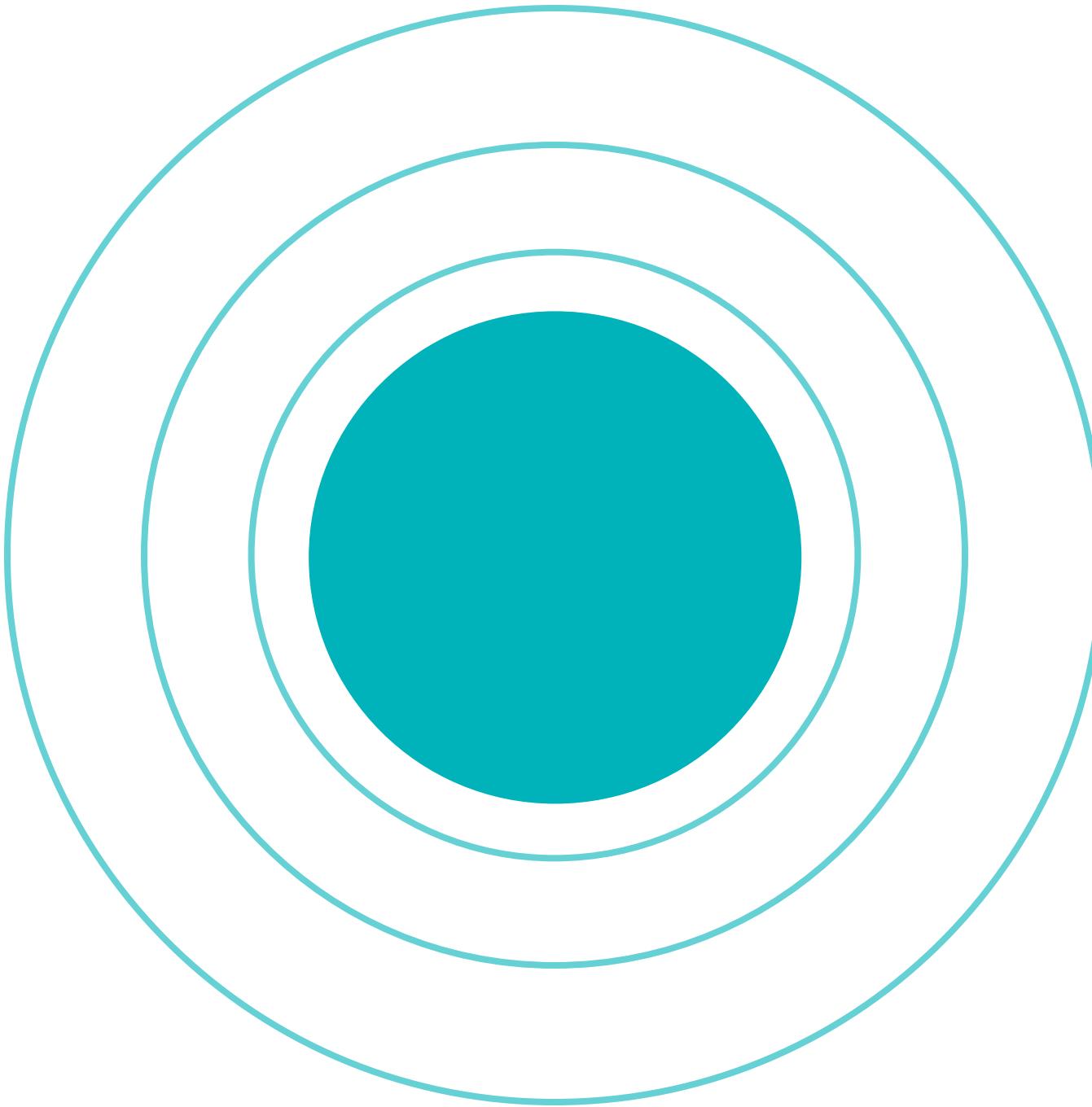
**Learn More and
Participate**

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the lands on which we are hosting this meeting include the traditional territories of many nations.

The OCFP and DFCM recognizes that the many injustices experienced by the Indigenous Peoples of what we now call Canada continue to affect their health and well-being. The OCFP and DFCM respects that Indigenous people have rich cultural and traditional practices that have been known to improve health outcomes.

I invite all of us to reflect on the territories you are calling in from as we commit ourselves to gaining knowledge; forging a new, culturally safe relationship; and contributing to reconciliation.



Your Panelists



Dr. Monique Moller

Dr. Prachi Soneji

Dr. Sabrina Akhtar

Psychedelics and the Use in Treatment of Mental Health

Psychedelics and the Use in Treatment of Mental Health

OCFP Practicing Well CoP - December 10, 2025

Dr. Monique Moller, MD CCFP (AM) MSc

Staff Physician - Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) & University Health Network (UHN)
Assistant Professor, Division of Mental Health and Addiction, Department of Family and Community Medicine; Department
of Pharmacology and Toxicology, Temerty Medicine,
University of Toronto

What is a psychedelic?

- From Greek *psykhē* "mind" + *dēloun* "make visible, reveal," from *dēlos* "visible, clear
- "*mind manifesting*" molecules
- Amplifiers of the human psyche
- Compounds that induce a 'Non-Ordinary State of Consciousness consisting of various stages of ego-release and an often startling alteration of perceptions.
 - Empathogens; Psychomimetic; Entheogens, Psychoplastogens

What are these compounds?

- **Serotonergic psychedelics** (agonize 5HT_{2A} receptor) - LSD, psilocybin, mescaline, DMT
- **Empathogens/Entactogens** (release serotonin) - MDMA
- **Dissociative** (NMDA receptor antagonist) - Ketamine
- **Cannabinoids** (CB1 receptor agonist) - Cannabis
- **'Other'** – Ibogaine, Cathinones

Despite initial neurotransmitter targets, these compounds appear to modulate networks within an area of known relevance for consciousness, identifying a biologically plausible candidate for their subjective effects.

Intro to the Default Mode Network (DMN)

- Crucial in everyday coconsciousness; helps us function in the world
 - Reducing Valve – so we can cope with the constant stimuli
- High activity in the DMN linked with:
 - Awareness of ourselves → sense of self; 'ego'
 - Social thinking → understanding what others are feeling
 - Thinking about past or future
- Lowest activity in DMN linked with:
 - Focusing on specific tasks, activities that don't require self-reflection

DMN and Mental Health

- Hyperactivity in certain regions of DMN
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Chronic pain
 - Eating Disorders
 - Obsessive Compulsive Disorders
 - Substance Use Disorders



The DMN & Psychedelics

- Psychedelics dissolve the usual connections in the DMN
- When activity reduced here, ‘our ego shifts from foreground to background.’
 - Similar to when Galileo used the telescope to show that Earth wasn’t the Centre of the universe
- Ego-dissolution – loss of a sense of self;
 - The boundary between the self and the world around you disappears.
 - “Mystical Experience”
 - “a sense of unity” or “the experience of becoming one with all that exists.”
 - strongest mediator of therapeutic efficacy in addiction.



Mechanisms of Psychedelic Compounds

1. Induced neuroplasticity
2. Alterations in brain networks connectivity
3. Alterations in emotion processing
4. Alterations in reward and stress processing
5. Increased sense of social connectedness and sense of oneness
6. Meaning making of experiences; mystical experience

Transformations Catalyzed by PAP

Increase psychological flexibility, leaving individuals to feel more open and less avoidant by activating mindfulness, acceptance, commitment, and behavior change processes.

Emotions become more available, when previously they may have been numbed or protected by psychological defensiveness.

Often, new insights can arise and connections can be made around past experiences, and our current patterns or behaviours.

*** As defensiveness is reduced, these newfound feelings of vulnerability and sensitivity can lead to increased fear and anxiety, hence the necessity of ++ supports

“Fresh Tracks”



“Fresh Tracks”



Psychedelics and Substance Use Disorders

- Most work on psychedelics and substance use disorders was conducted for alcohol use disorder. A range of classic psychedelics (LSD, psilocybin, and ayahuasca) appear to be beneficial for facilitating both reduced drinking and abstinence.
- Small clinical trials have also shown promising initial results for both tobacco and opioid use disorders.
- A few small trials looking at ketamine to treat alcohol and cocaine use disorders show promising results
 - Measures of abstinence, substance use, psychological and psychosocial outcomes, craving, and withdrawal reported positive results.
- Data is limited ; more research is needed
- Health Canada and SAP has not approved cases as of yet

Psychedelics and Adolescents

- Adolescents younger than 18 years are typically excluded from research due to ethical and legal challenges
- Three trial registrations and one trial plan showed involvement of participants younger than 18 years (MDMA or psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy as an intervention for adolescents with PTSD, ASD with social anxiety, or self-harm); none of the trials were completed and no trial findings have been published.

“Given that many medications are used off-label in adolescents, we argue for cautious, ethically grounded research-starting with older adolescents with the highest foreseeable benefit-risk ratio due to special circumstances-to better understand the potential risks and benefits of psychedelic therapies for this vulnerable population.”

Your Panelists



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Psychedelics and the Use in Treatment of Mental Health

Psychedelic Assisted Psychotherapy

Perspectives from a Community Family Physician

Dr. Prachi Soneji MD CCFP
Community FHO Doctor (Toronto)

Conflicts of Interest: None to Declare
Being paid an honorarium to be here today

How does a Community Family Doc end up offering PAP to their patient?

- 2021 - COVID & Burnout
- A Serendipitous meeting
- A Little Curiosity
- Engaging in Training
- Building Community
- DESIRE

Patient AH

- 42 yr old mother of 2 young kids
- No previous mental health history
- Diagnosis of PTSD in 2021 secondary to a specific trauma
- Previously working as a Medical Secretary
- Unable to Work due to severity and persistence of symptoms
- No hx of CAD, stroke, arrhythmia, seizures, HTN, Liver/Kidney Dx

Patient AH

- Tried 3 meds with no improvement
- In ongoing therapy for herself and her children
- Had heard about and researched PAP in PTSD
- Baseline PCL score was 40 , PHQ 9 was 12
- Had a strong desire to not be on medications

Patient AH

PROTECTIVE FACTORS:

- Patient Driven
- Already had a therapist with good rapport
- Supportive family and friends
- Previous high level of functioning
- Strong doctor patient relationship (12 + yrs)
- Openness without Expectations

Special Access Application

- Provide rationale & methodology
- Clearly delineate patient story, symptoms, impairments and impact on QOL
- Include Baseline Measures
- Indicate all treatments tried and their outcomes
- Provide list of studies showing evidence for your intervention
- Indicate Pharmaceutical Company info

canada.ca

Special Access Program
Form A - Patient specific request - C08.010(1)

Section A: Practitioner information

Practitioner's name: (First Last)

Hospital or clinic name:

Practitioner's address:

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone #: _____ Fax #: _____

Email: _____

If alternate contact is available complete section below

Alternate contact name: (First Last)

Telephone #: _____ Fax #: _____

Email: _____

Shipping information

Send drug c/o:

In-patient hospital pharmacy Practitioner's office
 Blood bank Government agency depot
 Nuclear medicine
 Community Pharmacy

Shipping address:

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/documents/services/drugs-health-products/special-access/drugs/special-access-program-form-a-patient-specific-request-c08-010-1-en.pdf>

Patient AH

- 5 Preparation Sessions
- 2 of 3 approved Dosing Sessions with MDMA completed
- Minimum of 3 Integration Sessions after MDMA Sessions
- No longer meeting criteria for PTSD
- Back to work as a medical secretary
- Continues to integrate her experiences through journalling, therapy, exposure to nature, meditation and occasional check-ins with me PRN
- Describes her experience as “profound and life changing”
- Did not experience any unexpected adverse reactions

From Daunting to Doable!

DAUNTING	DOABLE!!
SAP Application	Collaboration is Key
DOCUMENTATION	AI SCRIBE & Templates
APPOINTMENT BOOKINGS	Strategic Bookings & Deroster
FEELING READY	Experiential Training & Community Support
SPACE	Patient Home vs. Rental Space
RENUMERATION	K007 (timed codes)

Your Panelists



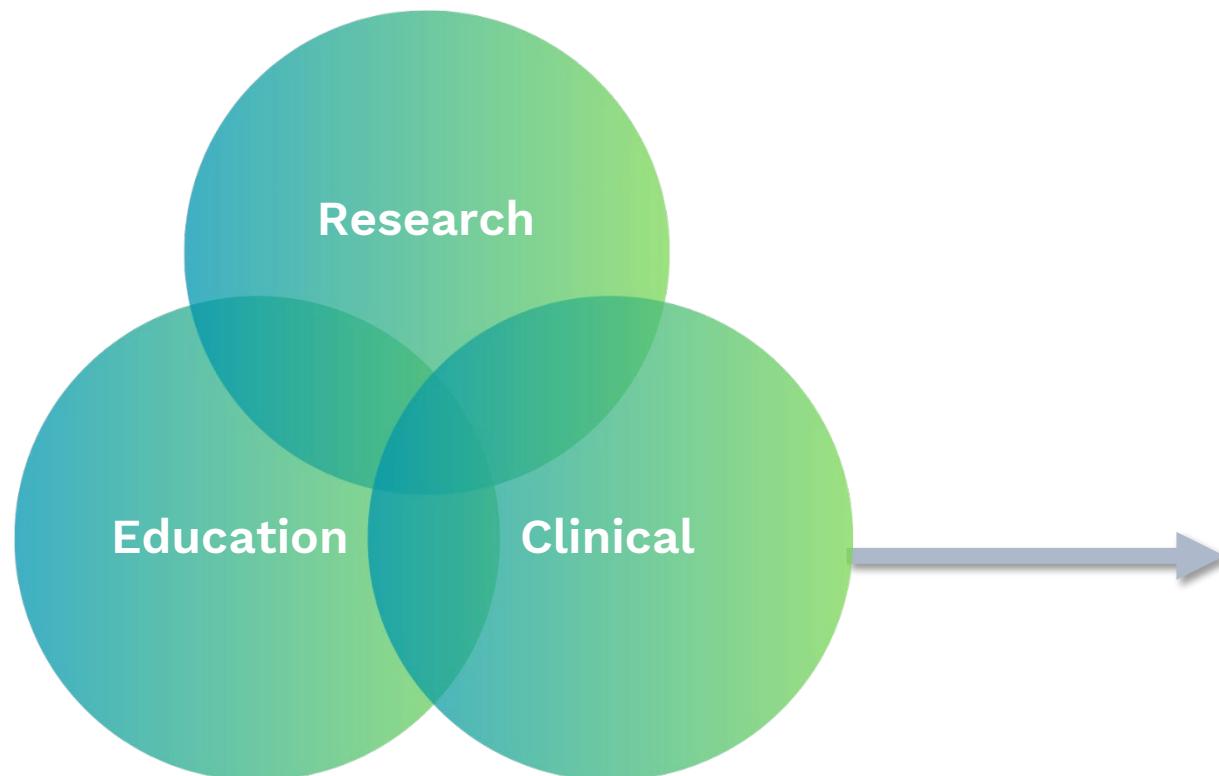
Dr. Prachi Soneji

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Dr. Sabrina Akhtar

Psychedelics and the Use in Treatment of Mental Health

UHN Psychedelic Psychotherapy Research Group



Dr. Sabrina Akhtar
Medical Lead
UHN Psychedelic Psychotherapy Clinic

UHN Psychedelic Psychotherapy Clinic

Aims of the Clinic

1.



Treat patients through Health Canada's Special Access Program

2.



Collect real world outcome data

3.



Train psychedelic therapists

UHN Psychedelic Psychotherapy Clinic

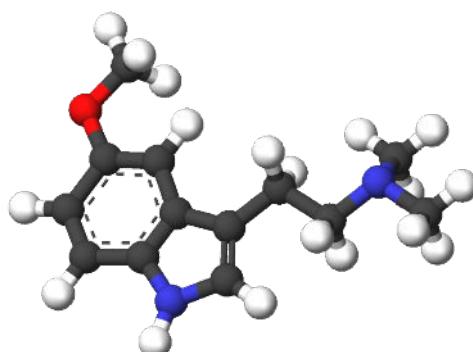
Initial Indications

1.



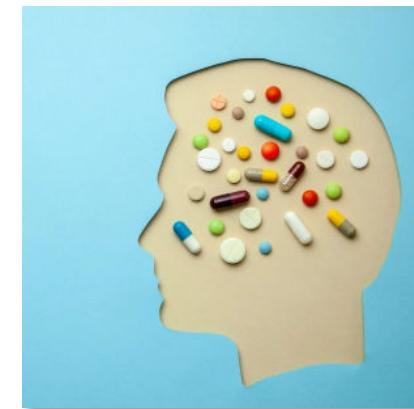
Psilocybin Therapy for
End-of-Life Distress

2.



MDMA-assisted
Psychotherapy for PTSD

3.



Concurrent Substance Use
Disorders

UHN Psychedelic Psychotherapy Clinic

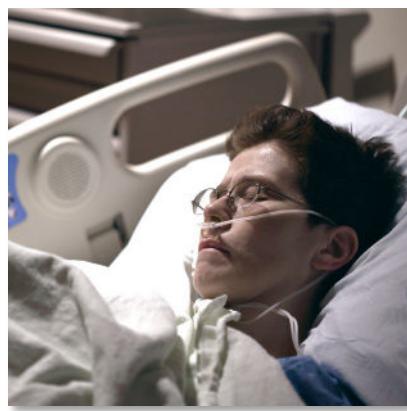
Patient Population

1.



Diverse

2.



Medically
fragile

3.



Not eligible for
clinical trials

UHN Psychedelic Psychotherapy Clinic

Training

Real world
experience for our
therapists

Video recording of all
sessions for treatment
adherence

Peer and expert
supervision

Community of practice
to learn and grow
together

UHN Psychedelic Psychotherapy Clinic

Data Collection

Real world
outcomes

Contribute to evidence
base for safety and
efficacy

Surveys and focus groups for
program evaluation and
quality improvement

UHN Psychedelic Psychotherapy Research Group Clinic

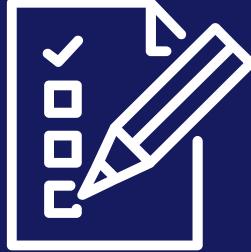
Program Cancelled

I had intended to present these slides with our program live and underway. We were fully funded through philanthropy and launched in the spring 2025.

UHN Psychiatry leadership changed at the same time, and as of 2 weeks ago a funding withdrawal by UHN leadership halted the program.

I am sharing the work here nonetheless because the need, the vision, and the momentum remain important for patient care at the end of life and across refractory mental health conditions.

Resources Tools



Links to resources shared today will be sent to participants following the session.

Tools and Resources

Resource	Link
Ketamine Assisted Therapy Association (KATA) Guidelines	https://katacanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/KATA_OMA_Psychedelic_MIG_Practice_Stands_Recommendations_Outpatient.pdf
How to find an Ethical & Skilled Therapist	https://www.psychedelicassociation.net/find-an-ethical-therapist
Best Practices for Psychedelic Practitioners	https://www.psychedelicassociation.net/best-practices
Psychedelic Training Programs	https://www.psychedelicassociation.net/resources/education
Psychedelic Association of Canada- YouTube	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqYHahyzy22_p4_NktfUKMg
Psychedelic Therapy Access and Training	https://therapsil.ca/about/
Psychedelic Access-Community of Practice	https://www.mapscanada.org/psychedelics-access/
List of ongoing clinical trials can be searched here	https://clinicaltrials.gov/
Health Canada's special access programs (SAP application form can be found here)	https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/special-access/drugs.html
UHN Psychedelic Psychotherapy Research Group	https://www.uhn.ca/MentalHealth/Research/Psychedelic-Psychotherapy-Research

Resources Education

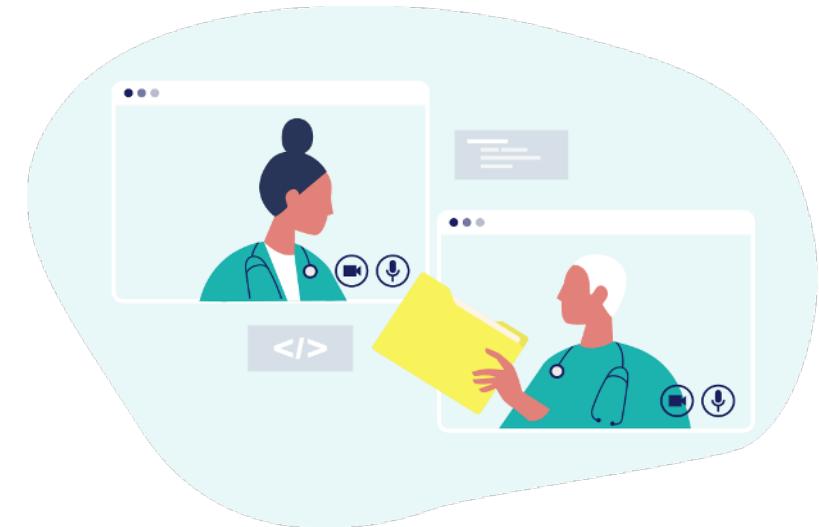


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Mentorship Program - Connect with a Peer Guide!

Interested in continuing your learning journey while prioritizing your own well-being?

Connect with another family physician through OCFP's one-to-one mentorship program for educational support on topics related to physician wellness, mental health, chronic pain and substance use disorders.



Examples of topics Peer Learners have explored:

- Guidance for early career/work-life balance
- ADHD and approach to management



Scan the QR code for more information!



[Peer Connect](#)



practisingwell@ocfp.on.ca

UPCOMING!



Antimicrobial Stewardship in Primary Care Audit and Feedback to Improve Antibiotic Prescribing



January 16, 2026
12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

FREE

[Register Now!](#)



Early Years and Resident Survey



Survey 1: Supporting Early-Career Family Physicians

OCFP is gathering insights to **better support members in their first five years of practice**
Your feedback will help develop: Practical tools and resources and knowledge translation materials.



Scan to complete
Early-Career Survey

Survey 2: Supporting Family Medicine Residents

OCFP is gathering insights to support residents as they **transition into practice**
Your feedback will help: Improve the Transition to Practice Guide, develop practical tools and resources and offer educational content that meets your needs.



Scan to complete
Resident Survey

Details for Both Surveys

Deadline: Friday, December 19 at 5:00 PM

Time to complete: Less than 10 minutes

Upon survey completion: Enter a draw for a **\$200 Amazon.ca gift card**

Upcoming Community of Practice

Perinatal Mental Health: Practical Screening and Support for Family Physicians

with Dr. Alison Shea, Dr. Milena Forte, Dr. Ariel Dalfen

**January 28, 2026
8:00am – 9:00am**

[Register Now](#)

practisingwell@ocfp.on.ca



This one-credit-per-hour Group Learning program has been certified by the College of Family Physicians of Canada and the Ontario Chapter for up to 1 Mainpro+ credit. The Practising Well Community of Practice includes a series of planned live, interactive sessions. Each session is worth 1 Mainpro+ credits, for up to a total of 12 credits.