



# 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**

December 10, 2025

Practising Well: Your Community of Practice

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](mailto: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



This program has received funding from the Ontario Ministry of Health and in-kind support from the Ontario College of Family Physicians and the Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of Toronto.

## 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.



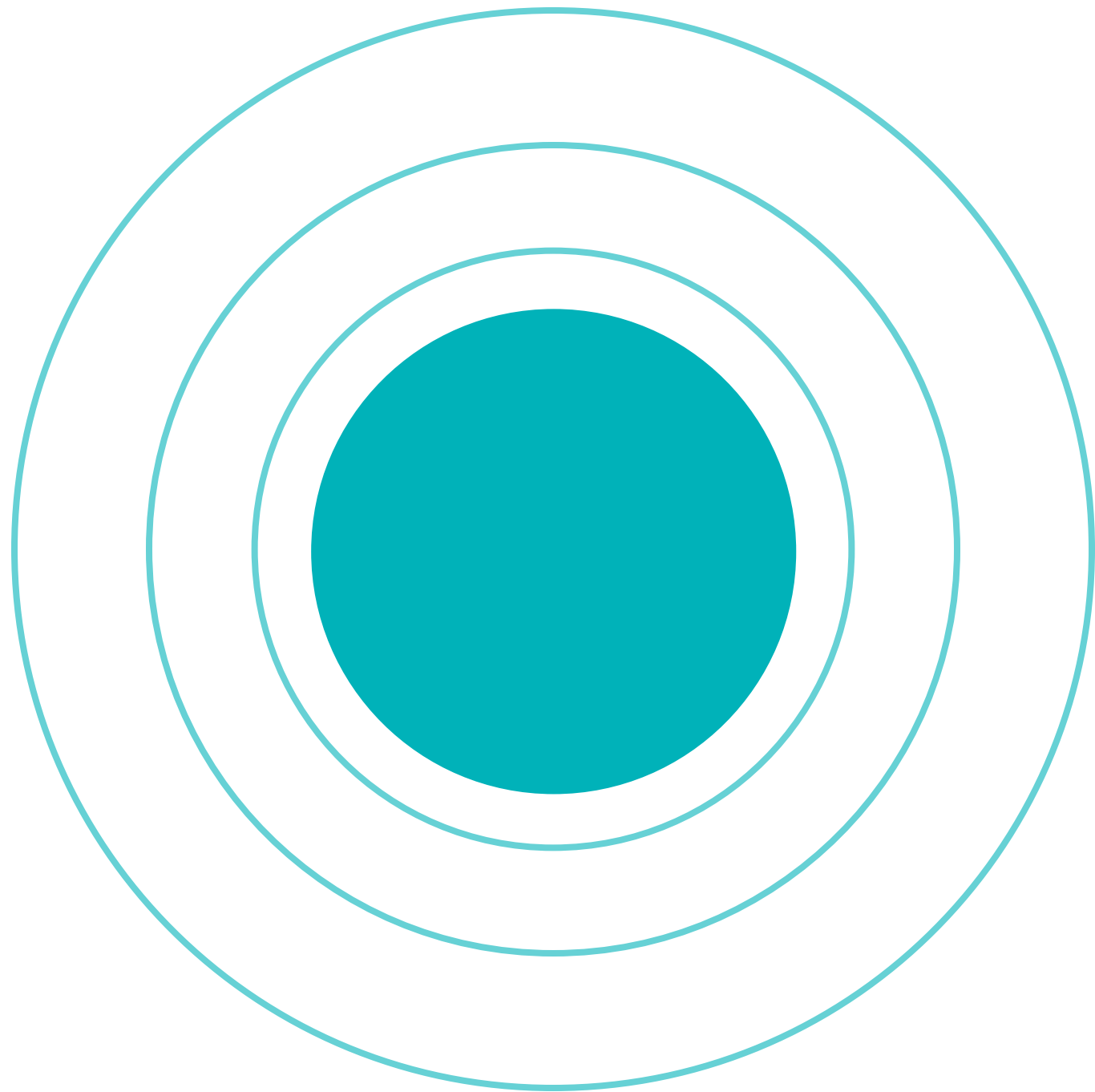
**Learn More and  
Participate**

# 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<sub>2A</sub> 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



Dr. Monique Moller

Dr. Prachi Soneji

Dr. Sabrina Akhtar

**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

- Trialed 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

History Bookmarks Window Help

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:

<input type="radio"/> In-patient hospital pharmacy	<input type="radio"/> Practitioner's office	<input type="radio"/> Nuclear medicine
<input type="radio"/> Blood bank	<input type="radio"/> Government agency depot	<input type="radio"/> 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!

<i>DAUNTING</i>	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



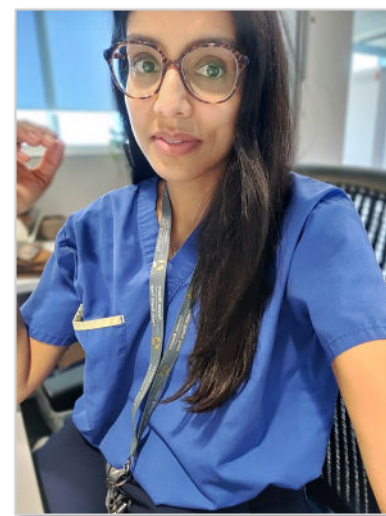
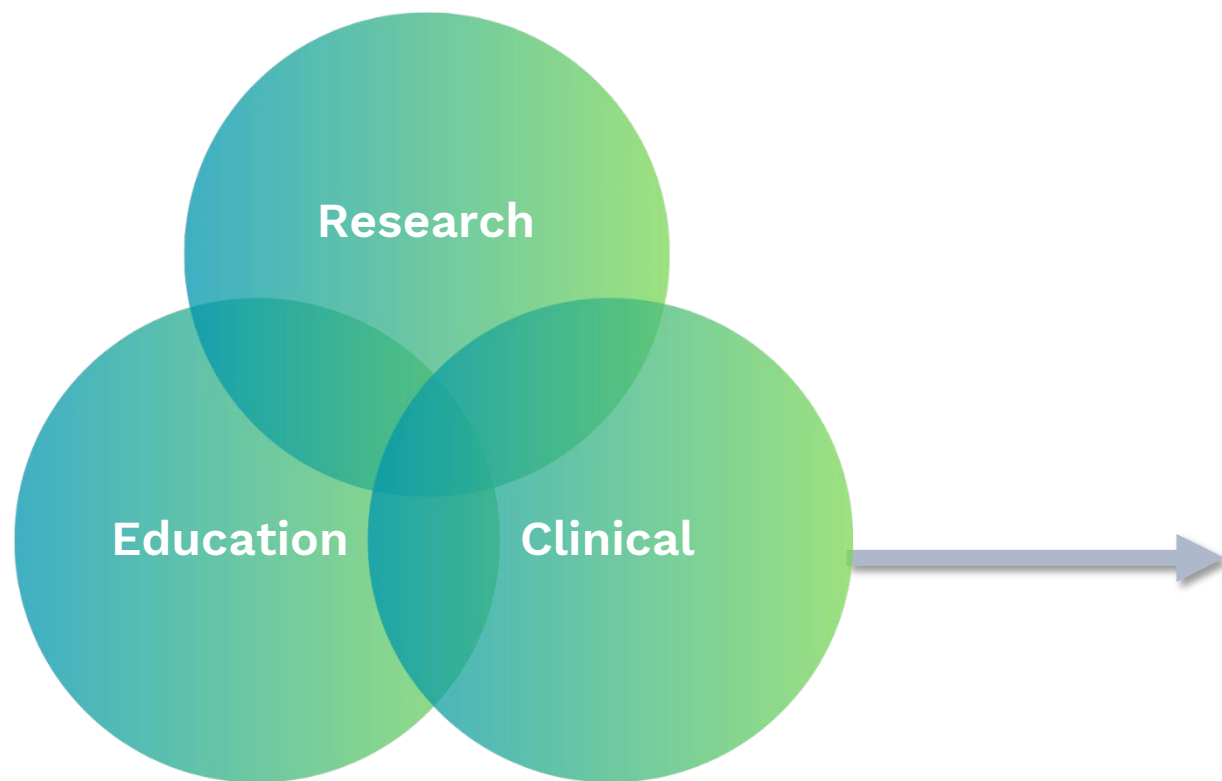
Dr. Prachi Soneji

Dr. Monique Moller

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

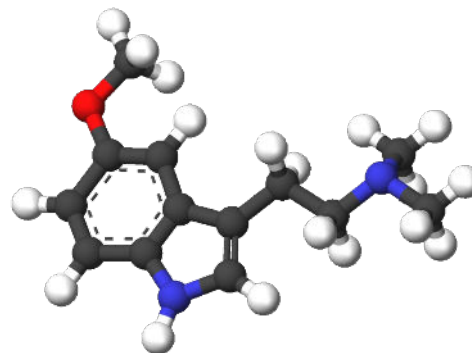
## Initial Indications

1.



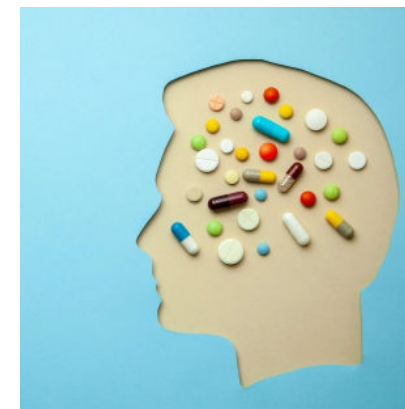
Psilocybin Therapy for  
End-of-Life Distress

2.



MDMA-assisted  
Psychotherapy for PTSD

3.



Concurrent Substance Use  
Disorders

# UHN Psychedelic Psychotherapy Clinic

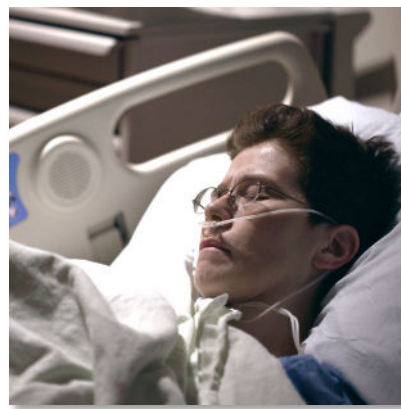
## Patient Population

1.



Diverse

2.



Medically  
fragile

3.



Not eligible for  
clinical trials

# UHN Psychedelic Psychotherapy Clinic

## Training

Real world  
experience for our  
therapists

Peer and expert  
supervision

Video recording of all  
sessions for treatment  
adherence

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
<b>Ketamine Assisted Therapy Association (KATA) Guidelines</b>	<a href="https://katacanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/KATA_OMA_Psychedelic_MIG_Practice_Standards_Recommendations_Outpatient.pdf">https://katacanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/KATA_OMA_Psychedelic_MIG_Practice_Standards_Recommendations_Outpatient.pdf</a>
<b>How to find an Ethical &amp; Skilled Therapist</b>	<a href="https://www.psychedelicassociation.net/find-an-ethical-therapist">https://www.psychedelicassociation.net/find-an-ethical-therapist</a>
<b>Best Practices for Psychedelic Practitioners</b>	<a href="https://www.psychedelicassociation.net/best-practices">https://www.psychedelicassociation.net/best-practices</a>
<b>Psychedelic Training Programs</b>	<a href="https://www.psychedelicassociation.net/resources/education">https://www.psychedelicassociation.net/resources/education</a>
<b>Psychedelic Association of Canada- YouTube</b>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqYHahzy22_p4_NktfUKMg">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqYHahzy22_p4_NktfUKMg</a>
<b>Psychedelic Therapy Access and Training</b>	<a href="https://therapsil.ca/about/">https://therapsil.ca/about/</a>
<b>Psychedelic Access-Community of Practice</b>	<a href="https://www.mapscanada.org/psychedelics-access/">https://www.mapscanada.org/psychedelics-access/</a>
<b>List of ongoing clinical trials can be searched here</b>	<a href="https://clinicaltrials.gov/">https://clinicaltrials.gov/</a>
<b>Health Canada's special access programs (SAP application form can be found here)</b>	<a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/special-access/drugs.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/special-access/drugs.html</a>
<b>UHN Psychedelic Psychotherapy Research Group</b>	<a href="https://www.uhn.ca/MentalHealth/Research/Psychedelic-Psychotherapy-Research">https://www.uhn.ca/MentalHealth/Research/Psychedelic-Psychotherapy-Research</a>



# Resources Education



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

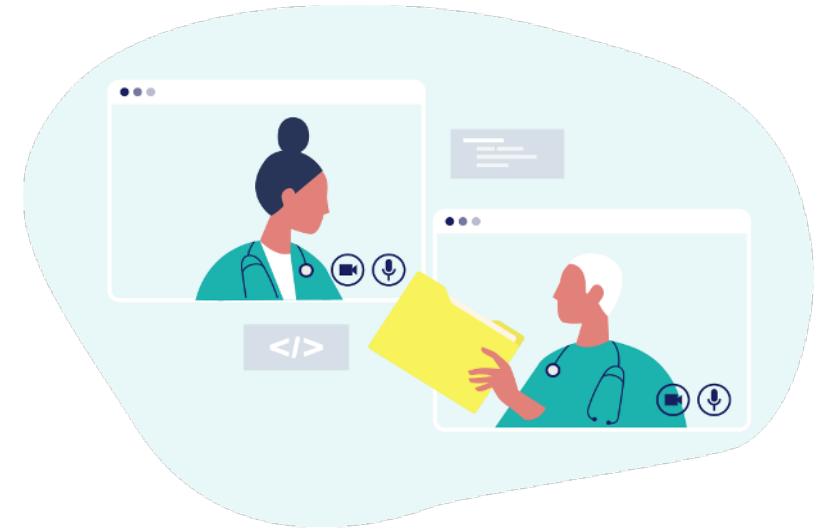
# Mentorship Program - Connect with a Peer Guide!

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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.