BUSINESS CONNECT

EmpowerMen - Law Enforcement Conference 2025

222 Broadway Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0R3, Canada

Scan for live agenda

NOVEMBER 24

Registration

03:00PM – 07:00PM

Fort Garry Hotel - Lobby area

Informal Meet-Up

06:00PM – 08:00PM

Fort Garry Hotel Lobby / Oval Room

POWERED BY

NOVEMBER 25

Registration and Networking Breakfast

08:00AM – 08:30AM

Provencher Ballroom

Opening Ceremony

08:30AM – 09:30AM

Provencher Ballroom

8:30am - Welcome/Intro to conference by Stephen Moorgan

8:35am - Housekeeping by Stephen Moorgan

8:45am - Opening Prayer and Song/Land Acknowledgement/Smudging by Aaron Leask

8:55am - Candle Lighting by Dina Unger

8:55am - Greeting EmpowerMen Project by Hennes Doltze

9:00am - Greetings Executive Director MaMaWi by Tammy Christensen

9:05am - Greetings Chief of Police by Gene Bowers

9:15am - Wrap up of opening ceremony + Introduce keynote speaker by Stephen Moorgan

Keynote 1 - Normalising the Buying of Sexual Acts and Violence Against Women and Girls

09:30AM – 10:30AM

Provencher Ballroom

This presentation will focus on the consequences of legalizing and normalizing the buying of sexual acts by men and boys and how this normalization is an accelerator of sex and gender-based violence that not only harms individual women and girls, but also the buyer of sexual acts and the wider society.



SPEAKER

Reem Alsalem - United Nations

Reem Alsalem is the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls and its causes and consequences, appointed in July 2021 by the UN Human Rights Council. She holds a master's in international relations from the American University in Cairo, Egypt (2001) and a master's in human Rights Law from the University of Oxford, United Kingdom (2003).

Reem Alsalem is an independent consultant on gender issues, the rights of refugees and migrants, transitional justice, and humanitarian response. She has consulted extensively for United Nations departments, agencies and programmes such as UN-Women, OHCHR, UNICEF and IOM, as well as for non-governmental organizations, think tanks and academia. Previously, she worked as an international civil servant, serving with the UNHCR in thirteen countries. During her service, she has planned, implemented, and monitored programs that served to protect survivors of gender-based violence, particularly women and girls.

Health/Coffee Break

10:30AM – 11:00AM

Provencher Ballroom

Keynote 2 - Empowering Survivors: Ontario's Human Trafficking Legal Support Program

11:00AM – 12:00PM

Provencher Ballroom

Kelly will provide an overview of Ontario's Human Trafficking Legal Support Program which provides free, confidential legal advice and representation to survivors of all ages, as well as to parents, guardians, and customary caregivers of trafficked children or those at risk. The program offers an avenue to explore all available options for exiting a trafficking situation and is the first of its kind in North America.



SPEAKER

Kelly Beale - Ontario Ministry of Justice

Kelly Beale was a Crown Attorney in Toronto from 2001-2017. She prosecuted all types of criminal offences, specializing in child abuse and exploitation, multi-victim and sexual violence cases. She was a designated mentor for junior crowns on sexual violence prosecutions and a designated human trafficking prosecution crown.

Since 2017, she has been the lead-counsel for Ontario's Legal Support Program for Victims and Survivors of Human Trafficking. It is the first of its kind in North America and Kelly works closely with anti-human trafficking partners, justice and service providers.

As independent counsel for survivors of human trafficking, Kelly provides confidential legal advice and support to survivors across the province. This includes exploring other available options for protection against a trafficker for those who do not want to (or are afraid to) go to police, such as obtaining a human trafficking restraining order, preventing traffickers from having any contact with the survivor or others at risk.

Kelly is passionate about assisting survivors to access meaningful supports to provide for their emotional and physical safety while applying a trauma-informed approach; continuing to assist survivors with their changing needs at various stages of their journey; and, empowering survivors to determine and control the processes, services, and supports they choose to engage with.

Lunch

12:00PM – 01:00PM

Provencher Ballroom

Workshop 1/A1 - MMIR in Minnesota: Survival Sex, Sex Trafficking, and Pathways to Violence & Disappearance

01:00PM – 02:00PM

LaVerendrye Room

This workshop examines the connection between Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) in Minnesota, survival sex, and sex trafficking as drivers of vulnerability to violence and disappearance. Centered in Indigenous knowledge and survivor-informed practice, the workshop highlights key pathways into exploitation, the realities of survival-based choices, and the ongoing impacts of criminalization and stigma.



SPEAKER

Taylor Wencel - Minnesota Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office

Taylor Wencel has spent several years working with domestic violence and sexual assault, and human trafficking victim/survivors to help individuals with case management needs and community resources. Taylor also has experience working with protocol development with law enforcement, social workers, and community providers, while hosting multi-disciplinary.

She also has experience working with domestic violence offenders and providing psycho-educational classes to help prevent the spread of the epidemic of violence within communities. Holding a bachelor's degree in criminal justice/sociology from Minnesota State University Moorhead, Taylor has collaborated with the North Dakota Human Trafficking Task Force, providing vital case management support to victims/survivors. In 2021, Taylor transitioned to Minnesota, serving the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) Victim specialist for the Minnesota Human Trafficking Investigators Task Force (MNHITF) with The LINK program for a year.

Taylor has been the Education Coordinator for the MN BCA Predatory Crimes Section, has designed and delivered training programs and workshops for law enforcement, social workers, schools, and community members on topics related to crime prevention, victim support, human trafficking, as well as Internet Crimes Against Children and sextortion education. Taylor is now the Intelligence Specialist for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office for the state of Minnesota. She helps with technical assistance, data collection, analysis of cases, trainings, and is the subject matter expert for human trafficking for the office.



SPEAKER

Ana Negrete - Minnesota Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office

Ana G. Negrete currently serves as the Interim Director for the State of Minnesota's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) O ce, where she leads statewide e orts to address the MMIR epidemic. In this role, Ana collaborates closely with community stakeholders to confront the crisis through a coordinated and culturally grounded approach.

With more than 25 years of experience in the field, Ana has dedicated her career to public service with a strong focus on justice system processes, addressing racial disparities, and uplifting Indigenous communities. She is deeply committed to elevating the voices of MMIR-impacted families, ensuring their lived experiences and leadership guide the state's response to this ongoing crisis.

Throughout her tenure with the MMIR O ce, Ana has led impactful initiatives such as statewide presentations, public awareness campaigns—including a powerful billboard project—and the development of a regionally deployed search kit program. She has also played a key role in supporting families as they navigate complex systems in the pursuit of justice and healing.

Ana's leadership is grounded in equity, advocacy, and community empowerment—driven by a lifelong dedication to meaningful, systemic change.

Workshop 2/A2 - MACY: Supporting and Empowering Young People in Manitoba

01:00PM – 02:00PM

Provencher Ballroom

This presentation will inform attendees about the office of the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth. This includes an overview of the different teams and the work we do, with an added focus on the Serious Injury Reviews & Investigations program. Attendees will learn about their responsibility to report serious injuries to our office, and what happens after a report is made.



SPEAKER

Sherry Gott - Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth

Sherry Gott is a proud member of the Sapotaweyak Cree Nation and speaks the Swampy Cree dialect. Sherry is a survivor of both the Residential School System and Day School. She acknowledges the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who have graciously offered her learnings to help her walk a path of humility. As a social worker, she is guided by these teachings and walks this path with children, youth, and family members.

Sherry is the first Indigenous Cree woman to be appointed into the role of Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth. She does not take this role lightly and appreciates the importance of working together to support all children, youth, and families. Sherry has over 30 years of experience working in the areas of child welfare, education, and mental health. Her most memorable experiences come from working with 3-to-5-year-old children in the Headstart program. Those children gave her insight into the importance of unconditional love.

Since October 2022, Sherry has served as the Manitoba Advocate, overseeing the day-to-day operations of the MACY office and fiercely advocating for young people across the province. She has played an integral role in building relationships with community partners, Indigenous Governing Bodies, governments, and other key stakeholders.

Sherry is an active member of the Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates (CCCYA), a group of child and youth advocates from across Canada. Together the group explores common issues and trends impacting young people, advocates for change, and presents a united front in upholding the rights of children under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Workshop 3/A3 - How Supporting Parents Helps Trafficking Victims

01:00PM – 02:00PM

Gateway/Tache room

Feelings of helplessness and isolation are common among parents of human trafficking victims, but these parents may also have unique opportunities to help disrupt the control of a trafficker. In this workshop John Cassells and Jennifer Guest will share encouraging data and stories that show the value in supporting whole families when exploitation occurs.



SPEAKER

John Cassells - Lifeworthy

John Cassells is long-time anti-human trafficking advocate and the founding Director of Lifeworthy. In 2014, John began building the Torontobased Lifeworthy project to support individuals and families impacted by sex industry involvement. In 2016, John launched Parents Hope, a new Lifeworthy program providing assessment, referrals and ongoing support for parents/family members of exploited loved ones.



SPEAKER

Jennifer Guest - Lifeworthy

Jennifer Guest has been volunteering with Lifeworthy's Parents Hope program since 2021. As a therapist, Jennifer specializes in areas of need that are especially applicable to this group, including anxiety and depression, self-esteem, and grief and loss. Jennifer contributes to the Parents Hope support group meetings and provides monthly workshops on topics that are especially relevant to participants.

Workshop 4/B1 - From Recognition to Restoration: How Survivor Centered Tech is Reshaping the Frontline Response to Human Trafficking

02:05PM – 03:05PM

LaVerendrye Room

Human trafficking is changing, and our tools must evolve too. This session introduces two survivor-led technologies -- an AI-powered, trauma-informed recognition tool for law enforcement, and a secure referral platform connecting survivors to aftercare without re-traumatization. Discover how survivor-designed innovation is bridging the gap between identification and true restoration.



SPEAKER

Dina Unger - Even4One

Dina is the co-founder, CEO, and heart and soul behind EVENforONE's acute advocacy-based referral database and networking system, which is designed to help survivors/overcomers of trafficking reclaim their agency and voice as they navigate the intense journey from their exploitative circumstances to supported stability within safe and vetted aftercare programs.

As a Lived Experience Expert, a Credentialed Advocate, and 20 years of experience in counter trafficking, she brings a depth of personal experience and compassion to her process of championing the needs of survivors and helping them find and access the resources available to them in their pursuit of healing.

Dina's fierce Mumma-bear heart motivates her to fight every day to ensure trafficking survivors discover hope and are given a chance at a new life.

She also sits on numerous committees and groups, including the Global Association of Human Trafficking Scholars, The Exodus Road's International Survivor-Centered Advisory Committee, the G100: a Group of 100 Global Women Leaders, and the Saskatchewan Hospitality Committee that is helping to inform the provincial strategy to combat human trafficking. Recently, she was also invited, with many other survivors, to offer her voice and experience to inform Canada's new National Human Trafficking Strategy.

Workshop 6/B2 - Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Addresses Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking

02:05PM – 03:05PM

Provencher Ballroom

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre has several programs designed to address the issues of sexual exploitation, with this session providing an overview of the important work being done. Hear from Samantha Brown of Cedar Circle, a program focused on helping individuals exit sexual exploitation and build pathways to safety and belonging, Chris Molloy and Alexis Delaurier of EmpowerMen, who deliver youth workshops and community trainings on preventing exploitation, and others.

POWERED BY



SPEAKER

Samantha Brown - Cedar Circle at Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

Samantha Brown is an Anishinaabe woman from southern Ontario who leads the Cedar Circle at Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre in Winnipeg — a program focused on helping individuals exit sexual exploitation and build pathways to safety and belonging. Her work weaves together Indigenous laws, land-based teachings, and system-level strategy to create spaces where healing and accountability can coexist.

As a manager, advocate, and community builder, Samantha is known for her ability to bridge worlds — bringing ceremony into policy rooms and grounding partnerships in relationships rather than transactions. She has worked across multiple sectors to strengthen culturally safe responses to exploitation and violence, always centring the voices of those with lived experience.



SPEAKER

Chris Molloy - EmpowerMen

Chris Molloy is an experienced social services professional, specializing in supporting youth. With a strong background in crisis response, youth advocacy, and community outreach, he has worked extensively with at-risk individuals to create safe and supportive environments. His leadership experience includes mentoring teams, coordinating care strategies, and collaborating with agencies to improve youth outcomes.



SPEAKER

Alexis Delaurier - EmpowerMen

Alexis Delaurier has a strong educational background in Psychology and Family Social Sciences and is currently pursuing her master's in education with a focus on School Counselling. Alexis has mastered the art of engaging and nurturing young minds. Her previous role as a Mental Health Volunteer Facilitator at the Canadian Mental Health Association reflects her unwavering commitment to supporting and educating communities.

Health/Coffee Break

03:05PM – 03:25PM

Cultural Activity Group - The Dream Weavers

03:25PM – 03:35PM

Provencher Ballroom

The Dream Weavers is a non-profit, community-based drum group that holds circles and safe spaces for Survivors on their healing journeys. The group is led by Lived Experience Survivors and is not affiliated with any agency or organization.

Open discussion - "Journey to Justice: Building Survivor-Centered Systems as a Response to Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking"

03:35PM – 04:20PM

Provencher Ballroom

The discussion will focus on how different systems (e.g. justice system) can adapt to provide improved responses to survivors of exploitation and trafficking. We will discuss ideas, challenges and actionable steps for leaders in the field.

POWERED BY



SPEAKER

Moderator: Andrea Heinz

Andrea Heinz is an Activist and peer-reviewed scholar on commercial sexual exploitation. Drawing from her seven years spent in Edmonton's licensed commercial sex industry from 2006-2013, she has become a prominent voice in the abolition movement, advocating for actionable change toward market-constriction efforts and End Demand legislation worldwide.

Andrea is the program coordinator and facilitator of the Edmonton STOP (Sex Trade Offender Program, also known as "John school") and with over 12 years of involvement in the program, has educated hundreds of men arrested for attempting to pay for sex acts. She appeared as a Parliamentary Witness to the 2022 review of the Canadian Government's prostitution laws, and continues to work with several individuals and organizations on strengthening Canada's Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act.

In 2024, she and fellow-advocate Kathy King published the book, When Men Buy Sex: Who Really Pays? which filled a crucial gap in Canadian literature around commercial sexual exploitation. Andrea's tireless efforts have been acknowledged through several awards, including the Woman of Courage Award from the Centre to End All Sexual Exploitation, the inaugural Dr. Zohra Husaini Memorial Award for exceptional dedication to advancing women's human rights from the Indo-Canadian Women's Association, the Human Rights Champion Award from the John Humphrey Centre for Peace & Human Rights, and recently the Joy Award from the Soroptimist International Club of Edmonton.



SPEAKER

Moderator: Stephen Moorgen

Stephen Moorgan works in The Salvation Army's Correctional and Justice Services Department. Prior this position, he was in law enforcement for thirteen years, in labor and employment relations, where he conducted investigations into harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

In addition to his work with the Salvation Army, Stephen has considerable experience working with issues related to forced labour practices. He has also taught at a post-secondary institution and pastored for several years. Stephen has three biological children as well as four foster children.

Cultural Activity - Pow Wow Club Instructors TBC

04:20PM – 04:30PM

Provencher Ballroom



SPEAKER

Stephen Moorgen

Activation/Entertainment

06:00PM – 08:30PM

The Forks

NOVEMBER 26

Networking Breakfast

08:00AM – 08:30AM

Provencher Room

Opening Ceremony

08:30AM – 09:00AM

Provencher Ballroom

8:30am - Welcome back/Recap Day 1 by Stephen Moorgan

8:35am - Candle lighting/Prayer by Shona Stewart

8:45am - Smudging by Aaron Leask

8:55am - Intro of Marcel van der Watt by Stephen Moorgan

Keynote 3 - Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking, and the RenAIssance that can End it

09:00AM – 10:00AM

Provencher Ballroom

Some of the most pressing factors that characterize the current Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking (SEHT) landscape are discussed, as well as the vice and the value of AI's dual role in perpetrating and combating SEHT. Insights from available research, relevant court cases, and experiences from impactful U.S. and international initiatives and strategies by the National Center on Sexual Exploitation will be shared.



SPEAKER

Marcel Van der Watt - National Center on Sexual Exploitation

Marcel van der Watt, Ph.D. is the President of the National Center on Sexual Exploitation in Washington, D.C. He is an internationally acclaimed investigative and research professional with over 22 years of experience in combating the interconnected criminal economies of organized crime, human trafficking, and sexual exploitation.

His extensive background as a former police investigator, hostage and suicide negotiator, and human trafficking case consultant continues to inform his work. Marcel has consulted on and provided expert court testimony in several sex trafficking cases, briefed members of the U.S. Congress on issues related to online criminality and engaged with both the Presidency and the Multi-Party Women's Caucus in South Africa's Parliament on matters related to implicit harms, myths, and laws associated with the sex trade. His work has been published and presented on a number of international platforms, and he has trained multidisciplinary professionals from more than 30 countries. Marcel is also a Research Fellow at the University of the Free State in South Africa.

Highlighting Exhibitors

10:00AM – 10:15AM

Provencher Ballroom

Health/Coffee Break

10:15AM – 10:45AM

Provencher Ballroom

Workshop 7/C1 - The Harms our Children Face Online: It's Worse than You Think

10:45AM – 11:45AM

La Verendrye Room

Canadian youth are increasingly experiencing online sexual exploitation, including luring, sextortion, and image-based crimes. Learn about the trends the Canadian Centre for Child Protection is seeing on the frontlines of this crisis and the important advocacy and accountability work the organization is doing to help shape the political and legal landscape to better protect our children.



SPEAKER

Jacques Marcoux - Canadian Centre for Child Protection

Jacques Marcoux is the Director of Research and Analytics for the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (C3P), where he oversees and directs organizational research needs related to the sexual victimization of children. His team's mandate is to enhance the public understanding of the nature of online harm to children and to arm key stakeholders with evidence□based research. Additionally, Jacques is heavily involved in working with government stakeholders in Canada and abroad to help develop online safety policy recommendations through his role as an expert observer on the Global Online Safety Regulators Network (GOSRN), a coalition of government regulators from across the world.

Jacques is formerly an award□winning investigative reporter with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, specializing in data analysis. Previously he also worked in the field of public relations, strategic communications, and also in competitive intelligence analysis in the financial sector.

Jacques Marcoux

Director of research and analytics
Canadian Centre for Child Protection

Workshop 8/C2 - Behind the Scenes: How Collaboration is Changing Ontario's Fight Against Human Trafficking

10:45AM – 11:45AM

Provencher Ballroom

Discover how Ontario is tackling human trafficking through an intelligence-driven, collaborative approach. This workshop explores the latest trends shaping the province and the evolution of the Intelligence-Led Joint Forces Strategy (IJFS) since its launch in 2021. It also dives into a compelling case study that shows how building a case around the victim can lead to successful outcomes.

POWERED BY

SPEAKER

Detective Sergeant Ashley Horton - Ontario Provincial Police

Detective Sergeant Ashley Horton is a seasoned law enforcement professional with 15 years of policing experience. She currently serves as the West Region Team Lead for the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Anti-Human Trafficking Provincial Strategy Team.

Over the past five years, Detective Sergeant Horton has specialized in anti-human trafficking investigations. She is a recognized instructor in human trafficking at the OPP Academy and serves as a lead facilitator for the Joint Forensic Investigation Child Sexual Abuse Course. As a subject matter expert, she regularly presents on human trafficking to municipal police services, community organizations, and provincial ministry sectors. In 2023, she was honoured with a team accolade award for her role as the primary investigator in a successful multi-jurisdictional human trafficking case.

SPEAKER

Detective Sergeant Scott Chalkley - Ontario Provincial Police

Detective Sergeant Scott Chalkley has been with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) for over 15 years. In 2016, he started an initiative modeled after Winnipeg's StreetReach Program -- the Youth Crisis Unit. This pilot project focused on addressing the high volume of missing youth cases and combating child exploitation across the region.

Detective Sergeant Chalkley began his career in Southern Ontario before relocating with his family to Northwestern Ontario, where he now calls Kenora home. In 2021, he transitioned to the OPP Anti-Human Trafficking Unit. His leadership and dedication led to his appointment as Team Lead for Northern Ontario in 2024, where he continues to spearhead efforts to disrupt and dismantle human trafficking networks.

Workshop 9/C3 - Prosecuting Sexual Offences in the Digital Age

10:45AM – 11:45AM

Gateway / Tache Room

This session will focus on prosecutions involving sexual offences, including sex trafficking offences, with a discussion on the evolving use of technology to facilitate the commission of these crimes and its implications for investigative and prosecutorial strategies.

SPEAKER

Alanna Littman - Manitoba Justice Prosecution Service

Alanna Littman has served as a Crown Attorney with Manitoba Justice since March 2009. Over her 16 years with the Prosecutions Service, she has worked in several areas of criminal law, however, her primary specialization has been in cases involving sexual violence and child abuse.

Her practice focuses on supporting vulnerable victims, managing complex files, and advancing trauma-informed approaches within the justice system.

SPEAKER

Shane Smith - Manitoba Justice Prosecution Service

Shane Smith first accepted a job with Manitoba Justice – Prosecutions in May of 2009, where he eventually became a Crown Attorney. Over the following sixteen years, Shane has worked in many different units, working on various subjects, such as Domestic and Sexual Violence, Fatalities and Homicides, Impaired Driving, and working on circuit points all over Manitoba.

In 2023, Shane began a new challenge that put mentorship at the forefront of his responsibilities when he became Supervising Senior Crown Attorney of the Domestic and Sexual Violence trial unit. Shane now supervises other Crown Attorneys who conduct trials relating to domestic violence, sexual assaults, and offences against children. Shane also recently took on the role of co-coordinator of all Human Trafficking files that come through Manitoba Prosecution Service.

Lunch

11:45AM – 12:45PM

Provencher Ballroom

Cultural Activity - Nikki Komaksiutiksak

12:45PM – 01:00PM

Provencher Ballroom

Nikki Komaksiutiksak is an Inuit woman from Chesterfield Inlet, Nunavut. She is an experienced throat singer, a teacher of Inuit history and culture, and a deeply expressive musical performer. Nikki has participated in numerous international events, proudly representing Manitoba and Inuit communities at prestigious venues such as the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Summer Games and the 2015 Indigenous Music Awards in Winnipeg. She has also recorded music with talented artists across Canada.

Over the years, Nikki has been featured in events around the world, always sharing her identity and teaching others about Canadian Inuit culture. She reminds audiences that the Inuit of Canada are an essential part of the country's history and cultural fabric—yet they are too often excluded, overlooked, or forgotten.

Nikki is passionate about ensuring that Inuit culture is remembered, recognized, and celebrated across Canada and beyond.

POWERED BY

Workshop 10/D1 - Gaps in the System: How and Why Canadians are Using Online Technologies to Engage in Sexual Exploitation

01:00PM – 02:00PM

La Verendrye Room

This session will provide a broad overview of a research project undertaken in partnership with EmpowerMen. The focus of the project and presentation is on the collection and use of digital information to more effectively track and address online demand for sexual exploitation. The presentation will conclude with broader implications/gaps pertaining to the role of law enforcement and the legal community.



SPEAKER

Prof. (Emeritus) John Winterdyk - Mt. Royal University

John Winterdyk is a retired Criminology professor from Calgary's Mount Royal University (MRU). John was the first student to earn a PhD in criminology at Simon Fraser University. Throughout his academic career, John has specialized in youth justice, human trafficking, crime prevention, comparative criminology, and criminal justice. He has received several national and international awards for his work, and he was the founding director of the Centre of Criminology and Justice Research at MRU.

In addition to co-authoring and editing over 40 academic books, John Winterdyk has published numerous articles both in Canada and internationally and has held several international adjunct and visiting positions. He is currently co-editing a special journal issue on demand reduction and human trafficking and co-editing a book on the 'new abolitionism' and sexual exploitation.



SPEAKER

Brian Rae - Buyer Resist

Brian Rae grew up in North Africa, where he developed a deep passion for justice that first led him into law. Early in his career, he recognized a deeper personal calling -- pursuing change by combining innovative technology with compassionate care. Following that conviction, Brian transitioned from law to found Wilber, a nonprofit dedicated to eliminating the demand for sexual exploitation. At the core of Wilber's mission is an AI chatbot that intercepts men attempting to buy sex online and guides them toward recovery and freedom from sexual addiction and brokenness.

Workshop 11/D2 - Sex Buyer Suppression & Sex Worker Wellness

01:00PM – 02:00PM

Provencher Ballroom

Sgts. Shawn Trinder (WPS) and Cathy Farrell (RCMP) will discuss sex buying trends in Manitoba. They will share best practices and lessons learned in their joint forces projects.

SPEAKER

Sgt. Cathy Farrell - RCMP Manitoba

Sergeant Cathy Farrell has 30 years of policing experience, with the majority of her career dedicated to tackling issues related to sex offenders and violent crime. In 2011, she obtained certification as a Violent Crime Analysis Specialist. Following this, she took on the leadership role within the Manitoba Integrated High Risk Sex Offender Unit. Currently, Sgt. Farrell oversees the newly established Human Trafficking Unit at Manitoba RCMP, where she is deeply committed to combatting human trafficking. She collaborates with a dedicated team of investigators who share her unwavering commitment to addressing human trafficking.

SPEAKER

Sgt. Shawn Trinder - Winnipeg Police

Sergeant Shawn Trinder has been an investigator with the Winnipeg Police Service for the past 25 years, during which he's worked with several specialized investigative units. He is currently Sergeant in charge of the WPS Counter Exploitation Unit and oversees all investigations pertaining to both child and adult exploitation, luring, and human trafficking.

Workshop 12/D3: Human Trafficking and Exploitation at the Border and Inland

01:00PM – 02:00PM

Gateway / Tache Room

Three officers from the Intelligence and Enforcement Operations Division of Canada Border Services Agency will discuss border and inland related issues regarding the trafficking and exploitation of persons in Canada. This will include immigration enforcement and alternatives to detention for those who are survivors of trafficking/exploitation.

SPEAKER

Brad James-Thiessen - Canada Border Service Agency

Brad James-Thiessen is an Inland Enforcement Officer with the Canadian Border Services Agency. He's been with the CBSA since 2004 and Inland Enforcement since 2014. He worked at the Emerson Port of Entry for ten years including five years as a K9 Officer, which provided insight into the issue of cross-border human trafficking. Brad has also worked as a Police Constable with the Morden Police Service and Ste. Anne Police Service.

SPEAKER

Erin Slatcher - Canada Border Service Agency

Erin Slatcher is an Intelligence Officer with the CBSA working primarily within the commercial trucking and immigration fraud portfolios.

SPEAKER

Stacie Bowe - Canada Border Service Agency

Stacie Bowe has been with the CBSA for over 23 years, and a member of the Intelligence and Enforcement Unit since 2008. In her time as an Intelligence Officer, Stacie has specialized in crossborder smuggling files, specifically regarding the trafficking of people, currency, and drugs. She worked in Criminal Intelligence Service Manitoba (CISM) focusing on Serious and Organized Crime in Manitoba and is currently embedded in the National Security Enforcement Section (NSES).

Health/Coffee Break

02:00PM – 02:20PM

DAC Ghyslain Vallières Memorial Award

02:20PM – 02:30PM

Provencher Ballroom

Ghyslain Vallières Memorial Award

Demand Action Coalition will bestow the Ghyslain Vallières Memorial Award upon the Longueuil Police Service. The award is given to individuals and organizations in recognition of extraordinary commitment, per-severance, and ingenuity in the fight toward the eradication of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in all Its forms.



SPEAKER

Moderator: Stephen Moorgen

Stephen Moorgan works in The Salvation Army's Correctional and Justice Services Department. Prior this position, he was in law enforcement for thirteen years, in labor and employment relations, where he conducted investigations into harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

In addition to his work with the Salvation Army, Stephen has considerable experience working with issues related to forced labour practices. He has also taught at a post-secondary institution and pastored for several years. Stephen has three biological children as well as four foster children.

Workshop 13/E1 - The Role of an Analyst in Human Trafficking Investigations 02:30PM – 03:20PM

La Verendrye Room

This presentation is designed to help investigators understand the role and benefits of criminal intelligence analysts (CIA) in human trafficking investigations by reviewing examples of the analytical products they can produce, understanding their access and research capabilities with analytical software tools and databases, and the strategies and recommendations they can offer to support investigations.

SPEAKER

Tasha Jayatunge - Alberta Law Enforcement Response Teams

Tasha Jayatunge has been a civilian member of the Edmonton Police Service for 13 years. For the past 2.5 years she's been assigned to support the elite Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team (ALERT) as the designated Criminal Intelligence Analyst within the Human Trafficking and Exploitation Unit (HTCEU).

As a Criminal Intelligence Analyst, Tasha assists law enforcement agencies, multidisciplinary teams, and other stakeholders, bringing her analytical skills, analytical products, and knowledge of human trafficking investigations to the table. Tasha is passionate about serving in an analyst role in human trafficking investigations and contributing to knowledge building and training, policy development, and strategic initiatives in the fight against exploitation.

Workshop 14/E2: Creating Manitoba's Red Dress Alert System 02:30PM – 03:20PM

Provencher Ballroom

This presentation is designed to help investigators understand the role and benefits of criminal intelligence analysts (CIA) in human trafficking investigations by reviewing examples of the analytical products they can produce, understanding their access and research capabilities with analytical software tools and databases, and the strategies and recommendations they can offer to support investigations.



SPEAKER

Denise Cook - Giganawenimaanaang / Red Dress Alert

Denise Cook is a citizen of Pimicikamak (Cross Lake First Nation) on her father's side and Opaskwayak Cree Nation, The Pas, and Cranberry Portage on her mother's side. She has years of experience working in Indigenous communities, child welfare, and healthcare with a focus on Indigenous recruitment and human resources. Most recently, she has been involved in gender-based violence programs that focus on healing from sexualized violence, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, supporting MMIWG2S+ families, and harm reduction.

Denise is currently Team Lead for Giganawenimaanaanig and the Red Dress Alert Pilot Project. She is committed and passionate about improving Indigenous communities, especially women and families, and believes that Indigenous women are the backbone of the community and will lead their communities to health and wellness.

Denise is inspired by many role models, including her Mom Gwen Cook, Grandmother Margret Head, and many beautiful Aunties, Sisters, and Nieces. She is also a proud Grandmother to an amazing grandson, MJ. Denise has been privileged to participate in ceremonies and receive healing with the Three Fires Midewin Lodge, which has been an essential part of her life over the past 30 years. Denise looks forward to continued growth and learning through her heart work.



SPEAKER

Kim McPherson - Giganawenimaanaang / Red Dress Alert

Kim McPherson is a citizen of Peguis First Nation in Manitoba and lives in Winnipeg. Her mother and father were survivors of Indian Day Schools, and her grandmother was a survivor of Indian Residential Schools. She is a proud mother of two sons, aged 33 and 19. She has earned two degrees: a Bachelor of Nursing and a Law Degree.

Kim is passionate about learning her First Nations rights, identity, culture, and traditions. This has led her to roles in the provincial government, Southern Chiefs' Organization, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, the National Family and Survivors Circle, Anishinaabe Nations in Treaty 2 Territory, and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. She is currently contracted with Giganawenimaanaanig as one of the writers for the Red Dress Alert Pilot Project.

She dedicates personal time to healing from the devastating and tragic losses of her sister Jennifer Dawn McPherson and her aunt Jennifer. Since 2013, she has been the co-founder of J.D.M. Indigenous Designs, honouring their late sister's memory through art as a form of healing, reclamation, inspiration, and empowerment, while also raising public awareness about MMIWG. Alongside her sister and niece, on November 28, 2022, they were honoured as recipients of the Manitoba Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal, recognizing their community efforts to raise awareness about the national issue of MMIWG and gender-based violence.

Workshop 15/E3 - Behind Closed Doors: How Municipal Licensing Enables Sexual Exploitation in Canada

02:30PM – 03:20PM

Gateway / Tache Room

This workshop reveals how municipal licensing of sexual exploitation-based businesses (such as escort agencies, strip clubs, and Body Rub establishments) legitimizes systems of coercion and inequality while contravening Canadian law. Drawing on lived experience and research, they examine how these bylaws perpetuate harm, explore the factors that led municipalities to adopt them, and outline practical steps to dismantle exploitative frameworks and advance justice for those affected.

POWERED BY



SPEAKER

Casandra Diamond - BridgeNorth

Casandra Diamond is a nationally recognized expert in anti-human trafficking, providing direct services, policy and advocacy in Canada, and has extensive experience advising all levels of government. As a survivor of sex trafficking, her lived experience critically informs her leadership, research, and practice in the field of trafficking prevention, survivor support, and public policy development.

Casandra's work is grounded in a grassroots, trauma-informed, strength-based framework, emphasizing holistic and survivor-centered care. Her expertise spans prevention programming, safety planning, and exit strategies for those who have experienced exploitation and contributes to the development and growth of a national framework of systems to support Survivors.



SPEAKER

Andrea Heinz - Alberta Centre to End Trafficking

Andrea Heinz is an Activist and peer-reviewed scholar on commercial sexual exploitation. Drawing from her seven years spent in Edmonton's licensed commercial sex industry from 2006-2013, she has become a prominent voice in the abolition movement, advocating for actionable change toward market-constriction efforts and End Demand legislation worldwide.

Andrea is the program coordinator and facilitator of the Edmonton STOP (Sex Trade Offender Program, also known as “John school”) and with over 12 years of involvement in the program, has educated hundreds of men arrested for attempting to pay for sex acts. She appeared as a Parliamentary Witness to the 2022 review of the Canadian Government’s prostitution laws, and continues to work with several individuals and organizations on strengthening Canada’s Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act.

In 2024, she and fellow-advocate Kathy King published the book, When Men Buy Sex: Who Really Pays? which filled a crucial gap in Canadian literature around commercial sexual exploitation. Andrea’s tireless efforts have been acknowledged through several awards, including the Woman of Courage Award from the Centre to End All Sexual Exploitation, the inaugural Dr. Zohra Husaini Memorial Award for exceptional dedication to advancing women’s human rights from the Indo-Canadian Women’s Association, the Human Rights Champion Award from the John Humphrey Centre for Peace & Human Rights, and recently the Joy Award from the Soroptimist International Club of Edmonton.

Open discussion - “From Bystanders to Leaders: Mobilizing Men to Prevent Exploitation and Trafficking"

03:20PM – 04:10PM

Provencher Room

The discussion will focus on how we can engage men and boys in different spaces (e.g. education, technology, justice system, etc.) to become active participants to prevent sexual exploitation and trafficking. We will discuss ideas, challenges and concrete actions that individuals and communities can take to increase buy in and male leadership to reduce exploitation and increase safety for all.

SPEAKER

Moderators: Stephen Moorgen / Andrea Heinz

POWERED BY

Cultural Activity Group – The Dream Weavers

04:10PM – 04:30PM

Provencher Room

The Dream Weavers is a non-profit, community-based drum group that holds circles and safe spaces for Survivors on their healing journeys. The group is led by Lived Experience Survivors and is not affiliated with any agency or organization.