



ldawc•Learning Disabilities
Association of Wellington County

LDAWC Family Conference

Saturday, October 21, 2023

Keynote Speaker:

Alina Kislenko, RP, Founder of the ADHD and Asperger's /ASD Centre

Strategies around Employment, Friends, Family and Relationships for those with ADHD

Alina Kislenko is an Assistant Neuroscience & Psychiatry Professor at McMaster School of Medicine and a Psychotherapist who is Autistic and ADHD. She also founded and runs the award-winning ADHD & Asperger's/ASD Centres in Guelph and Ottawa, as well as a not for profit for women in poverty to access STEM and build business skills. She does interactive presentations all over the world and has been on many international tv and radio shows to educate about neurodivergence. Alina's centres are the only ADHD & Autism Centres in the world that only hire neurodivergent practitioners to avoid common ableism in the mental health field. They offer ADHD & Autism diagnosis, counselling, coaching, online classes, and video courses and see clients from anywhere. Her website is www.ADHDInterrupted.com.

Morning Plenary:

Dr. John McNamara, Professor of Child Studies

The Science of LD's

John is a Professor in the Department of Child and Youth Studies at Brock University. His teaching and research are centred around supporting children with learning disabilities. Over the course of his career, John has published widely in academic outlets and presented internationally about his research on learning disabilities. He also teaches the first year course in Child and Youth Studies to over 1000 students a year.

Morning Workshops (10:55-12:10)

Breakout #1

Easing the fears of Post Secondary

Tania Green B.Sc., M.Ed

Tania Green has been an Advisor to Students with Disabilities in Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at the University of Guelph for the last 20 years. Her specialization is in working with students with Learning Disabilities, ADHD and other cognitive disabilities. She is highly involved in the SAS transition experience for students and coordinate the SAS student engagement, orientation and transition programs.

Easing the fears of Post Secondary – For students with disabilities there may be a lot of questions about what supports and services are available in post-secondary education. This session will discuss things to consider when exploring post-secondary education, documentation required to access disability related accommodations and typical supports and services available to students.

Breakout #2

Tech Talk with Bridges Canada (Part 1)

with Brenna McFarlane - Assistive Technology Instructor

With technology infused in so much of student learning today, it may be overwhelming and a bit mystifying about how you can help. Come and learn about the tech tools students are using in classrooms today across the curriculum, and the features they can use to support them to be independent, successful learners! While the focus will be on the popular Google applications, we will make connections to the Microsoft environment as well. A particular focus will be on the features and tools students have available to support reading and writing, primarily the Read&Write Tools by TextHelp.

With a firm belief that technology in our classrooms is the “game changer” for so many of our students today, it has become Leanne Husk’s passion to see it implemented and used to its potential. Combined with strategic teaching, education technology opens up curriculum to struggling learners, truly making it accessible to all. Specializing in learning disabilities, Leanne has spent her career introducing, training and mentoring students, their families and educators to the limitless potential of education technology. She is an energetic, dynamic, dedicated individual who, over the years, has gathered a wealth of knowledge and experience, devoting herself to creating positive, successful, enjoyable, interactive and inclusive learning environments for the students and teams she supports

Breakout #3

Helping Your Kids with Math

Jonthan So, Vice principal for the Peel District School Board; Master's in Education (@MrSoclassroom)

As a parent and teacher, moving through the world of Special Education can be daunting, intimidating and sometimes discouraging. As an adult with ADHD and a parent of a child with ADHD, the educational world is also often in disequilibrium with my own life and expectations. This workshop is designed to create a space where participants can share stories, discuss strategies and learn more about the Special Education world. Participants will have discussions on the IEP process, classroom management strategies, student strategies and discussions about assessment practices. We will also discuss how parents can communicate with the education world and be advocates for their child's needs. Come ready to talk, discuss and learn.

Breakout #4

Advocating for yourself and others

Lynn Ziraldo - Past ED of the York LDA Chapter with 40+ years in the field of special education.

This session will address how to be an effective advocate including approaches and strategies to be successful in your role as an advocate for your child.

Presented by Lynn Ziraldo- Lynn past chair of the K to 12 Education Accessibility Standards committee (2018-2022) Lynn's involvement with the Learning Disabilities Association York-Simcoe as well as provincially and nationally has been over 40+ years. Lynn is past chair and advisor of the Ministers Advisory Council for Special Education in Ontario She is the chair of the YRDSB Special Education Advisory Committee .

Afternoon Workshops (1:10-2:25)

Breakout #5

Collaborative Problem Solving and Managing Conflict

Siobhan Chirico, Registered Psychotherapist / Ontario College of Teachers (OCT)

Siobhan provides psychotherapy and counselling services for children, teens, individuals and families for anxiety, learning challenges, behavioural challenges, separation/divorce, grief, professional burnout and more in Burlington and across Ontario. In person and video/telephone sessions available. Registered with College of Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO) with services covered by many extended health insurance plans. Siobhan's interest in mental health developed through supporting children and families with special education needs in her career as a special education leader at Halton District School Board. She left her role at the school board to pursue a Master's degree in psychotherapy. At HDSB she was Instructional Program Leader in Student Services K-12. Her portfolio included; Behaviour Resource Classes, Collaborative Problem Solving®, Sensory Rooms/Sensory Tool Kit and supporting the most vulnerable students and their families across the board. As a member of the HDSB multidisciplinary team, Siobhan worked to plan and implement programming for students with complex academic and/or behavioural needs.

Siobhan provides individual, family and group therapy sessions. She expertly facilitates group learning about the neuroscience of anxiety, happiness and preventative mental health care as well as the Collaborative Problem Solving® approach. Parenting a child with mental health, special education or behavioural needs can be overwhelming, Siobhan helps parents walk this difficult path with experience, knowledge and compassion. She also has a keen interest in helping education professionals avoid and recover from burnout, exhaustion and work stress. Siobhan has a passion for reframing how people understand mental health and wellness. Following the philosophy "people do well if they can ". Siobhan believes that everyone can thrive if the correct supports are in place.

Breakout #6

Tech Talk with Bridges Canada (Part 2)

with Brenna McFarlane - Assistive Technology Instructor

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Breakout #7

IEP Support and advice with experts guests from both UGDSB and Wellington CDSB

Nadia Tonin, Jeff Mawhinney and Jacqueline Weresch and Mark Howe, WCDSB & UGDSB

Individual Education Plans (IEPs) can seem complicated, whether you are new to the special education world or a "frequent flyer". This breakout session will focus on the details of an IEP. Staff from each local school board will explain their forms in detail. Then you will have an opportunity to discuss particular line items with your respective school staff member. After the general info, you will break into two groups: one for each school board. Bring your IEP if you are willing to share the contents with the group!

Each of the staff from the school boards is an experienced Special Education Resource Teacher.

