

CONFERENCE

ADDICTION, MENTAL HEALTH AND THE LAW



Program

FEBRUARY 3 TO 5, 2025 | TORONTO

Hilton Hotel, 145 Richmond St W, Toronto, ON, M5H3M6 CA

“Addiction, Mental Health and the Law”

CIAJ’s Conference on **Addiction, Mental Health, and the Law** will delve into the complex interplay between substance abuse, mental health issues, and the justice system. This event will bring together experts from various disciplines and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers to examine the multifaceted challenges faced by courts, law enforcement, treatment providers, policymakers, as well as communities, families, and individuals.

Key questions to be addressed include: How do mental health issues, addiction, and criminality interact and influence each other? What are the most effective approaches to treating individuals struggling with addiction? How do substance abuse and mental illness complicate treatment and intervention? Why are these issues becoming more prevalent and difficult to manage? What role do harm reduction policies play, and can they be integrated with effective public safety measures? How do treatment courts fit into the broader justice landscape, and are the tools provided by the Criminal Code adequate for addressing these challenges?

Join us as we explore these pressing questions and discuss necessary changes to better address the challenges at the intersection of addiction, mental health, and the law.

- *Bilingual program with simultaneous interpretation.*
- *Participation in this program is accredited in provinces where CLE requirements for lawyers are mandatory.*
- *Participation in this program is approved under Section 41 (1) of the Judges Act.*



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Guy Felicella

Guy Felicella is an international speaker and advocate for drug policy reform. Overcoming a two-decade substance use disorder, he has turned his life around after years of homelessness, gang involvement, and surviving overdoses in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. Now, Guy passionately promotes harm reduction, trauma therapy, and faster access to treatment, using his story of resilience and recovery to inspire others and push for compassionate drug policies and addiction support.

CO-CHAIRS

- **The Honourable Justice Richard D. Schneider**, Ontario Court of Justice, past Chair of the Ontario Review Board (Toronto, ON)
- **The Honourable Justice P. Colleen Suche**, Court of King’s Bench of Manitoba, CIAJ’s past president (Winnipeg, MB)

MEMBERS

- **The Honourable Justice Veronica L. Jackson**, Supreme Court of British Columbia (Victoria, BC)
- **The Honourable Justice Mélanie Hébert**, Court of Quebec (Montreal, QC)
- **Doug LePard, O.O.M.**, Retired Police Chief & Policing and Criminal Justice Consultant, (Vancouver, BC)
- **Megan Longley, K.C.**, Executive Director, Dalhousie Legal Aid Service, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University (Halifax, NS)
- **The Honourable Justice Julie Dutil**, Court of Appeal of Quebec, CIAJ’s President (Quebec, QC)
- **The Honourable Justice Brian Puddington**, Ontario Court of Justice (Halton, ON)
- **Dr. Demetra Fr. Sorvatzioti**, Legal expert, Researcher at Queen’s University (Kingston, ON)
- **Nazrina Umarji**, Director, Legal Services & General Counsel, College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (Edmonton, AB)
- **Christine O’Doherty**, Lawyer, CIAJ’s Executive Director (Montreal, QC)
- **Lise Bujold**, CIAJ’s Assistant Director (Montreal, QC)
- **David Lazzam**, Articling Student at CIAJ (Toronto, ON)

08:00–09:00 AM Registration and breakfast

09:00–09:30 AM Welcome Remarks and Introduction

- Co-Chairs:*
- *The Honourable Justice Richard D. Schneider, Ontario Court of Justice, past Chair of the Ontario Review Board (Toronto, ON)*
 - *The Honourable Justice P. Colleen Suche, Court of King's Bench of Manitoba, CIAJ's past president (Winnipeg, MB)*

09:30–10:15 AM Presentation

- Keynote speaker:*
- *Guy Felicella, International Public Speaker*

10:15–10:30 AM Health Break

10:30–11:30AM Beyond Punishment: Trauma-Informed Approaches to Mental Health and Criminal Justice Reform

- Speaker:*
- *Benjamin Perrin, Law Professor, University of British Columbia and National Best-selling Author (Vancouver, BC)*

11:30–12:30 PM Addiction, Mental Health, and the Brain: Understanding Childhood Adversity and its Impact on Well-being

Modern brain science shows that the experiences we have in childhood change the brain in ways that make us more or less likely to succeed in school, at work, as parents, and in other social and family relationships. Childhood adversity affects more than just our academic and social outcomes: it also makes us more vulnerable to mental health and substance use problems. This session will describe how brains are built and how stress undermines healthy brain development. Applying these neuroscientific insights is a complex challenge that will require new ideas, concrete action, and system-level collaboration.

- Speaker:*
- *Nicole Sherren, Principal Consultant & Owner, R2P Solutions (Calgary, AB)*

12:30 –1:30 PM Lunch

1:30–3:00 PM Panel 1 | Addiction Unveiled: A Medical Perspective

Moderator:

- *The Honourable Justice Veronica L. Jackson, Supreme Court of British Columbia (Victoria, BC)*

Speakers:

- *Dr. Tony George, Senior Scientist at Institute for Mental Health Policy Research, professor of psychiatry in the Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS) at the Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto (Toronto, ON)*
- *Dr. Charl Els (MBChB, FCPsych, MMedPsych, DipABAM, ACBOM, FIAIME), Clinical Professor. Dept. of Psychiatry, Dept. of Medicine, JDHEC*
- *Dr. Didier Jutras-Aswad (MD, MSc), Interim chief. Department of psychiatry, CHUM; Psychiatrist. Addiction psychiatry unit, CHUM; Full professor. Department of psychiatry, Université de Montréal*

3:00–3:15 PM Health Break

3:15–4:45 PM Panel 2 | Substance Use Trends: Impacts on Users, Communities, and Law Enforcement

Moderator:

- *The Honourable Justice Brian Puddington, Ontario Court of Justice (Halton, ON)*

Speakers:

- *Amanda Butler, Assistant Professor, School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University (Burnaby, BC)*
- *Gerry St-Hilaire, Team Leader, "Centre d'intervention en dépendances Adrienne-Roy" (Shawinigan, QC)*
- *Jessyca Greenwood, Principal Lawyer at Greenwood Law*

5:30–7:30 PM Cocktail Reception

09:00–10:00 AM Breakfast discussion

Navigating Challenges and Best Practices in Treatment Courts and Decriminalizing Mental Illness.

Moderator:

- *Megan Longley, K.C., Executive Director, Dalhousie Legal Aid Service, Schulich School of Law, Dalhousie University (Halifax, NS)*

Speakers:

- *The Honourable Justice Mélanie Hébert, Court of Quebec (Montreal), QC*
- *The Honourable Justice Heather Perkins–McVey, Ontario Court of Justice (Ottawa, ON)*
- *The Honourable Justice Kofi Barnes, Ontario Superior Court of Justice (Toronto, ON)*

10:00–11:15 AM Panel 3 | Challenges to Fundamental Principles of Law

Moderator:

- *The Honourable Deputy Chief Justice Joanne Durant, Alberta Court of Justice (AB)*

Speakers:

- *Kent Roach, Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Toronto (Toronto, ON)*
- *Michelle Lawrence, Associate Professor, Director, Access to Justice Centre for Excellence, Faculty of Law, University of Victoria (Victoria, BC)*
- *Benjamin Berger, Professor & York Research Chair in Pluralism and Public Law, Osgoode, Faculty of Law, York University (Toronto, ON)*

11:15–11:30 AM Health Break

11:30–12:45 PM Panel 4 | Criminal Code Limits: Navigating NCR and Automatism Challenges

Moderator:

- *The Honourable Justice Richard D. Schneider, Ontario Court of Justice, past Chair of the Ontario Review Board (Toronto, ON)*

Speakers:

- *Dr. Sophie Anhoury, Forensic Psychiatrist, Southern Alberta Forensic Psychiatry Centre (Edmonton, AB)*
- *Michaela Donnelly, Crown Counsel (Vancouver, BC)*
- *Chris Johnson, Defense Counsel (Vancouver, BC)*

12:45–1:45 PM **Lunch**

1:45–3:15 PM **Panel 5 | Indigenous Approaches and Perspectives on Addiction**

Moderator: • *To be confirmed*

Speaker: • *David Milward, Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Victoria (Victoria, BC)*

3:15–3:30 PM **Health Break**

3:30–4:45 PM **Panel 6 | Testing the Limits: Decriminalization and Safe Injection Sites, harm Reduction Measures**

Moderator: • *Doug LePard, O.O.M., Retired Police Chief & Policing and Criminal Justice Consultant, (Vancouver, BC)*

Speakers: • *Dr. Sumantra Monty Ghosh, Internist and Addiction specialist, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry - Medicine Dept, University of Alberta (Edmonton, AB)*
• *Dr. Gillian Kolla, Assistant professor at Memorial University's Faculty of Medicine, Canadian Institute for the Substance Use Research at the University of Victoria (Victoria, BC)*
• *Dr. Marie-Ève Goyer, Researcher, Collaborator, IUD, Clinical Associate Professor, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Family Medicine and Emergency Medicine, University of Montreal (Montreal, QC)*

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2025

9:00–10:00 AM **Conversation with families**
Personal stories and testimonies that reveal everyday lived realities.

10:00–11:15 AM **Panel 7 | Sentencing addicted offenders: What are we punishing**

Moderator: • *The Honourable Justice P. Colleen Suche, Court of King’s Bench of Manitoba, CIAJ’s past president (Winnipeg, MB)*

Speaker: • *The Honourable Justice Edward J. Kelly, Ontario Court of Justice*

11:15–11:30 PM **Health Break**

11:30–12:45 PM **Panel 8 | Beyond the Courtroom: Innovative Solutions for Addiction and Mental Health**

Moderator: • *The Honourable Chief Justice Marianne Rivoalen, Court of Appeal for Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB)*

Speaker: • *The Honourable Judge Karine Giguère, Participant of the Addiction Treatment Program (CQATP), Court of Quebec (Montreal, QC)*

12:45–1:30 PM **Lunch**

1:30–2:30 PM **Roundtable**

2:30–2:45 PM **Closing Remarks**

Co-Chairs: • *The Honourable Justice Richard D. Schneider, Ontario Court of Justice, past Chair of the Ontario Review Board (Toronto, ON)*
• *The Honourable Justice P. Colleen Suche, Court of King’s Bench of Manitoba, CIAJ’s past president (Winnipeg, MB)*

DECADES OF EXCELLENCE

CIAJ IN 2024

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50 years: Planting the Seeds of Justice

CIAJ is an independent, non-profit organization that links individuals and institutions involved in the administration of justice across Canada.

Since its founding in 1974, CIAJ has taken a critical look at our justice system and explored current issues aimed at improving the administration of justice and preserving a strong and independent judiciary.

In collaboration with governments, courts, tribunals, professional associations, law schools, and law firms, CIAJ sponsors and conducts multidisciplinary conferences, specialized seminars, tailored training sessions, national discussions on major issues, and prepares comprehensive papers and reports. Our services are offered in both official languages.

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Contact us

Please contact us for more information about our organization, the benefits of membership and how you can assist us with our mission.

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50 YEARS OF CIAJ



SEPTEMBER 17-19, 2025 | OTTAWA

Conference: Democracy, the Rule of Law, and Institutional Independence



OCTOBER 29-31, 2025 | VANCOUVER

49th Annual Conference: Environment and the Law



CIAJ's 49th Annual Conference on Environment and the Law will critically examine the intersection of environmental crises, legal implications, and human rights. Vital to the discussion will be the issues of climate change refugees, immigration, land rights, and Indigenous people. The conference's inclusive and multidisciplinary approach provides a platform for amplifying the voices of individuals and groups most affected and marginalized by environmental issues. This conference will foster dialogue aimed at understanding and addressing these issues, encouraging participants to contribute to crafting forward-thinking solutions. Together, we will explore the means to shape a legal environment that respects human rights, acknowledges the reality of environmental crises, and work toward a more sustainable and equitable future.