

**CONFERENCE**

# **ADDICTION, MENTAL HEALTH AND THE LAW**



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**Program**

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**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.

### OUR PROUD PARTNER

We are proud of our valued partner who support our Conference on Addiction, Mental Health and the Law. His commitment and support are essential to the success of this event.





## 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)

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**07:30–09:00 AM Registration and breakfast**

*Badge Pick-Up*

**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**

Guy Felicella is a harm reduction and recovery advocate who survived decades of addiction, gangs, the criminal justice system and homelessness living in the downtown Eastside of Vancouver. We open our conference with his powerful story of how he overcame it all, providing a personal accounting of the challenges and solutions that will be explored throughout the conference.

*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**

Professor Benjamin Perrin, author of *Indictment: The Criminal Justice System on Trial (2023)* and *Overdose: Heartbreak and Hope in Canada's Opioid Crisis (2020)*, explores how the justice system can evolve beyond punitive measures to embrace trauma-informed methodologies. He emphasizes understanding the deep-rooted psychological impacts of trauma, advocating for holistic, compassionate interventions that address the intersecting challenges of mental health, substance use, and systemic inequities, ultimately aiming to build a more just and healing-focused system.

*Speaker:*

- *Benjamin Perrin, Law Professor, University of British Columbia, Faculty of Law Peter Allard, 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**

To address the needs of individuals and communities who are impacted by addiction, legal professionals, social workers, and policy-makers require an understanding of addiction based on fact, not fiction. This panel therefore grounds the conference’s discussions with an exploration of addiction from a medical perspective, dispelling myths and misconceptions while setting the stage for future panels by clarifying the problems in need of addressing.

*Moderator:*

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

*Speakers:*

- *Dr. Tony George, Senior Scientist, Institute for Mental Health Policy Research, Professor of Psychiatry, Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS) at the Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto (Toronto, ON)*
- *Dr. Didier Jutras-Aswad (MD, MSc), Chief, Department of Psychiatry, CHUM; Psychiatrist, Addiction psychiatry unit, CHUM; Full professor, Department of Psychiatry, Université de Montréal (Montreal, QC)*
- *Dr. Alexander Simpson, Chair in Forensic Psychiatry, Senior Scientist, Research Program, Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Temerty Faculty of Medicine, CAMH + University of Toronto, Member, Nunavut and Ontario Criminal Code Review Boards (Toronto, ON)*

**3:00–3:15 PM**    **Health Break**

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

From courtrooms, to law enforcement agencies, to hospitals and frontline social work centres, shifting trends in substance use (and in particular crystal methamphetamine) continue to impact the safety of those experiencing addiction, the wellbeing of communities, and the ability of professionals to triage, sentence, and treat individuals in a way that reduces future substance use and recidivism. Panel 2 brings together a wide range of experts to describe the current state of substance use in Canada, as well as the ways in which actors are seeking to address new challenges and provide novel solutions.

*Moderator:*

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

*Speakers:*

- *Jessyca Greenwood, Principal Lawyer at Greenwood Law (Toronto, ON)*
- *Fiona Wilson, Deputy Chief, Vancouver Police Department (Vancouver, BC)*
- *The Honourable Justice Jennifer Marie Campitelli, Ontario Court of Justice (Halton, ON)*

**5:30–7:00 PM**    **Reception**

*Non-alcoholic beverages, finger foods and cash bar for alcohol.*

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**09:00–10:00 AM Breakfast discussion\***

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

\*Buffet available from 08:30 AM

**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 Kofi Barnes, Ontario Superior Court of Justice (Toronto, ON)*
- *Demetra Fr. Sorvatzioti, Associate Professor, Law Department, School of Law, University of Nicosia (Cyprus)*

**10:00–11:15 AM Panel 3 | Mental Disorders and Substance Dependence: Fundamental Principles of Criminal Responsibility**

**Moderator:**

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

**Speakers:**

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

**11:15–11:30 AM Health Break****11:30–12:45 PM Panel 4 | Challenges and Possibilities: Practical Insights into Mentally Ill Offenders and the Criminal Justice System**

The criminal justice system has long struggled to address cases which deal with mentally ill accused persons. From assessing fitness to stand trial, to trial stage defences such as NCR or automatism, to sentencing considerations such as a reduction in moral blameworthiness, courts are faced with unique issues throughout the trial process, which often extend beyond what the Criminal Code offers. This panel provides expertise from the bench, Crown and defence counsel, and psychiatry to unpick these difficult topics, assessing the pros and cons of our current system before offering insights into how we might change our approaches to accused individuals with mental disorders within the criminal justice system.

**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, Defence Counsel (Vancouver, BC)*

**12:45–1:45 PM Lunch**

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

*Moderator:*

- *The Honourable Justice Catherine Rhinelander, Ontario Superior Court of Justice (Toronto, ON)*

*Speakers:*

- *David Milward, Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Victoria (Victoria, BC)*
- *Pierre Clary-Rock, Regional Coordinator, Justice Program, Council of the Atikamekw Nation (Wemotaci, QC)*
- *José Pruden, Wellness Director, Battle River Treaty 6 Health Centre (Battleford, SK)*

**3:15–3:30 PM Health Break**

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

The interlinked concepts of harm reduction and decriminalization are often misunderstood in the realms of law enforcement and policy-making. Panel 6 provides an in-depth explanation of what the “medical model” for addiction actually entails, while also exploring the principles underpinning harm reduction policies, as well as the wider socio-economic context within which decriminalization efforts must be understood and applied.

*Moderator:*

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

*Speakers:*

- *Dr. Monty Ghosh, Internist and Addiction specialist, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry - Medicine Dept, University of Alberta (Edmonton, AB)*
- *Dr. Marie-Ève Goyer, MD, MSc, CCFP (MT), Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Family Medicine and Emergency Medicine, Université de Montréal, Scientific Director, Clinical and Organizational Support Team in Addiction and Homelessness, Assistant Head of Specific Programs CIUSSS Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (Montreal, QC)*

**4:30–5:00 Fireside chat**

An open conversation exploring key challenges and issues related to the intersection of addiction, mental health and law.

*Moderator:*

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

*Speaker:*

- *Noah Irvine, Mental Health Advocate (Guelph, ON)*



**9:00-10:00 AM**

**Conversation with families\***

Personal stories and testimonies that reveal everyday lived realities.

*\*Buffet available from 08:30 AM*

*Moderator:*

- The Honourable Justice Susanne Boucher, Ontario Superior Court of Justice (Toronto, ON)

*Speakers:*

- Christian Boivin, Data Strategy & Execution, Senior Manager, JLR - an Equifax company (Montreal, QC)
- Petra Schulz, Co-founding Director of Moms Stop The Harm (Edmonton, AB)

**10:00-11:15 AM**

**Panel 7 | Sentencing addicted offenders: What are we punishing?**

Panel 7 explores challenges and possibilities when applying sentencing principles to addicted offenders. How do we apply punitive principles where culpability is impacted by substance use? How can we tailor restorative sentencing principles to offenders experiencing addiction to break the cycle of substance abuse and recidivism? These questions and more will be explored in the panel's discussion.

*Moderator:*

- The Honourable Justice P. Colleen Suche, Court of King's Bench of Manitoba, CIAJ's past president (Winnipeg, MB)

*Speakers:*

- Matthew Eaton-Kent, Criminal Defence Lawyer, Principal Barrister at Eaton-Kent Law (Toronto, ON)
- Miriam Henry, Assistant Crown Lawyer (Toronto, ON)
- The Honourable Justice Edward J. Kelly, Ontario Court of Justice (Toronto, ON)

**11:15-11:30 AM**

**Health Break**

**11:30-1:00 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)

*Speakers:*

- The Honourable Judge Karine Giguère, in charge of the Addiction Treatment Program (CQATP), Court of Quebec (Montreal, QC)
- The Honourable Brian Scully, Retired Judge of the Ontario Court of Justice (Toronto, ON)
- Dr. Judy Finlay, PhD, Associate Professor, Faculty of Community Services (Toronto, ON)
- Dylan Peyachew, Youth Justice Project Lead, Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc. (Winnipeg, MB)



**1:00–1:15 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)*

**1:15–2:00 PM**

**Packed lunch**

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**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2025**

DECADES OF EXCELLENCE

# CIAJ IN 2025

Imagine a space where the complex challenges of the Canadian justice system are not only analyzed but where concrete solutions emerge.

This is what the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice (CIAJ) is all about. Since 1974, CIAJ brings together individuals and institutions from diverse expertise **to improve the administration of justice across Canada.**

## OUR MISSION

To promote excellence in justice through knowledge, learning and the exchange of ideas..

CIAJ acts as **a conduit for change.** Our **multidisciplinary** approach enables us to **break down silos** and **mobilize diverse perspectives** to develop concrete solutions tailored to the **real needs of the Canadian population.**

## COMMUNITY

JUDGES, LAWYERS,  
LEGISLATIVE DRAFTERS,  
INDIGENOUS ELDERS,  
ACADEMICS,  
POLICYMAKERS, SOCIAL  
WORKERS, LAW  
ENFORCEMENT...

Join us and our members in shaping the future of justice.



**+10 000**

Subscribers

**+2 600**

Members

## PROGRAMS



**+2 000**

Program participants in judicial and non judicial activities and conferences.



**+300**

Speakers and subject matter experts



**+40**

Programs, in person and online  
CONFERENCES, SYMPOSIUM, ROUND TABLES, SUMMITS,  
SPECIALIZED SEMINARS, WEBINARS, CUSTOMIZED  
TRAINING COURSES...

## INDEPENDENT & PAN-CANADIAN



CIAJ is a multidisciplinary, independent, pan-Canadian, not-for-profit network across Canada.

## IN ALL FAIRNESS

A podcast channel to explore ways of improving the administration of justice in Canada.



**50 039**

Downloads of our podcasts.



**#CLAWBIES 2023**

Best Podcast Award

## BLOG POSTS



**+120**

Blog posts and expert analysis to contribute to a more efficient justice system.

**More than an event organizer, CIAJ is a driving force for change, building bridges where none existed before, for a justice system that reflects our society.**



[WWW.CIAJ-ICAJ.CA](http://WWW.CIAJ-ICAJ.CA)

# 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.

**Join CIAJ: develop yourself, shape a better world, and make a difference.**

Become a member of CIAJ and benefit from cutting-edge training and research programs, connect with key players in the system, and contribute to improving the Canadian justice system. As a member, you'll also enjoy exclusive benefits such as discount on every in-person program, free webinars and the accumulation of CPD hours.

**[JOIN CIAJ](#)**



## 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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**Montréal, Québec, Canada**  
**H3S 1Z6**  
**Tel: 514 -731-2855**  
**Email: [ciaj@ciaj-icaj.ca](mailto:ciaj@ciaj-icaj.ca)**

**OCTOBER 28-30, 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.

**NOVEMBER 18-19, 2025 | OTTAWA**

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

