



Building Resilience in Indigenous Youth - the Influences of the Earlier Years

Webinar

December 14, 2023

Guest Speaker Bios



Dr. Chiachen (Chi) Cheng is a Child & Adolescent, Adult Psychiatrist and Physician-Researcher. Dr. Cheng completed her General Psychiatry training and Child & Adolescent Psychiatry sub-specialization at McMaster University. She received a Masters of Public Health at Harvard University.

In 2006, she moved to Northern Ontario with her partner and young family. She currently lives in Thunder Bay and is the proud mother of two adult sons, and one teenage daughter.

Dr. Cheng was Medical Director at several programs, including at First Place (Early Psychosis Program in NW Ontario), Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Services at both Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Care Group, Thunder Bay.

In 2016, Dr. Cheng joined the faculty at Northern Ontario School of Medicine University. She has become a core member of the post-graduate program in Psychiatry, initially as the program's Research Coordinator, Site Director in Thunder Bay, and now Program Director for Psychiatry.

Dr. Cheng's research interests are early intervention for youth mental health, evidence based practice as it interfaces with pediatric and youth mental health policy, and models of care for vulnerable populations in northern or remote settings. She has received research grant funding from institutions such as Ontario Trillium Foundation – Youth Opportunities Fund, PSI Foundation Mid-Career Award, and Canadian Institutes of Health Research.



Dr. Jean-Victor Wittenberg is a staff psychiatrist specializing in infant psychiatry at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. He is an Associate Professor at the University of Toronto. His primary interest is in the influence of relationships and stress on psychological development and health in infants, children and youth. He has worked in Canada and internationally to develop, evaluate and teach treatment interventions that promote children's mental health. He consulted with Tel Aviv University to develop a network of infant psychiatry clinics across Israel. He was first head of the Child and Family Psychotherapies Program at the University of Toronto, Division of Child Psychiatry. He specializes in work with highly stressed populations including infants and young children with serious medical problems,



those in child protection, infants and children of teen mothers and infants, children, youth and families in First Nations communities. He led an advocacy initiative that resulted in the federal government's creation of the Compassionate Family Care Benefit to support families in which a child, spouse or parent is gravely ill. More recently he has focused on stigma, misinformation and disinformation as causal and perpetuating factors in the social gradient leading to severe skews in health outcomes for those at the lower end of the social gradient. The most recent focus of this work is on the huge disparity of First Nations children and families in the child protection system.