

CADDAC 2026 ADHD Conference

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

October 24 & 25, 2026

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Kenny Handelman (Day 1)



Dr. Kenny Handelman is a child, adolescent and adult psychiatrist who specializes in ADHD. He is board certified in Canada and the US and is the founder of The Centre for Integrative Mental Health - a clinic which assesses and treats ADHD across the lifespan.

He is an Assistant Clinical Professor at McMaster University in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neuroscience.

Dr. Handelman is the best-selling author of *Attention Difference Disorder*, a book for parents of kids and teens with ADHD.

Dr. Handelman speaks internationally on ADHD and has taught doctors in 22 countries across 4 continents. He also has Adult ADHD himself.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Joan Flood (Day 2)



Dr. Joan Flood is a family physician with a special focus on ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorder in both children and adults. She practices at the Possibilities Clinic in Toronto where she sees individuals of all ages from across Ontario for assessments of ADHD.

For seven years, Dr. Flood served on the board of CADDRA, the Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance — the national organization that sets the standards for how ADHD is diagnosed and treated in Canada. She now sits on the CADDRA Advisory Council.

During her years on CADDRA's Board, Dr. Flood led the committee responsible for advocacy and public awareness, and co-authored a national report, *Creating Equitable Access to ADHD Care in Canada*, submitted to the federal Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. She also authored CADDRA's official position statements on cannabis and ADHD (2020 and 2024).

Dr. Flood chaired CADDRA's national conferences in 2019 (Toronto) and 2024 (Winnipeg), each bringing together several hundred doctors, psychologists, and health professionals to learn and discuss the best approach to ADHD assessment and management. Current work includes contributing to the fifth edition of Canada's national ADHD practice guidelines and collaborating with the College of Family Physicians of Canada and the Canadian Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists to strengthen

mental-health training for family doctors. Dr. Flood is well known as a lecturer and teacher on ADHD and has contributed to many accredited programs on ADHD assessment and management.

Dr. Flood earned a medical degree from the University of Manitoba and an undergraduate degree in physiology from McGill University. She is a Fellow of the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Doron Almagor (Day 2)



Dr. Doron Almagor is a Child, Adolescent, and Adult Psychiatrist with Royal College subspecialty certification in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. He completed his medical degree and psychiatry residency at the University of Toronto, where he held a faculty appointment for 30 years and led the core ADHD lecture series for psychiatry residents. He served for 20 years on staff at Toronto Western Hospital (University Health Network), including in the Tourette Syndrome Neurodevelopmental Clinic, and held staff and resident supervision roles at the SickKids Centre for Community Mental Health.

Dr. Almagor is the former Chair of CADDRA, the Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance, the current Chair of the CADDRA Advisory Council, and a member of the Psychopharmacology Chapter Committee for the Canadian ADHD Practice Guidelines. He is a past President of the Ontario Psychiatric Association. He is a co-author of the World Federation of ADHD International Consensus Statement and has published on ADHD pharmacotherapy, including studies of long-acting methylphenidate formulations. He is currently Principal Investigator of an investigator-initiated Phase IV trial of methylphenidate in older adults with ADHD. He has presented internationally, including at the World Congress on ADHD, CHADD, and CADDRA conferences. He is also the co-author, with Dr. Brenda Miles, of the forthcoming children's book *What to Do When Paying Attention Is a Mystery* (Magination Press, American Psychological Association). Dr. Almagor leads a team of over 130 staff members as he is the Founder and Director of the Possibilities Clinic in Toronto, a multidisciplinary clinic serving patients across Ontario and parts of Canada through in-person and telemedicine care and specializing in ADHD, Autism, Learning Disorders and other neurodiverse conditions.

CADDAC wishes to thank the generous sponsors of our 18th Annual ADHD Conference



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The ADHD Resilience Paradox: How to Bounce Back Without Burning Out – Aaron Bailey

Aaron Bailey is a Professional Certified Coach, certified ADHD Life Coach, speaker, educator, and founder of Aaron Bailey ADHD Coaching. Drawing from both professional expertise and lived experience with ADHD, a learning disability, anxiety, and depression, Aaron is passionate about helping individuals better understand how their brains work and developing strategies with his clients that allow them to thrive.

Aaron holds advanced ADHD coach training from the ADD Coach Academy (ADDCA), where he currently serves as an Assessor and Faculty member and is completing the Leader-in-Training program. He has also facilitated ADHD coaching groups for the Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC), supporting youth and families across Canada. With a background in Child and Youth Services and Human Services, Aaron has spent almost two decades supporting individuals with ADHD, learning disabilities, mental health challenges, and trauma. Today, his work extends beyond coaching to include presentations, workshops, and professional development for educators, workplaces, parents, and ADHDers of all ages. Through his engaging, strengths-based approach, Aaron has educated thousands of people on ADHD, executive functioning, resilience, and neurodiversity.

Known for his authenticity, humour, and practical insights, Aaron's mission is simple: to help people stop fighting their brains and start working with them.



Wired Differently at Midlife: ADHD, Menopause, and the Women Who Were Missed – Ammara Wood

Ammara Wood (she/her) is an ADHD Coach, Neurodiversity Consultant, and Menopause Educator, and the founder of Blissfully ND Wellness.

As a Black, late-identified ADHD mom of neurodivergent kids navigating perimenopause herself, she blends lived experience and professional expertise at the intersection of hormones, neurodivergence, and identity. She holds credentials as an ADHD Coach, Neurodiversity Accessible Provider, and Menopause Support Specialist, and her work bridges individual coaching for late-diagnosed ADHD women in midlife with organizational consulting for neuroinclusive workplaces. Known for making complex neurodivergent and hormonal experiences feel deeply seen, Ammara helps women and organizations move from overwhelm to clarity — because capacity isn't the problem; the system just wasn't designed with their brains in mind.



ADHD and Cannabis Use: Compulsion, Recreation or Self-Medication? – Dr. Maria Rogers

Dr. Maria A. Rogers, PhD, C.Psych., is a clinical psychologist, Full Professor at Carleton University, and the Canada Research Chair in Child and Youth Mental Health and Well-being. Her research and clinical work focus on ADHD, neurodevelopmental disabilities, parenting, and family functioning, and she has authored more than 80 peer-reviewed publications, including her recent review of ADHD treatments in the British Medical Journal.

Dr. Rogers is the author of the forthcoming book *Parenting When You Have ADHD (and Your Kid Probably Does Too!): Cultivating Confidence and Calm While Parenting with an ADHD Brain*, which translates research and clinical expertise into practical guidance for families. An internationally recognized speaker, she is passionate about helping parents, clinicians, and educators better understand ADHD through compassionate, strengths-based, and evidence-informed approaches.



ADHD & Sleep: Understanding and optimizing the other half of the day – Dr. Chris Richards-Bentley

Dr. Chris Richards-Bentley, MEd, MD, FRCPC (he/him) is the lead physician at Springboard Clinic and is widely recognized for his expertise in ADHD. He serves as a provincial consultant in ADHD and transitional age psychiatry within the Ontario Telemedicine Network's eConsult program.

He has published on ADHD in physician populations and has contributed to enhancing the assessment and management of ADHD within Toronto Paramedic Services. Dr. Richards-Bentley continues to support physician education as a supervisor, lecturer, and curriculum developer within the University of Toronto Department of Psychiatry. He also serves as co-chair of the Trans Health Committee within the University of Toronto's student health services.

Dr. Richards-Bentley completed a Master of Education focused on narrative histories of minority communities in Canada and has taught Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to physicians in Ethiopia through the Toronto Addis Ababa Psychiatry Project. He has delivered lectures on ADHD in emergency psychiatry settings, transitional age youth, gifted and high-functioning individuals, and individuals with other forms of neurodivergence. His clinical interests include global health and the treatment of ADHD in the context of anxiety, mood disorders, and trauma-related conditions.



Seeing Strengths, Building Skills, and Empowering Children with ADHD – Dr. Julie Desjardins

Dr. Julie Desjardins is a Clinical Psychologist, and the Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Child, Adolescent, and Family Centre of Ottawa (CAFCO). She provides therapy to children, adolescents, and families. She also conducts comprehensive social-emotional and psychoeducational assessments. Dr. Desjardins takes an integrative and client-centered approach to treatment, grounding her work in attachment theory while drawing from evidence-based modalities such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), and Emotion-Focused Family Therapy (EFFT). Her work emphasizes collaboration, strengths, and helping children, adolescents, and families build the skills and confidence needed to thrive.

In addition to her clinical practice, Dr. Desjardins is a Clinical Professor and Replacement Professor at the University of Ottawa, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses. She also provides clinical supervision to doctoral students in Clinical Psychology.

Dr. Desjardins is deeply committed to clinical teaching and mentorship. She is the recipient of the Harvey Brooker Award for Excellence in Clinical Teaching from the Ontario Psychological Association (OPA) and the OPA Award of Merit, the Association's highest honour, recognizing significant contributions to the profession of psychology.



When Smart Girls Struggle: Exploring high-masking presentations of ADHD and autism in girls and women – Dr. Marie Hooper

Dr. Marie Hooper is a Clinical-Developmental Psychologist (Supervised Practice) and the Founder of Flourish Health Services, a neurodiversity-affirming interdisciplinary practice in Toronto. Her clinical work focuses on the assessment and support of autistic and ADHD individuals across the lifespan, with interest in high-masking presentations in girls, women, and gender-diverse individuals.

Dr. Hooper is known for her work helping families, educators, and clinicians better understand the often-overlooked ways that ADHD and autism can present beyond traditional stereotypes. Her areas of interest include autism in girls and women, demand avoidance, giftedness and twice-exceptionality, executive functioning, anxiety, and neurodivergent burnout.

In addition to her clinical work, Dr. Hooper teaches psychology at York University and regularly provides consultation and training to schools, healthcare professionals, and community organizations. As a late-identified autistic and ADHD woman herself, she brings both professional expertise and lived experience to her work, advocating for more accurate, affirming, and accessible pathways to identification and support.



When Brightness Masks Struggle: Understanding the Hidden Needs of Gifted and Twice-Exceptional Learners with ADHD – Barbara Lazarou

Barbara is an experienced educator, author, and advocate with decades of experience supporting gifted and twice-exceptional learners. She holds degrees in Political Science and Gifted Education and is currently pursuing a PhD in Special Education, where her research focuses on the experiences and development of twice-exceptional individuals. Throughout her career, Barbara has worked across elementary and secondary education, championing evidence-informed practices that address both academic potential and social-emotional well-being. A frequent presenter at parent and professional conferences, Barbara is committed to helping educators, families, and clinicians better understand the unique strengths, challenges, and developmental pathways of gifted and neurodivergent learners. She is an active member of international professional organizations including the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) and the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children (WCGTC), Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), and remains engaged in research, advocacy, and professional learning that advance outcomes for exceptional learners. Barbara consults with families, educators, and schools to support the identification, development, and well-being of gifted and twice-exceptional learners, helping people better understand themselves, realize their potential, and navigate their unique developmental journeys.



When Brightness Masks Struggle: Understanding the Hidden Needs of Gifted and Twice-Exceptional Learners with ADHD – Melanie Harsch

Melanie is a Registered Social Worker (RSW) with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), a Master of Social Work (MSW), and brings years of experience working with children, youth, and adults both locally and abroad. Melanie's special interest in working with and supporting gifted children and their families grew out of her experience parenting two gifted daughters, experiencing the amazing guidance of the Davidson Young Scholars program (DYS), an organization for families with profoundly intelligent children, and volunteering with the gifted organization Partners for the Advancement of Gifted Education (PAGE), a gifted support organization. Melanie began her therapy career at a clinic for children and families, and after a move to Qingdao, China, she enjoyed years working as a school counselor at an international school. Currently she sees clients in person at KaZa Family Centre in Toronto and also works for an international clinic, meeting virtually with clients across the globe.



When Brightness Masks Struggle: Understanding the Hidden Needs of Gifted and Twice-Exceptional Learners with ADHD – Jim Rea

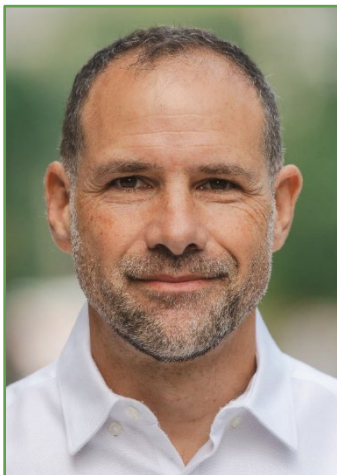
As the father of two gifted children, Jim is deeply aware of the challenges that bright youth face in the public school system in order to thrive emotionally, socially and academically. Jim is the president of the Association for Bright Children Ontario (ABC Ontario) and is co-chair of the Provincial Parents Associations Advisory Committee on SEAC (PAAC on SEAC). He is also a Parent Mentor and a Community Manager for Uniquely Bright Life (formerly Bright & Quirky), an organization that provides education and support for parents of twice exceptional youth.



Why ADHD Brains Get Stuck on Screens – and What Families Can Actually Do – Harshi Sritharan

Harshi Sritharan, MSW, RSW, is a Registered Social Worker, psychotherapist, speaker, and Founder & CEO of Green Forest Therapy. Green Forest Therapy provides specialized support individuals across the lifespan—from children and students to entrepreneurs, executives, and high-performing professionals—helping them navigate executive functioning challenges, emotional regulation, learning differences, anxiety, and the impact of technology on attention and daily functioning, through therapy, coaching and educational services. Harshi integrates neuroscience, behavioural science, psychoeducation, and coaching principles to translate complex research into practical, real-world strategies. In addition to her clinical work, she provides workshops, training, and consultation for

parents, educators, schools, professionals, and organizations on ADHD, executive functioning, emotional regulation, and digital well-being.



Why ADHD Brains Get Stuck on Screens – and What Families Can Actually Do – Eli Singer

Eli Singer is the Founder and CEO of Offline.now and author of Offline.now: A Practical Guide to Healthy Digital Balance. Offline.now is a digital wellness platform focused on practical, shame-free digital balance, helping people reclaim time, focus, and joy in a world of endless screens through expert guidance, educational content, and a growing directory of specialists. Eli's work focuses on practical behaviour-change tools that help individuals, families, and professionals reduce digital overwhelm without shame or all-or-nothing rules.



From Hanging In to Hanging Out: How to Help School-Aged Kids Find Their Friendship Fit – Lanni Zinberg-Swartz

Lanni is a speech-language pathologist who is passionate about supporting neurodivergent children, teens and young adults to form fun and meaningful connections with others. She works primarily with individuals who are Autistic and/or have ADHD, and is the parent of a young adult with ADHD. She has divided her time between work in the private and public system since completing her degree in 1998. Lanni is the owner/Director of Connections SLP, a virtual SLP and OT practice that supports all of the skills necessary for the development of friendships. In the public system, Lanni has worked with Child Development Programs at Oak Valley Health since 2000. She is part of the management team for the York Region Preschool Speech and Language Program (YRPSLP), working as the Clinical Leader for

Autism Services and Augmentative Communication Consultation Services. Lanni is also a long-time member of the Diagnostic Autism Clinical Services team for Children's Treatment Network, one of Ontario's five Autism Diagnostic Hubs, providing diagnostic assessment for school aged children and

teens, many of whom also have ADHD. During her many years as a front-line speech-language pathologist at YRPSLP, Lanni facilitated More Than Words® and TalkAbility™ programs for hundreds of families, spending hours in homes across York Region coaching parents during playdates. At Connections SLP, she created PlayGreat, a unique group program for parents of neurodivergent school-aged kids that empowers parents to learn how to coach their children in natural social situations. Lanni was recognized by the Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists for outstanding contributions to the association and the profession and was the 2020 recipient of OSLA's Honours of the Association award.



From Deficit to Design: How ADHD Children Are Challenging Us to Evolve Parenting, Education, and Emotional Intelligence – Lara Dawn

Lara Dawn is an international speaker, educator, author, ADHD parenting specialist, and founder of The ADHD Village, a global community dedicated to helping families move from frustration and shame to connection, confidence, and joy.

With more than 25 years of experience in education, Lara has worked with thousands of children, parents, and educators, helping them better understand the ADHD brain through the lenses of neuroscience, emotional intelligence, positive psychology, and nervous system regulation. Known for her ability to translate complex research into practical, actionable strategies, Lara empowers families to shift from surviving to thriving.

She is the creator of LOVE Ü Parenting, Warrior Mamas, and Becoming Ü, transformative programs that support parents, women, and youth in building emotional resilience, meaningful relationships, self-awareness, and personal growth. Through coaching, retreats, workshops, and online communities, Lara helps people reconnect with themselves and create lasting change from the inside out. Lara is also a certified RRT (Rapid Relief Technique) practitioner, incorporating tapping, nervous system regulation, mindfulness, and positive psychology into her work to support emotional wellbeing and sustainable transformation.

As the host of The evOLVED Brain podcast and creator of the ADHD Family Summit, Lara has reached over 20 thousand families worldwide with her message that ADHD is not a deficit to be fixed, but a design to be understood. Her work challenges traditional narratives around neurodiversity while inspiring a more compassionate, connected, and emotionally intelligent future for children, families, schools, and communities.

Whether speaking on stages, leading retreats, facilitating workshops, or coaching families, Lara's mission remains the same: helping people understand themselves and each other more deeply so they can live, love, and lead with greater connection, confidence, and purpose.



How to Organize your Clothes & Avoid Laundry Woes – Nathalie Pedicelli

Nathalie Pedicelli is an ICF trained ADHD Organizer Coach combining the knowledge of an ADHD Coach with the experience of a Professional Organizer. With 18 years of experience helping the adult ADHD community, she has developed several group programs that focus on developing life skills and strategy implementation: decluttering & organizing, time management & planning, emotional regulation, procrastination & relationship management.

Nathalie co-designed and facilitates the Adult ADHD Group Coaching program for the Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC). Helping clients with ADHD increase their productivity by learning how to use a planner effectively has become her signature work.



Reclaiming Unstructured Time Beyond the Workday: Neuroaffirming Tools for Transitions, Downtime & Wellbeing – Rhiannon Carter

Rhiannon Carter is a certified ADHD Coach and former educator with over 25 years of experience providing support to the ADHD community. As the founder of Empower You ADHD Coaching, she specializes in working with adults, post-secondary students, and parents, helping them build practical strategies and confidence in managing ADHD across all areas of life. Rhiannon brings both professional expertise and lived experience to her work, helping clients design customized, solution-focused interventions.

She has also had the privilege of co-designing a national Adult ADHD Group Coaching program for the Centre of ADHD Awareness, Canada (CADDAC) and facilitates these programs. She is based in Calgary, Alberta and coaches folks across North America. Rhiannon is a Professionally Certified Coach with the ICF, an Associate ADHD Certified Coach with MentorCoach, and a Permanent Professionally Certified Teacher in Alberta.