

Parents as Partners Conference

Workshop Session: A2, B2, C2

Room: 200B

Workshop Title: The Medicine Wheel Teachings for Health & Wellness

Presenter: Tsitra McKay, BSW, MSW

Tsitra McKay is Mi'kmaq and Scots Canadian from Bracebridge Ontario. She began her journey into Social Work in the Community Health Worker Training program at Anishnawbe Health where she learned about the effects of colonization and the systemic or "root causes" of the issues that affect the Indigenous Communities today. Her training focused on understanding issues like residential school syndrome, poverty, addiction, poor mental and physical health, lateral violence, oppression, homelessness and low education, as well as over representation in the criminal justice system and the Children's Aid. Traditional teachings from Elders were also a major component of learning while in the Community Health Worker training program. Subsequently, it is these teachings that she brings with her as a Social Worker, Child and Youth Counsellor and teacher.

Tsitra completed her Bachelor of Social Work at York University and her Master's in Social Work at York with a focus on continuing and expanding her research on the precolonial and postcolonial educational experiences of Indigenous people and the direct linkages to the social determinants of health and corresponding social policy. Tsitra is currently employed at First Nations School of Toronto and teaches Indigenous perspectives in social work at York University part time.

Description:

This workshop will share approaches, tools and resources which can assist parents and community leaders to support family and community health and wellness. The Medicine Wheel is a tool used by many Indigenous peoples in Canada and for various purposes and involves looking at all things in life through a holistic lens. It represents the four directions, four elements of nature, four elements of one's wellbeing (emotional, mental, spiritual and physical) and the four seasons to name a few. Traditional teachings about the Wheel include an understanding of how everything in life and within the universe is interconnected, interrelated and interdependent upon one another for survival. Balance, harmony, respect and unity are just a few of the values inherent to the Medicine Wheel teachings. Participants of the workshop will have opportunities to engage in individual and group activities and learn ways they can apply a holistic approach into their own lives.