3rd National Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Conference

“The fields of VTRA and Crisis Trauma Response are inseparably connected.”

April 6th - 7th 2017

The Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel, Banff, Alberta
Years ago in their collaboration, Dr. Marleen Wong and J. Kevin Cameron stated that “violence begets trauma and trauma begets violence”. This dynamic can become a self-perpetuating cycle and thus the title of our 3rd National Conference: “The Fields of Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) and Crisis/Trauma Response are Inseparably Connected”

Many violence prevention and threat assessment practices currently in use are heavily focused on individual pathology and behavioral indicators “in the moment” with a limited view to the complex environmental and systemic factors that prevent educators, mental health and law enforcement professions from a more dynamic assessment of risk over time. After high profile violence in all its forms, news media accounts often report that professionals “didn’t see it coming” or embrace the long standing fallacy that he or she “just snapped.” Sadly, these pronouncements often reflect situations in which one individual with some authority has made such a determination alone relying on limited knowledge, ignoring serious warning signs, or taking a protective stance in support of the threatening student or staff member. Stereotypical assumptions about a student’s family background or a faculty member’s brilliance contribute little to increasing the safety of the student body or campus and even less to the troubled individual who is in need of intervention and help.

This conference will provide conceptual frameworks that underscore the work of a VTRA Team whose members consider pre-incident dynamics that influence violent thoughts and behaviors. Utilizing the unique expertise of team members – an educator, a mental health professional and law enforcement - will help in a more comprehensive understanding of violence as an evolutionary process. Using a “trauma lens” through which to view numerous case studies and real life examples, the presenters will examine the clinical and developmental issues of the child/adolescent and adults and the facilitating factors operating within the systems that serve students and others. The conference will also highlight practices that facilitate and/or hinder collecting and analyzing available data from school and community sources and focus on pre-incident events that foreshadow violent behavior. The perspective of this conference is truly one of prevention. The presenters hope to add to the knowledge and practice of risk and threat assessment in schools and communities and to prevent all forms of violence to self and others.

To register visit: CCTATR.COM
J. KEVIN CAMERON, M.Sc., R.S.W., B.C.E.T.S., B.C.S.C.R
Board Certified Expert in Traumatic Stress Diplomate, American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress

“The Fields of Crisis/Trauma Response and Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) are inseparably connected”. Mr. Cameron will present the early foundation of the VTRA and Traumatic Event Systems (TES) Models from the original focus on individual functioning to the now broader role of human “systems” functioning. That two people can be exposed to the same trauma and yet respond in very different ways, and at different times, speaks to the need for comprehensive “data-driven assessments”; assessments that consider the “anxiety field” that each person of concern maneuvers through. The best way to determine how an individual, family, school, community, or even a nation will respond to trauma is to understand their pre-trauma functioning. The best way to intervene is to use that historical information and overlay it with “active” risk enhancers to develop “data-driven interventions”.

DR. MARLEEN WONG, Ph.D.
Marleen Wong is Senior Associate Dean and clinical professor at the USC School of Social Work. Formerly the Director of Mental Health, Crisis Teams and Suicide Prevention Programs at the Los Angeles Unified School District, she has been engaged in a 19 year community based research partnership with RAND Health and the UCLA Partnered Health Research Center. She is currently the Principal Investigator for the SAMHSA funded Trauma Treatment Adaptation Center for Resilience, Hope and Wellness in Schools.

Identified as one of the “pre-eminent experts in school crisis and disaster recovery” by the White House and the “architect of school-safety programs” by The Wall Street Journal, she has developed school based crisis intervention and disaster response and recovery training in the US, Canada, Israel, and Asia after school shootings, earthquakes, typhoons and acts of terrorism.

Wong has been a consultant to the Educational Directorate/Pentagon, the US Departments of Education, Justice, Health and Human Services, RAND Health, the MacArthur Foundation, and the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving. She has served as a member on the SAMHSA National Advisory Council, the Advisory Board of the Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland, The Institute of Medicine Board of Neuroscience and Behavioral Health, the National Expert Advisory Committee for the National Native Children’s Trauma Center at the University of Montana and the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program at UCLA. She has been an invited speaker and panelist for White House Summits since the Columbine High School tragedy, most recently at the White House Summit on Trauma Informed Approaches in Schools: Supporting Girls of Colour and Rethinking Discipline held on September 19, 2016.

She is one of the original developers of the evidence based Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) and Psychological First Aid for Schools: Listen Protect Connect.

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“Research to Practice: Lessons Learned from High Profile Violence” Dr. Wong will take us on a journey from her work with some of the highest profile traumas in America and beyond over the past 25 years including her early work during the 1992 Los Angeles Riots to the Oklahoma City Bombing, Sandy Hook School Shooting, and the San Bernardino Terrorist Attacks. She has been invited to the White House by the last five sitting Presidents of the United States because of her leading work in violence prevention and trauma response. She has led in the education of police officers across America in all these areas as they culminate in the area of mental health for young people. Dr. Wong had a profound influence on the early work of Kevin Cameron and the current evolution of the VTRA and TES Models now. A significant part of this Keynote will be a semi-structured “conversation” between Dr. Wong and conference participants facilitated by Mr. Cameron.

THEOREN FLEURY, Former NHL All-Star, Stanley Cup winner and Olympic Gold Medalist, two-time bestselling author of *Playing with Fire* and *Conversations with a Rattlesnake*, healing motivator, person of great life experience and knowledge in the field of relational trauma.

Theo’s mission statement is to help as many people get to where they want to go has taken shape in many forms, whether meeting people for a brief moment on the street or as a dynamic inspirational speaker with the intention of creating healing through conversation. He loves people, their stories and their journeys. He is committed to daily transformation through personal growth through self-reflection, mindfulness and new action. His compassionate spirit allows others to feel safe and whole through experiencing his vulnerability.

Theo has been awarded the Canadian Humanitarian Award, The Queen’s Jubilee Medallion, he is an Honorary Chief and recipient of the Aboriginal Indspire Award. In 2014 Theo was awarded with an honorary doctorate in Science from University of Guelph-Humber for outstanding contributions to the Mental Health of Canadians. Theo pursues excellence in all areas of his life. Most recently Theo was bestowed with a second honorary doctorate in Laws from Brandon University in recognition for his contributions combating child sexual abuse and for his outstanding efforts to promote healing and recovery.

JOE CALENDINO, Executive Director, Yo Bro Yo Girl Youth Initiative

Joe has over 8 years of experience working with youth in some of the city’s most vulnerable neighbourhoods. His experience, as well as his unique personal background, motivated him to create Yo Bro Yo Girl Youth Initiative in 2009. As a former member of the Hells Angels and recovering addict, Joe has experienced firsthand the consequences of his choices. He went from a successful businessman in the mobile phone business to living, drug addicted on the streets of Vancouver after losing everything to gangs and drugs. Joe was honoured with the Courage to Come Back Award in 2014 for overcoming his addictions and using his experience to help others. Along with his Business Degree, Joe holds a certificate in Substance Use from the Justice Institute of BC and is a certified black-belt in Jiu-Jitsu.
MELANIE REED-ZUKOWSKI, M.Ed., Registered Psychologist

Melanie Reed-Zukowski is a Registered Psychologist and a Certified Teacher with over 31 years of experience working at the school and district level. She is a VTRA Level I Trainer and co-author of the School District’s 3rd Edition VTRA Protocol. She has served as the District’s Crisis Response Leader, and is part of the Child Trauma Academy’s NME trainer program. Ms. Reed-Zukowski is also a consultant to the Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response. She has participated on a Southern Alberta committee to explore trauma/crisis response supports for rural communities, provided psychological support internationally in a number of high profile traumatic events.

When the Unthinkable Happens: Providing Support Following a Natural Disaster and a Terror Attack

Ms. Reed-Zukowski will share her experiences on the ground in the aftermath of two high profile international incidents. In 2010, she was one of three Canadian professionals asked to join the psychology team with Project Medishare, an American organization running trauma hospitals (pediatric and adult) out of tents beside the Port-au-Prince airport runways because their teaching hospital had been extensively damaged in the earthquake. And while worlds apart, her work in Nice, France, where on behalf of the B.C. Government, she assisted in the aftermath of the 2016 Nice, France terrorist attack which killed 80 people during the Bastille Day celebrations on the Promenade des Anglais. She provided support to 101 students and chaperones from a British Columbia school district that were in Nice the night of the attack.

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