



2025 CFNU Biennial Convention  
Education Days

June 3-4, 2025

Course outlines  
and learning objectives

## **Workshop #1**

### **The Other Wet Floor: psychological and emotional occupational wellness for helping and caring professions**

**Facilitator:** JD Gilmour

#### **Description**

“The Other Wet Floor” is a workshop for individuals who face the psychological and emotional risks of working in helping and caring professions. This workshop takes a ground-up approach to understanding compassion fatigue, secondary trauma, burnout and moral distress; participants are invited to take a look at how their work contributes to the development of each phenomenon and the overall impact to their well-being. Most importantly, this workshop honours that those in the helping profession perform challenging emotional work. Participants are encouraged to change the belief that they are to blame for their distress. Instead, they are invited to consider how their experiences are normal and appropriate for the work that they do.

#### **Objectives**

During this workshop, you will:

- Be better able to identify your own compassion fatigue, burnout and secondary trauma.
- Have the appropriate language to check in with each other and to avoid situations of crisis by accessing help sooner.
- Explore career-sustaining behaviours and discuss strategies to improve your overall wellness at work, adopting a “mission-based mindset” and accepting the realities of trauma-informed work.

## **Workshop #2**

**Retirement – the next chapter: a practical guide** (back by popular demand)

**Facilitator:** Jim Yih

### **Description**

Choosing to retire is one of our most important life decisions, yet many workers feel unprepared for the transition and lack the financial literacy required for retirement. Can you maintain your lifestyle in retirement? How will decisions you make impact your retirement? In this course, we will examine the financial aspects of retirement, including the role of CPP, OAS, pensions, RRSPs, RRIFs and other income sources. We will discuss other considerations in transitioning to retirement, including maintaining our mental, physical and psychological well-being.

**Note:** Pre-course preparation: know what type of pension plan you have (e.g., defined benefit, defined contribution, RRSP, collective agreement language, etc.). If you are unsure, please contact your union.

### **Objectives**

During this workshop, you will:

- Identify the role of pensions, including defined benefit, defined contribution and others.
- Understand approximately how much money you need to retire, including the impact of investments, RRSPs, RRIFs, CPP and OAS.
- Understand the direction that can be provided by your collective agreement.
- Know the implications of working beyond retirement age or retiring early.
- Set realistic expectations for retirement, that recognize the non-financial factors supporting a successful and independent transition.

## **Workshop #3**

### **Yoga and dispute resolution**

**Facilitators:** Barb Campbell and Lee Coughlan (UNA)

#### **Description**

In this course, participants will explore the connections between yoga and dispute resolution. Participants will participate in yoga practice (using chairs) and contemplate their personal experience. We will discuss how what we learn, our experience and practice on the mat translates to how we navigate our role in managing labour relations and other disputes. The course will examine the science behind how yoga prepares and “repairs” a conflict specialist. The course will also draw on principles of yoga practice to explore three main themes in conflict resolution: settling into discomfort, generating options and managing emotional responses to disputes.

#### **Objectives**

During this workshop, you will:

- Engage in yoga practice to prepare physically, emotionally and psychologically for the demands of conflict management.
- Understand the distinction between dispute management and dispute resolution.
- Explore the connection between mindful movement and effective communication.
- Examine the concepts of settlement and compromise and how they may impact conflict management.
- Reflect on your habits in conflict situations and the impact on your own and others’ behaviours.

## **Workshop #4**

### **Embracing professional inclusion: fostering diversity and equity in health care**

**Facilitator:** Augie Jones

#### **Description**

Professional inclusion is essential in creating diverse, equitable and high-performing nursing teams. This workshop will explore the significance of fostering an inclusive work environment where all health care professionals, regardless of their background, feel valued and supported. Participants will discuss the impact of inclusive practices on team dynamics, patient care and overall workplace satisfaction. Through interactive discussions, attendees will learn strategies for promoting diversity, addressing unconscious biases and creating supportive spaces for underrepresented groups within the nursing profession. The session will emphasize the importance of inclusive leadership and how it contributes to improved patient outcomes, team performance and personal wellness.

#### **Objectives**

During this workshop, you will:

- Understand the value of professional inclusion and its impact on patient care and team dynamics.
- Identify unconscious personal “blind spots” that affect workplace culture and strategies to create a wider professional and personal perspective.
- Explore practical approaches for fostering inclusive and diverse work environments in health care settings, that create a more safe and positive space for clients and staff.

## **Workshop #5**

### **Nurse-patient ratios: balancing care for better outcomes**

**Facilitators:** Alex Hamill (CFNU), Justin Hiltz (NSNU), Tarya Morel (BCNU), Michelle Mahon (California Nurses Association)

#### **Description**

This workshop will focus on the critical role nurse-patient ratios play in delivering safe high-quality care. Research consistently shows that when nurses are responsible for fewer patients, the risk of medical errors decreases, patient satisfaction improves and health care outcomes are better overall. Conversely, high nurse-patient ratios contribute to burnout, increased stress and compromised care quality. Participants will explore the challenges of maintaining optimal staffing levels. The session will highlight evidence-based strategies for improving ratios, including policy advocacy and innovative care models that support both patients and all health care professionals.

#### **Objectives**

During this workshop, you will:

- Understand the correlation between nurse-patient ratios, patient outcomes and nurse well-being.
- Identify challenges to achieving optimal nurse-patient ratios in health care settings.
- Explore practical strategies and policy solutions to improve nurse-patient ratios for safer and more effective care delivery.

## **Workshop #6**

**The social determinants of health tour** (limit of 32 participants)

**Facilitator:** TBC

### **Description**

Residents of Niagara have a long-standing and deep-rooted interest in the temporary foreign workers system, a system the United Nations has widely critiqued as discriminatory and exploitative. Nurses, health care professionals and their unions recognize the crucial role of social determinants of health in shaping well-being. We understand that health is profoundly influenced by social factors within communities and environments, particularly for migrant workers. This workshop will delve into the community supports available to these workers, focusing on their access to essential resources, health care, transportation, health and safety, and legal services. Participants will have the opportunity to explore these topics in depth.

**Note:** This course is a bus and walking tour. Please dress appropriately with comfortable shoes. Be prepared for moderate physical activity and note that some locations may not be easily accessible by all participants.

### **Objectives**

During this workshop, you will:

- Learn about the role of migrant agriculture workers in our society.
- Understand the resources and challenges to accessing health care and other supports.
- Explore health and safety concerns, including the impacts of COVID and limited access to essential resources.

## **Workshop #7**

### **Climate change and health: implications for nursing and health care practice**

**Facilitators:** Nicole Simms, CASCADES; Stacy Neilson, nurse and activist; Teri Forster, nurse and activist

#### **Description**

This course examines the critical intersections between climate change and health, specifically tailored for nursing and health care professionals. Participants will explore how environmental changes influence health outcomes, and how you as a nurse can communicate and act concretely to address these challenges.

This workshop also empowers health care providers to advocate for plant-based sustainable menu options that benefit patients and promote community health. Participants will explore the health advantages of plant-based diets and strategies to enhance patient care, while educating the public on nutritious choices that support environmental sustainability.

#### **Objectives**

During this workshop, you will:

- Analyze the effects of climate change on health outcomes and identify vulnerable populations at-risk.
- Develop evidence-based interventions and advocacy strategies to address climate-related health issues within your workplace.
- Learn about carbon literacy and how quality improvement (QI) projects can advance sustainability in your workplace.
- Explore strategies for educating patients and communities on the health impacts of climate change, the role of the health care sector and effective strategies to adapt to these challenges.



## **Workshop #8**

### **Getting your message heard in the political world**

**Facilitators:** Kathleen Monk (Monk+Associates), David Cournoyer (UNA)

#### **Description**

When Canadians are polled about their key issues, we consistently find two things: health care is one of their top concerns, and they trust nurses more than just about any other professional. While comforting, this doesn't mean nurses' issues will be top of mind for political decision-makers – especially during the chaos of an election campaign.

We can change that with coordinated and strategic political action. But to do this we need a team of effective nurse activists and influencers. This workshop will help you become one of those influencers.

This dynamic interactive session will help you gain the skills you need to get your message heard over all the background noise. We will walk through the elements you need to become a more effective advocate, so you can tell your story in a memorable and persuasive way to political party decision-makers, candidates, media and voters.

#### **Objectives**

During this workshop, you will know how to:

- Decode the political landscape – and leverage to maximize your impact before, during and after an election campaign.
- Craft messages that speak to the public and decision-makers.
- Use the media to shape the discourse and apply political pressure.
- Turn the unique voices of nurses into political currency through effective storytelling.
- Create a doable action plan tailored to your context and priorities.

## **Workshop #9**

### **Emotional intelligence in health care**

**Facilitator:** Komal Bhasin

#### **Description**

Emotional intelligence (EI) is vital for nurses and health care workers facing the daily pressures of today's health care system. This session explores how EI improves communication, strengthens patient care and enhances resilience in demanding environments. Through practical strategies, participants will learn to better manage their own emotions, understand others and build stronger team dynamics. Tailored to health care professionals, this session provides tools to reduce burnout, enhance empathy and inclusion, and promote a positive workplace culture.

#### **Objectives**

During this workshop, you will:

- Learn to recognize your emotions and understand how they impact your interactions with patients and colleagues.
- Identify strategies for managing your emotional responses.
- Improve your empathy by understanding others' emotions and responding with compassion and awareness.
- Strengthen your communication and teamwork to foster a supportive, inclusive and collaborative work environment.

## **Workshop #10**

### **Understanding the migrant worker experience: a health care perspective**

**Facilitator:** Michelle Tew and Eduardo Huesca (Ontario workers), Jesslyn Froese

#### **Description**

Migrant workers face numerous challenges, including precarious working conditions, inadequate access to health care and limited legal protections. Through the lens of the presenters, who collectively have over 50 years working with Migrant Agricultural Workers, this workshop will explore the intersection of labour issues and health care access for migrant workers, with a focus on the unique health risks they face due to poor working conditions, lack of benefits and barriers to care. Participants will examine the role of health care providers in advocating for the health and well-being of migrant workers, addressing the social determinants of health that disproportionately affect them. The session will also highlight ways to navigate health care systems and community resources to support migrant workers more effectively.

#### **Objectives**

During this workshop, you will:

- Understand the labour issues and health care barriers faced by migrant workers.
- Identify the health risks and social determinants of health specific to the migrant worker population.
- Explore strategies for health care providers to advocate for and improve health care access for migrant workers.

## **Workshop #11**

### **Truth and Reconciliation: the Blanket Exercise (back by popular demand)**

**Facilitators:** Rodger Ross, Alan Kakakaway

#### **Description**

During this interactive workshop participants will walk through history to gain a better understanding on how colonization of Turtle Island, now known as Canada, has impacted the peoples who lived here long before settlers arrived. Through this exercise participants will explore the nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, how this relationship has been damaged over the years and how they can work toward reconciliation.

The Blanket Exercise explores the major themes and recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), examines how federal policies and programs impact the lives of Indigenous peoples in Canada, and identifies what Indigenous peoples and their allies are doing to bring about positive change.

#### **Objectives**

During this workshop, you will:

- Deepen your understanding of the denial of Indigenous peoples' nationhood.
- Learn how the colonization impacted those who were here long before settlers arrived.
- Gain appreciation for our shared history as Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.
- Recognize roles in working towards reconciliation.