


Therapeutic Justice: A Nova Scotian Lens

3rd Atlantic Problem-Solving Courts Conference

Friday, April 28, 2023
Halifax, N.S.



Wellness, or problem-solving courts, were first developed to help treat the issues contributing to an individual coming into conflict with the law. Collaboration and creative problem-solving are central to these programs. The concepts embraced in wellness courts demonstrate a broader commitment to therapeutic justice, including incorporating these concepts, where appropriate, throughout the criminal justice system. That transformation is already underway in some areas. *Therapeutic Justice: A Nova Scotia Lens* will focus on how this province is transforming justice and starting to deliver services differently.



MORNING AGENDA

8:30 a.m. AST Registration for in-person participants

9:00 a.m. AST

Opening Remarks

- The Hon. Pamela S. Williams
Chief Judge, Provincial Court of Nova Scotia
- Makira Armstrong
Dartmouth Wellness Court Graduate

9:15 a.m. AST

Rural Wellness Courts

Establishing a wellness court program requires patience, planning and strong community relationships. It can be a difficult process, even without the unique challenges often experienced in rural communities. This panel discussion will feature lived experiences of rural participants and advice from members of the Bridgewater Wellness Court Team for operating a successful wellness court in a rural setting.

- The Hon. Judge Catherine Benton, Provincial Court of Nova Scotia
- Stephanie Hillson, NS Legal Aid
- Sharon Goodwin, Crown Attorney, NS Public Prosecution Service
- Bridgewater Wellness Court Graduate

10:15 a.m. AST Morning Break

10:30 a.m. AST **A New Approach to Social Work**

Social workers have always been an essential part of the wellness court team. However, their role in the broader justice system continues to evolve, particularly in the area of corrections. This session features staff from Nova Scotia Correctional Services on the partnership between social workers and probation officers, and a new approach to delivering social work in Nova Scotia correctional facilities.

Speakers:

- Chris Hessian, Manager of Case Management & Social Work Services, Central Nova Correctional Facility
- Hannah Cavicchi-Burrows, Social Worker, Central Nova Correctional Facility

11:30 p.m. AST Lunch Break

AFTERNOON AGENDA

12:45 p.m. AST **Hidden Gems: The Unsung Members of the Wellness Court Team**

Most people understand the role of the judge, prosecutors, defence counsel and clinicians on the wellness court team. But there are countless others behind the scenes who help ensure these programs run smoothly. This panel discussion features some of the “hidden gems” of the Dartmouth Wellness Court Team.

Speakers:

- David Terrio & Jeffrey Younger, Nova Scotia Department of Justice - Sheriff Services Division
- DWC Halifax Regional Police Liaison

1:45 p.m. AST **Victim’s Voice**

Therapeutic justice focuses not just on rehabilitating an offender — it also helps rebuild relationships with the people who were harmed. Victims have a voice early on in the process — some choose to participate, while others do not. This session will feature lived experiences of victims and the role that Victim Services plays in supporting them.

Speakers:

- DWC Victim Services Liaison, Nova Scotia Department of Justice
- First Voice Participant

2:30 p.m. AST

Afternoon Break

2:45 p.m. AST**Community Partnerships Advancing Therapeutic Justice**

There is no universal model for wellness courts. Each program is unique to the region it serves, based partly on the health care, housing and other supports available in the community. Strong partnerships with those supporting organizations is key to a participant's success in the program. This panel highlights some of the partnerships across Nova Scotia.

Speakers

- Darryl Tracey, Court Support Worker, Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network (MLSN)
- Emma Halpern, Executive Director, Elizabeth Fry Society
- Leisha Seymour, Executive Director, John Howard Society
- Elizabeth Nkrumah, Wellness Navigator, Nova Scotia Brotherhood
- Doyle Saffire, Veterans Service Team Manager, Veterans Affairs Canada

3:45 p.m. AST**Closing Remarks**

- The Hon. Pamela S. Williams
Chief Judge, Provincial Court of Nova Scotia