

# Understanding Offenders and Offending National Problem-Solving Courts Virtual Conference

Friday, Sept. 17, 2021



In 2019, Nova Scotia hosted its first problem-solving courts conference, one of several events held that year to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the province’s Mental Health Court Program. The conference introduced attendees to problem-solving courts and provided opportunities for people working in the justice, health care and community services sectors in Atlantic Canada to connect with each other, as well as the people participating in these wellness court programs.

This year’s conference — *Understanding Offenders and Offending* — will be a free, virtual event available nationally. The program will take a deeper dive into the unique and often complex cases that problem-solving courts take on, the connection between the offence and an individual’s background and circumstances, and some of the rising trends that court teams are noticing in their courtrooms.



## MORNING AGENDA

**10:45 a.m. AST**      **Opening Remarks**  
The Hon. Pamela S. Williams  
Chief Judge of the Provincial and Family Courts of Nova Scotia

**11:00 a.m. AST**      **Nexus – What’s the connection?**

When it comes to determining a connection between an offence and the circumstances that contributed to an individual coming into contact with the law, can that be clearly defined in eligibility criteria, or are there grey areas? Hear from a panel of prosecutors and defence lawyers from Nova Scotia and Ontario on how they walk this tightrope.

**12:00 p.m. AST      Knowing Your Limits**

Can you support the individual while still protecting the community? Does your court have access to the appropriate treatment options, residential programming and staffing? Hear from a member of the Dartmouth Wellness Court team in Nova Scotia on the importance of understanding your limits and knowing when to say no to a case.

**1:00 p.m. AST      Lunch Break**

**AFTERNOON AGENDA**

**1:30 p.m. AST      Internet Sex Crimes – Not All Sex Offenders are Predators**

The internet is a modern and convenient way for us to connect with the world around us. But there are downsides — youth can access and are getting addicted to internet pornography at younger ages. When they turn 18, many become the next generation of sex offenders. Registered Psychologist Dr. Brad Kelln explores whether we are avoiding our duty to educate in favour of criminalizing misguided youths.

**2:30 p.m. AST      Relationship between Cannabis and Offending**

Understanding the relationship between and the risk of continued cannabis use and offending behaviours — when is the risk too high? This session will consider the potential outcomes of cannabis use during the early adult years. The panel will also examine how the effects of drug use can influence certain psychiatric presentations, including psychosis and how that impacts risk within a wellness court program.

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