



## ***Dermot Hurley MSW***

### **Nurturing Resilience Among Clients and Clinicians in Collaborative Mental Health Care**

Mental health practitioners face significant challenges in staying resilient as a consequence of exposure to high levels of stress and vicarious trauma. Through a large-scale qualitative study on “Narratives of Resilience in Child Welfare Practice” with colleagues in Argentina, Canada and Ireland, Professor Hurley has explored three important questions: 1) How do we understand the concept of resilience? 2) How do we promote resilience in practice? 3) How do stories of resilience help foster resilience in practitioners? In his thought-provoking presentation, Professor Hurley will describe how practitioners construct resilience, and how detecting resilience in clients impacts the resilience of the practitioner.

The results of this study suggest that mental health programs that support resilience in front-line clinicians are indirectly supporting and nurturing resilience in clients. It shifts the focus from a unitary notion of resilience to multiple constructions of resilience, as well as from individual to collective expressions of resilience. This keynote address will help clinicians deal more effectively with work-related stress, through examples drawn from child protection and mental health work with high-risk families. Participants will be invited to re-construct resilience for themselves and for their clients.

As a Professor of Social Work at King’s University College, and an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Western Ontario, Dermot is involved with the education and training of students in various health disciplines. For 20 years Dermot was the Director of the Family Therapy Program at the Child and Adolescent Centre, London Health Sciences Centre, UWO. His clinical practice is focused on multi-generational trauma, and he provides individual, couple and family therapy to people who are living with the legacy of unresolved trauma. He has developed expertise in the assessment of children and adolescents living with traumatic stress as a result of witnessing violence, and has worked with agencies to develop interventions both at the community, family and individual levels to promote the emotional health of families. He is an accomplished author and has published several articles in the field of social work and mental health, more recently from a relational-narrative perspective.