

**CAPL**  
Canadian Academy of  
Psychiatry and the Law



**ACPD**  
Académie canadienne  
de psychiatrie et droit

# 2026 CAPL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

April 26-29, 2026

**30<sup>th</sup>**  
Edition



The Westin Calgary  
320, 4th Avenue SW  
Calgary, AB

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

As a professional organization concerned with advancement of the science and practice of medicine in the specialty of forensic psychiatry, CAPL has established an annual conference devoted to promote standards of practice and further the continuing education of practicing forensic psychiatrists. Held annually in the spring, this conference features a 4-day core scientific program and pre-conference seminars.

### GOALS:

The conference provides attendees with an excellent opportunity to meet virtually with colleagues across the country and discuss their respective clinical, academic and research interests as well as standards governing the practice. The main goals of the conference are dissemination of current knowledge in forensic psychiatry and the related parent field of psychiatry, refresh skills in the fundamentals of the discipline and discuss advances in research relevant to the discipline.

### TARGET AUDIENCE:

Psychiatrists working at the interface of law and psychiatry, and any physician and professional interested in furthering their knowledge in this area.

### GENERAL OBJECTIVES: (for specific learning objectives, see pages 15-29)

At the end of this conference, participants will be able to:

- appreciate the diversity of forensic psychiatry including criminal and civil matters;
- discuss complex clinical cases and recent case law;
- implement treatment programs for mentally disorders offenders;
- directly apply new knowledge into their own practice.

### ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| • <b>Roland Jones, MD (Chair)</b> | • Najat Khalifa, MD   |
| • Julie Bérubé-Fortin, MD         | • Rakesh Lamba, MD  |
| • Alberto Choy, MD                | • Grainne Neilson, MD   |
| • Elizabeth Coleman, MD           |   |
| • Genna di Pinto, MD (Resident)   | • Chantal Goddard, Conference Organizer<br>Goddard Communications |

## PRE-CONFERENCE SEMINARS (\$)

### PRE-CONFERENCE SEMINAR #1

(space is limited, register early!)

Sunday, April 26 - 9:00-12:00

### A Legal Update: Key Canadian Cases Impacting Forensic Psychiatry

#### Presenters:

##### Wendy Ekert

Team Lead and Crown Prosecutor, High Risk Offender Unit  
Alberta Crown Prosecution Service

##### Parminder Johal

Crown Prosecutor, Appeals and Specialized Prosecutions Office  
Alberta Crown Prosecution Service

##### Karuna Ramakrishnan

Crown Prosecutor  
Calgary Crown Prosecution Office, ACPS

#### Learning Objectives:

At the end of the presentation, the participants will be able to:

- Discuss implications of recent cases on expert presentation of evidence to the Court, as well developments on evidence admissibility and reliability.
- In light of appellate decisions, with a focus on recent decisions in Alberta, explain why NCR findings might be overturned by the court.
- Describe the impact of SCC's Bharwani decision and how it has been applied in across Canada.
- Assess the legal perspective on current issues and trends in Dangerous and Long-Term offender applications in Canada.

#### Description:

This pre-conference workshop will review recent Canadian appellate cases of interest to forensic mental health professionals. Key cases will be summarized together with their practical implications for forensic practitioners. A number of areas will be addressed, including a discussion on fitness post-Bharwani, the importance of evidence in Dangerous/Long-Term offender and NCR applications, how that evidence might be challenged and what the implications are for assessors.

There will be time for questions and discussion. A casebook with summaries and links to cases will be provided.

### Bio – Wendy Ekert

Wendy obtained her Bachelor of Arts in History and Bachelor of Education at the University of New Brunswick and completed her law degree at the Dalhousie University. After finishing her articles in New Brunswick, Wendy headed to the Northwest Territories to begin her career as a Crown Prosecutor. She spent seven years there, travelling to remote communities on court circuit. She joined ACPS in 2017 as an Internet and Technology Crime Prosecutor and remained in that role until becoming Team Lead of the High Risk Offender Unit. Over her career, Wendy has prosecuted a wide variety of cases, including homicide, child pornography, luring, firearms, sexual assault, 810.2 applications, dangerous offender applications, and NCR hearings. She oversees all files before the Alberta Criminal Code Review Board for ACPS, regularly appearing before the Board as representative for the Attorney General and is the Alberta Coordinator for the National Flagging System. Wendy educates Crown Prosecutors on high risk offenders, expert evidence, fitness and NCR, and has presented at national conferences in this area of the law.

### Bio – Parminder Johal

Parm is an alumni of the University of British Columbia, where she obtained her Bachelor of Social Work, and an alumni of the University of Victoria, where she completed her law degree. For over a decade, Parm worked with the Legal Aid Society of Alberta representing youth offenders and other vulnerable members of society. Following her time with Legal Aid Alberta, Parm joined ACPS and worked primarily in the Family Protection Unit. Parm transferred to Appeals and Specialized Prosecutions office where she worked in the Internet and Tech Crimes unit prosecuting files involving the sexual exploitation of children. As a prosecutor in the High Risk Offender Unit, Parm is Assistant Coordinator for the National Flagging System and also oversees all 810.2 applications in Alberta. Parm assists with Specialized Prosecutions on files involving conflicts and provides assistance on prosecutions involving individuals who pose a significant risk to society.

### Bio – Karuna Ramakrishnan

Karuna Ramakrishnan has been a Crown Prosecutor for over 20 years. Prior to attending law school, she completed a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Psychology and a Master of Science in Neuroscience and Behavioural Psychiatry. As a prosecutor, she has dealt extensively with mentally ill and high-risk offenders in court, particularly with respect to issues of fitness and criminal responsibility. She has appeared before the Criminal Code Review Board as a representative of the Attorney General since 2011. She has taught and provided advice to police, prosecutors, law students and other stakeholders across Canada with respect to legal issues regarding the intersection of mental illness and the criminal justice system, as well as for high risk and dangerous offenders.

## **PRE-CONFERENCE SEMINAR #2**

**(space is limited, register early!)**

**Sunday, April 26 - 13:00-16:00**

### **The Essentials of Psychological Testing in Civil and Criminal Forensic Matters: Scope of Practice and Common Assessment Questions**

#### **Presenters:**

**Stephanie R. Penney, Ph.D., C.Psych.**

Scientist, Forensic Division

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

Associate Professor

Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto

**Jeffrey Waldman, MD, FRCPC**

Forensic Psychiatrist

Assistant Professor, University of Manitoba

Medical Director, Roblin Forensic Group

#### **Learning Objectives:**

At the end of the presentation, the participants will be able to:

- Describe the role and utility of psychological testing in common types of forensic mental health evaluations;
- Gain increased familiarity with commonly used psychological test batteries, and how they inform forensically relevant questions (e.g., diagnostic clarification, cognitive or intellectual functioning, personality style, and symptom validity/malingering);
- Evaluate the psychometric properties of commonly used psychological test inventories, including the populations on which they have been normed and the limits of their applicability in criminal and civil forensic evaluation scenarios.

#### **Description:**

At a basic level, psychological testing permits the assessor to obtain information about an individual in a standardized and valid manner, and often generates clinically important information that is not readily obtainable by other means.

Psychological assessments vary widely in scope, but commonly evaluate domains pertaining to general cognitive abilities and intelligence, specific academic or vocational aptitudes and interests, social and emotional functioning, personality, and other clinical problems. In civil and criminal forensic assessment contexts, additional questions pertaining to the veracity of an evaluatee's self-report and symptom presentation are often necessary to assess in an evidence-based manner.

This session will describe the uses of psychometric testing in the context of civil and criminal matters, and outline why incorporating this type of testing is necessary to align with best practices and guard against bias. We will provide an overview of commonly used psychological test batteries, their psychometric properties, and how they inform forensically relevant questions across civil and criminal assessment scenarios.

### **Bio – Stephanie R. Penney, Ph.D., C.Psych.**

Stephanie R. Penney, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist and scientist within the Division of Forensic Psychiatry at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, and cross appointed at the Associate Professor level within the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto. Both her research and clinical work focus on the assessment and management of violence risk within adult psychiatric and correctional populations. Dr. Penney's current program of research is geared toward understanding the causes of violence and offending in individuals with serious mental illness, enhancing the clinical practice of risk assessment, and ultimately, improving service delivery and health outcomes for vulnerable populations. She is currently the lead investigator on a CIHR team grant focused on mental health needs and programming for justice-involved women.

Dr. Penney has published over 50 scientific papers on topics pertaining to risk and recovery in forensic mental health care, and the measurement of violence and aggression in diverse populations. She has previously been the recipient of over \$900,000 in international, federal and provincial grants and research awards.

### **Bio – Jeffrey Waldman, MD, FRCPC**

Dr. Waldman holds specialty certification in psychiatry and subspecialty certification in forensic psychiatry. He is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Manitoba, and has been practicing Psychiatry since 2003, with a focus on Medicolegal and Forensic Psychiatry. He was the medical director of forensic services in Manitoba from 2013-2018.

Currently, Dr. Waldman serves as the Medical Director of Roblin Forensic Group. His clinical responsibilities extend to various community and institutional settings, including the Canadian Mental Health Association's ACT program, an addictions program called Executive Medical Solutions, and NAV Canada's Chemical Dependency Education and Rehabilitation Program, and he provides a clinic for adults with Intellectual Disabilities. Additionally, he is contracted to provide psychiatric services at correctional institutions, including Stony Mountain Institution, and Headingly Correctional Centre.

Dr. Waldman has held leadership roles in national psychiatric organizations, including serving as the Prairie Region Representative on The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada Subspecialty Committee in Forensic Psychiatry, and on the executive of the Canadian Academy of Psychiatry and the Law (CAPL). He is the editor of the CAPL newsletter and sits on the CAPL Corrections Subcommittee. He is on the board of directors of the Canadian Psychiatric Association (CPA), and on the Professional Standards and Practice Committee of the CPA.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

### A Mass Casualty Commission Product: Eight Best Practices for Forensic Assessment

**And**

### Understanding and Managing Bias in Expert Forensic Judgment

**Tess Neal, PhD**

Associate & Dean's Professor of Psychology,  
Iowa State University  
Editor-in-Chief, Psychology, Public Policy, and Law

#### **Bio:**

Tess M.S. Neal, PhD is an associate professor and Dean's Professor of psychology at Iowa State University. She is a scientist; a licensed clinical psychologist trained to assess, diagnose, and treat mental and behavioral disorders; as a forensic psychologist trained to bring psychology into legal contexts. She studies the nature and limits of expertise. Her basic work focuses on understanding and improving human judgment processes – especially among trained experts, and her more applied work focuses on improving forensic and legal experts' judgments in particular. Her work has been funded by multiple grants from the National Science Foundation and she has published nearly five dozen scientific papers. She is a fellow of both the Association for Psychological Science and the American Psychological Association, and she completed a Fulbright Scholarship in Australia in 2022. She is the Editor-in-Chief of the journal Psychology, Public Policy, and Law.

### Beyond Containment: A Clinical Approach to Stabilizing High-Risk Clients with Psychosis and Substance Use

**Vijay Seethapathy, MBBS, MRCPsych, FRCPC, ABAM**

President, CPA

#### **Bio:**

Dr. Vijay Seethapathy is the Chief Medical Officer at BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services, where he provides strategic and operational oversight for specialized programs, including the Forensic Psychiatric Hospital, Red Fish Healing Centre and Correctional Health Services. His passion for improving access to mental health care and treating patients with complex disorders has driven his career across multiple countries. Born in Chennai, India, Dr. Seethapathy's journey to psychiatry was initially unplanned, but his early training experiences reshaped his perspective.



Witnessing the power of empathetic patient care, he developed a deep commitment to psychiatry, focusing on treating vulnerable populations and concurrent disorders. His work spans several continents, including Kenya and the UK, where he honed his expertise in health care systems and developed a strong vision for early intervention and equitable access to mental health care. He believes that timely access to care is critical for improving patient outcomes, especially in severe mental illnesses like psychosis, where early intervention can prevent long-term disability.

Beyond his clinical work, Dr. Seethapathy is passionate about leadership and education. He holds an executive MBA and has spearheaded initiatives aimed at addressing system gaps in mental health care, such as Vancouver's 24/7 access and assessment centre, which breaks down barriers to timely psychiatric care. Dr. Seethapathy has been instrumental in implementing a triage model designed to streamline access to mental health services, ensuring that individuals in crisis receive the appropriate level of care swiftly. This model integrates various health professionals, enabling quick assessment and referrals to the right services based on patient needs. His leadership style is grounded in collaboration, whether it's building new models of care or supporting colleagues through renewed governance structures.

Outside of his professional life, Dr. Seethapathy enjoys sports, particularly tennis, squash and cricket. He also finds balance in cooking, karaoke and spending time with his family, whom he credits for their unwavering support throughout his demanding career.

Dr. Seethapathy's ongoing work reflects his commitment to patient-centred care, mentorship and the transformation of mental health services, both locally and globally.

## **Triarchic Model of Psychopathy: Implications for Causal Understanding and Clinical Practice**

### **Pr. Chris Patrick**

Distinguished Research Professor and Director of Clinical,  
Department of Psychology at Florida State University

#### **Bio:**

Christopher J. Patrick, PhD, is a Distinguished Research Professor of Psychology and Director of Clinical Training at Florida State University; prior to this he held the position of Starke Hathaway Distinguished Professor at the University of Minnesota. His scholarly interests include psychopathy, antisocial behavior, substance abuse, personality, fear and fearlessness, psychophysiology, and affective and cognitive neuroscience. He is author of more than 380 articles and book chapters, and Editor of the *Handbook of Psychopathy* (Guilford Press, 2006; 2nd ed., 2018). Dr. Patrick is a recipient of Early Career awards from the Society for Psychophysiological Research (SPR; 1993) and the American Psychological Association (APA; 1995), a Past President of both SPR and the Society for Scientific Study of Psychopathy (SSSP), and recipient of Lifetime Career Contribution awards from each of these societies. He is also a Fellow of APA, SPR, and the Association for Psychological Science, and a member of the Academy of Science Engineering and Medicine of Florida. He served in 2010 as a Workgroup Member for the National Institute of Mental Health's Research Diagnostic Criteria (RDoC) initiative, and from 2008-2013 as a Scientific Advisor to the DSM-5 Personality and Personality Disorders (PPD) Work Group. He is currently a member of the American Psychiatric Association's DSM-5 Review Committee for Externalizing Disorders and Personality Disorders, and a member of the Hierarchical Taxonomy of Psychopathology (HiTOP) Consortium.



## PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

### Sunday, April 26 – 9:00 - 16:00 (Pre-Conference Seminars)

08:00-09:00	<b>On-site Registration for Pre-Conference Seminar #1 attendees ONLY</b>
09:00-12:00	<p><b>PRE-CONFERENCE SEMINAR #1 (\$)</b></p> <p><b>A Legal Update: Key Canadian Cases Impacting Forensic Psychiatry</b></p> <p><i>Presenters:</i></p> <p><b>Wendy Ekert</b> Team Lead and Crown Prosecutor, High Risk Offender Unit Alberta Crown Prosecution Service</p> <p><b>Parminder Johal</b> Crown Prosecutor, Appeals and Specialized Prosecutions Office Alberta Crown Prosecution Service</p> <p><b>Karuna Ramakrishnan</b> Crown Prosecutor Calgary Crown Prosecution Office, ACPS</p>
11:00-12:00	<b>On-site Registration for Pre-Conference Seminar #2 attendees ONLY</b>
12:00-13:00	<b>Lunch (included in pre-conference seminars registration)</b>
13:00-16:00	<p><b>PRE-CONFERENCE SEMINAR #2 (\$)</b></p> <p><b>The Essentials of Psychological Testing in Civil and Criminal Forensic Matters: Scope of Practice and Common Assessment Questions</b></p> <p><i>Presenters:</i></p> <p><b>Stephanie R. Penney, Ph.D., C.Psych.</b> Scientist, Forensic Division Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) Associate Professor Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto</p> <p><b>Jeffrey Waldman, MD, FRCPC</b> Forensic Psychiatrist Assistant Professor, University of Manitoba Medical Director, Roblin Forensic Group</p>

20-minute presentation: 15 min. + 5 min. Q&A  
 40-minute presentation: 30 min. + 10 min. Q&A  
 60-minute presentation: 45 min. + 15 min. Q&A

## Sunday, April 26 (Annual Conference)

14:00-17:00	<b>On-site Registration</b>
16:30-16:45	<b>Welcoming Remarks and Fellowship Award</b>
16:45-17:45	<b>A Mass Casualty Commission Product: Eight Best Practices for Forensic Assessment</b>  <i>Presenter:</i> Tess Neal, PhD Associate & Dean's Professor of Psychology Iowa State University Editor-in-Chief, Psychology, Public Policy, and Law
18:00-19:00	<b>Welcome Reception</b>

## Monday, April 27 (Annual Conference)

### PLENARY

8:30-9:00	<b>Beyond Containment: A Clinical Approach to Stabilizing High-Risk Clients with Psychosis and Substance Use</b> <i>Presenter: Vijay Seethapathy, President, CPA</i>
9:00-10:00	<b>Triarchic Model of Psychopathy: Implications for Causal Understanding and Clinical Practice</b>  <i>Presenter:</i> Pr. Chris Patrick Distinguished Research Professor and Director of Clinical, Department of Psychology at Florida State University
10:00-10:40	<b>TBC</b>

10:40- 11:00 Networking break and Connect Café

### CONCURRENT SESSIONS

11:00- 12:20	<b>Session 1</b>	<b>Session 2</b>
--------------	------------------	------------------

12:20-13:30 Mentorship Lunch for Students, Residents and Fellows  
Buffet is also available for other attendees

#### CONCURRENT SESSIONS

13:30 – 15:10	Session 1	Session 2
---------------	-----------	-----------

15:10- 15:30 Networking break and Connect Café

#### CONCURRENT SESSIONS

15:30 - 17:00	Session 1	Session 2
---------------	-----------	-----------

17:30-18:15	<b>Cocktail</b>  <b>*** Dinner on your own ***</b>	
-------------	--	--

## Tuesday, April 28 (Annual Conference)

#### PLENARY

8:30-9:30	<b>Understanding and Managing Bias in Expert Forensic Judgment</b> <i>Presenter: Tess Neal, PhD</i>
9:30-10:10	<b>TBC</b>
10:10-10:30	<b>TBC</b>

10:30- 10:50 Networking break and Connect Café

#### CONCURRENT SESSIONS

10:50 – 12:10	Session 1	Session 2
---------------	-----------	-----------

12:10- 13:10 Lunch

#### POSTER SESSION and CONNECT CAFÉ

13:10-14:00	Poster Session
-------------	----------------

**CONCURRENT  
SESSIONS**

14:00 – 16:00	<b>Session 1</b>	<b>Session 2</b>
---------------	------------------	------------------

16:15-17:45	<b>AGM (For CAPL members only)</b>
18:15-19:45	<b>Off-Site Reception (\$)</b> (walking distance)

## Wednesday, April 29 (Annual Conference)

**PLENARY**

8:00-12:00	
------------	--