

Northern Alberta Educational Assistant's Conference 2025 – **Friday** (March 7, 2025)

Keynote

Dan St. Roman

The Ripple Effect

9:00 – 10:15 AM

When you throw a stone into a pond, sometimes it simply sinks—"plop". However, if thrown just right, the rock skips. Instead of the singular "plop", the skipping rock reaches more water, leaving ripples on the surface – and this energy changes the entire pond. As educators, we throw the stone. In this dynamic opening session, educators will learn simple ways we create ripples in the school setting that positively impact the students we serve.

Full Day Sessions

Sandra Woitas

Behaviour Management – 201

10:30 AM – 3:45 PM

Up to 80 per cent of our time in classrooms is spent dealing with attention seeking and persistent attention seeking behaviour. In this follow-up workshop, Sandra addresses responses to low level inappropriate student behaviour all the way to strategies to defuse the power struggle. All nestled within a framework of building positive student relationships. Participants will leave with a system of matching inappropriate behaviour with an appropriate level of assertiveness. Be prepared to get involved.

Morning Sessions

Dan St. Roman

Engaging the Disengaged

10:30 – 11:45 AM

Motivation and engagement are critical factors in helping our students find success in school. This session will feature simple ways to keep students actively plugged into teaching efforts. Participants will learn how to facilitate activities that help students not only pay better attention in class, but also better retain the content being taught.

Adrienne Fehr

Functional Life Skills

10:30 – 11:45 AM

Working with students who require functional life skills programming can be a challenge in the school setting. Explore and share some ideas to support our special students.

**Kathleen Gillis &
Mary Anne Donovan**

Behaviour, Co-regulation and Communication

10:30 – 11:45 AM

Presented by a multi-disciplinary team, this session will explain what co-regulation is and how to foster it with your students. It will look at how interpersonal factors impact students success and also how to be a behavioural detective when working with challenging students. It will walk through best practice for how to deal with a student pre/during and post a period of distress.

Alexis Marie Chute

Ideas and What to Do with Them (Or How to Get them if You're Stumped)

10:30 – 11:45 AM

Author, artist, and idea-maven, Alexis Marie Chute shares a dynamic and insightful exploration into the creative process of generating and utilizing ideas effectively in the educational context. Attendees will learn various strategies to inspire and nurture creativity among students, offering practical techniques to overcome creative blocks and spark imaginative thinking.

Torri Beutler

From Self-Awareness to Social Success: The Role of Social Emotional Learning

10:30 – 11:45 AM

This presentation explores the essential components of social emotional learning and its impact on social success. We will dive into the foundational role of self-awareness: helping individuals recognize and understand their emotions both within the body and mind. This session will discuss how emotional insights contribute to improved emotional regulation and social skills.

Jessica Whalen

What is this "Phonemic Awareness" everyone keeps talking about?

10:30 – 11:45 AM

What is Phonemic Awareness? How does it fit into Phonological Awareness? And how is that different from Phonics? We will discuss each of these questions and take a look at the relevant outcomes from the NEW ELAL Curriculum.

**Julia Turgeon, Angie
Stockley & Oreoluwa Fakoya**

Boundaries in the Helping Profession

10:30 – 11:45 AM

Working in a helping profession can be both rewarding and emotionally taxing. Professional boundaries allow us to separate our time at work from our time at home, allowing us to maintain satisfaction at work as well as remain happy and comfortable in our personal lives.

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Morning Sessions

**Brynn Shaw
& Michelle Eyre**

Enhancing Communication Through Multi-sensory Experiences

10:30 – 11:45 AM

This presentation explores the innovative and effective use of sensory equipment and rooms as supportive environments for speech-language development, especially for neurodiverse students. Attendees will learn how Educational Assistants can integrate sensory strategies into their days to engage students more deeply, improve focus, and create positive communication experiences.

Carmen Moore

Exercise: Outside the gym walls

10:30 – 11:45 AM

This session outlines in detail one of the 28 research-based strategies that have proven to support learners with autism and others. It fits within our mantra of a strategy that is “Good for all...critical for some!” Exercise has proven benefits for all learners – including the adults participating in the sessions.

**Tara Lux &
Kalli Charbonneau**

Relationship-Based Strategies to Support Challenging Behaviors

10:30 – 11:45 AM

We will learn strategies to support challenging behaviors that focus on relationship building and emotion regulation. We will discuss common cues that suggest a child is experiencing stress and having difficulty, as well as strategies to support this. We will explore how to use our own nonverbal and verbal communication to support children.

Nicole Bowman

ADHD – real strategies that work

10:30 – 11:45 AM

As a person with ADHD, I would like to offer strategies that work for me and my own children. I'll share the features of ADHD that I find most difficult to cope with and the tools that have been most impactful.

Cynthia Davison

Behaviour Basics

10:30 – 11:45 AM

We will delve into the four main functions of behavior: sensory stimulation, escape/avoidance, attention-seeking, and access to items. We will explore practical examples; participants will learn how to analyze and respond to behavior in a way that promotes positive change and improved outcomes.

**Jason Bigcharles
& Kim Barker-Kay**

Introduction to the Indigenous Culture Based Learning in Alberta Curriculum Website

10:30 – 11:45 AM

Join Jason and Kim to learn how this website can be used within your classroom, your planning, and to deepen your own knowledge and understanding of Nehiyaw (Cree) ways of knowing and being.

Goota Desmarais

The Arctic Experience: Goota's Journey Through Inuit Traditions

10:30 – 11:45 AM

Rooted in the land-based resources of the North, Inuit traditions and culture flourished despite the unforgiving Arctic climate. Demonstrating incredible resilience and ingenuity, the Inuit have a rich history that Goota enthusiastically shares through her vivid storytelling and genuine Inuit artifacts.

Early Afternoon Sessions

Dan St. Romain

Positive Behaviour Principles

1:00 – 2:15 PM

Although behaviors in the school system have changed a great deal in the past few decades, our strategies for supporting those behaviors have not. By examining all the information we have learned about the brain, we are in a better position to design effective interventions. In this fast-paced session, participants will learn nine principles for positively shaping the behavior of our students.

**Carli Fredrickson
& Heather Fedorick**

Mindfulness as a Tool

1:00 – 2:15 PM

Learn to utilize the practice of mindfulness, focusing one's awareness to the present moment, for your own benefit as well as a tool for the students you work with. Discover more about what mindfulness is, the benefits of regularly practicing mindfulness, strategies/resources to implement mindfulness into your life, and the relationship between mindfulness and human connection.

**Kathleen Gillis &
Mary Anne Donovan**

Behaviour, Co-regulation and Communication- Repeat

1:00 – 2:15 PM

Presented by a multi-disciplinary team, this session will explain what co-regulation is and how to foster it with your students. It will look at how interpersonal factors impact students success and also how to be a behavioural detective when working with challenging students. It will walk through best practice for how to deal with a student pre/during and post a period of distress.

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Early Afternoon Sessions

Alexis Marie Chute

Failure: Friend or Foe?

1:00 – 2:15 PM

Through engaging narratives and practical insights, attendees will discover ways to cultivate a growth mindset in students, encouraging them to view challenges as opportunities for growth. Chute explores how embracing failure can foster resilience, creativity, and innovation in the classroom, ultimately empowering educators to guide their students towards a more resilient and optimistic approach to both academics and life.

Torri Beutler

Yoga for the Neurodiverse Child: Regulating the Body to Calm the Mind

1:00 – 2:15 PM

This presentation explores how yoga can be a powerful tool to support children with autism in regulating their bodies and calming their minds. We will focus on breath-work, mindfulness, and gentle movement. Those in attendance will learn how yoga can reduce anxiety, improve focus, and enhance communication skills. Through adaptable poses and techniques this session will highlight practical ways to incorporate yoga into everyday routines.

Angela DesBarres

Hands on Phonics Activities

1:00 – 2:15 PM

Working with students who need support with Phonics Instruction? Join Angela DesBarres in learning about and trying some phonics games and activities that you could use with the students you are working with. Take away some book ideas and strategies that you could use the next day.

Morgan Wardill

Boundaries

1:00 – 2:15 PM

A session tailored to teachers to improve their quality of lives by understanding what boundaries are, how to implement them, and why they are important.

**Tiffany Montgomery
& Tyson Herzog**

Protective and Risk Factors Presentation

1:00 – 2:15 PM

Risk factors increase the likelihood of beginning substance use and of regular and harmful use. Protective factors decrease the likelihood of substance use or reduce the impact of risk factors. Not everyone who experiences a risk factor will use alcohol or drugs. Join us in an activity to explore these factors, understand how to recognize them, cultivate them for ourselves and our students, and deliberate on their significance in risk assessment.

Carmen Moore

Setting the stage for Autistic Learners

1:00 – 2:15 PM

This session outlines in detail one of the 28 research based strategies that have proven to support autistic learners and others. It fits within our mantra of a strategy that is "Good for all...critical for some!"

**Tara Lux &
Betsy Morris**

Relationship-Based Strategies to Support Challenging Behaviors - Repeat

1:00 – 2:15 PM

We will learn strategies to support challenging behaviors that focus on relationship building and emotion regulation. We will discuss common cues that suggest a child is experiencing stress and having difficulty, as well as strategies to support this. We will explore how to use our own nonverbal and verbal communication to support children.

**Sarah Christie-Wurz
& Michelle Brunski**

How to Support Students with Anxiety

1:00 – 2:15 PM

This session will give an overview of anxiety, highlighting the difference between normal situational anxiety and when it becomes a concern. We will explore strategies for support and discuss when to seek help from internal or external resources.

Cynthia Davison

Behaviour Basics- Repeat

1:00 – 2:15 PM

We will explore the core concepts behind the functions of behavior, examining why students engage in certain actions or responses. By understanding the underlying purposes of behavior, we can more effectively address challenges seen in the classroom and school setting.

Josh Lancaster

Gross Motor Signs: What to look for

1:00 – 2:15 PM

Increasing your awareness on signs of gross motor delay, what they mean, and ways to target those areas.

Goota Desmarais

Kinngait Through Goota's Eyes: A Tale of Challenges and Victories

1:00 – 2:15 PM

Growing Up in Nunavut Goota recounts her life in Kinngait, revealing the trials and triumphs of her early years. Please note that this powerful narrative may contain content unsettling for some audiences.

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Late Afternoon Sessions

Dan St. Romain Literature Language and Life Skills

2:30 – 3:45 PM

Although our inclination is to teach the way we were once taught, as times change, so must our strategies. In this fast-paced interactive session, participants will have fun examining how social, emotional, ethical and cognitive skills can be taught through the use of literature and interactive reading strategies.

Emma Davidson Self-Care

2:30 – 3:45 PM

This workshop is designed to learn more about self-care and how we can understand our wellness needs through the lens of gratitude and finding joy in the present. We will take a mindful approach to what self-care is and how to incorporate healthy habits in your daily life without it feeling like another task on the to-do list.

Charity Neilson Managing Expectations: Circle of Control

2:30 – 3:45 PM

This session will create opportunity to develop an intentional understanding of the circle of control which is a helpful tool for managing the stress, anxiety, and frustration caused by situations that are beyond our control. This tool will help shift perspective and create capacity to prioritize our focus and energy.

Alexis Marie Chute Productivity and Organization Working at Home, School, and Everywhere In Between

2:30 – 3:45 PM

This session will explore how to build effective personal and professional structures to be your most productive self, cut-out distractions, and find joy in all you do. Professional artist, bestselling author, and work-from-home addict, Alexis Marie Chute shares tips and tricks for scheduling your time, organizing your to-do list, getting more done, and finding your highest level of work and home balance for greatest life-fulfillment.

Torri Beutler Yoga for the Neurodiverse Child: Regulating the Body to Calm the Mind - Repeat

2:30 – 3:45 PM

This presentation explores how yoga can be a powerful tool to support children with autism in regulating their bodies and calming their minds. We will focus on breath-work, mindfulness, and gentle movement. Those in attendance will learn how yoga can reduce anxiety, improve focus, and enhance communication skills.

Angela DesBarres Hands On Phonological Awareness Activities

2:30 – 3:45 PM

Do you need support working with students who are struggling with hearing the sounds in words? Phonological Awareness is a skill that students require before and when they are learning letter names and sounds. Join Angela DesBarres in digging into what Phonological Awareness is and take home some ideas on what you can use with your students the next day in order to improve student beginning reading skills.

Morgan Wardill Mindfulness

2:30 – 3:45 PM

The session gives a general overview of mindfulness, why it is important, how to practice it, and what the benefits of it is. It also provides experiential activities to support learning and gives different examples for the importance of mindfulness practice in taking care of a person's mental health.

Tiffany Montgomery & Tyson Herzog Protective and Risk Factors Presentation- Repeat

2:30 – 3:45 PM

Risk factors increase the likelihood of beginning substance use and of regular and harmful use. Protective factors decrease the likelihood of substance use or reduce the impact of risk factors. Not everyone who experiences a risk factor will use alcohol or drugs. Join us in an activity to explore these factors, understand how to recognize them..

Carmen Moore How do I choose joy?

2:30 – 3:45 PM

How do you find joy in the world today? People are expressing more and more stress and worry in their families, work and communities. This can be difficult to do today but with a conscious choice and employing some research based strategies, one can truly find themselves living with more joy and looking to take care of themselves in a different way. This presentation is a mix of personal stories and down to earth ideas.

Lindy Beauchamp-Chester The Power of Story

2:30 – 3:45 PM

This session will assist participants to learn how story can create balance as a tool for self-care. Participants will learn how their story, lived experience and social location impact the work they do and that our own story can empower us in our daily lives.

Sarah Christie-Wurz & Michelle Brunski How to Support Students with Anxiety- Repeat

2:30 – 3:45 PM

This session will give an overview of anxiety, highlighting the difference between normal situational anxiety and when it becomes a concern. We will explore strategies for support and discuss when to seek help from internal or external resources.

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Late Afternoon Sessions

JennyLee Viola

Medicine Wheel: A Common Language

2:30 – 3:45 PM

The session will show how we can have cultural connection and understanding through the Indigenous Medicine Wheel. Exploring it using different modalities we can incorporate in the classroom.

Josh Lancaster

Gross Motor Signs: What to look for- Repeat

2:30 – 3:45 PM

Increasing your awareness on signs of gross motor delay, what they mean, and ways to target those areas.

Goota Desmarais

Exploring Inuit Games: Tradition, Skills, and Community

2:30 – 3:45 PM

Join us for an engaging session dedicated to the rich tradition of Inuit games. Participants will delve into the cultural significance, historical roots, and the skills involved in these traditional activities. Through interactive demonstrations and hands-on participation, you'll gain a deeper appreciation for the games that have been passed down through generations, fostering community and resilience in Inuit culture.