

One-day Workshop for Educators and Mental Health Professionals

Working with Children, Youth and Families with Complex Needs and Hidden Strengths: The Skills to Build Resilience

Dr. Michael Ungar

Start time: 9:00pm

Finish Time: 5:00 pm

Summary and Objectives of the Workshop:

When working with children and adolescents from emotionally turbulent and physically challenging backgrounds, we often focus too narrowly on the individual's *complex needs and problems*---like delinquency, anxiety or conflict with caregivers---and miss the broader sources of healing and resilience in young people's lives. This workshop will present a strengths-focused, resistance-proof model for clinical and community work that makes therapeutic interventions more effective and change more sustainable. It demonstrates skills that educators and mental health professionals can use in classroom, clinical and community settings to nurture the resilience of those with whom they work. With ample case studies and fascinating explanations of research, Michael shows why we need to work just as hard changing the environments that surround children as we do changing children themselves. Workshop participants will learn how to identify and enhance access to protective and promotive processes that exert a positive influence on young people's wellbeing. These include relationships with adults, a sense of personal self-control, agency and power, experiences of social justice and fair treatment, belonging and purpose, spirituality, and cultural rootedness. Michael will also discuss how to contract to achieve useful therapeutic goals that are culturally meaningful, and participants will leave knowing how to help their clients successfully transition their success in clinical, residential and community settings back into their "real-life" social environments at home.

Dr. Michael Ungar - Biography

Dr. Michael Ungar is the Canada Research Chair in Child, Family and Community Resilience at Dalhousie University, and the founder and Director of the Resilience Research Centre. He is among the best known writers and researchers on the topic of resilience in the world. As both a family therapist and professor of Social Work, he has helped to identify important factors that influence the resilience of children and adults during periods of transition and stress. He is the author of 14 books that have been translated into five languages, numerous manuals for parents, educators, and employers, as well as more than 150 scientific papers. Dr. Ungar's immense influence comes from his ability to adapt ideas from his research and clinical practice into best-selling works like *Working with Children and Youth with Complex Needs, Too Safe For Their Own Good: How Risk and Responsibility Help Teens Thrive* and *I Still Love You: Nine Things Troubled Kids Need from their Parents*. His blog Nurturing Resilience appears on *Psychology Today's* website.

Specifically the learning objectives for this workshop are:

1. To understand how individuals and families with complex needs use "problem" behaviours to enhance their resilience and wellbeing when more socially acceptable solutions are not available;

2. To become familiar with skills associated with a social ecological approach to individual and family intervention informed by research on resilience;
3. To discuss the Child and Youth Resilience Measure, an assessment tool that can help clinicians explore the hidden resilience of children and youth;
4. To learn about nine aspects of resilience necessary for positive development;
5. To develop strategies for working without resistance with hard-to-reach, culturally diverse children, adolescents, and their families;

To discuss ways services can be structured for children, youth and families that make resilience more likely to occur