

Thought Leaders Podcast
Weekly Discussion & Resource Guide

Background

The connective, inclusive nature of the Alliance is focused on removing barriers and establishing a strong cross-disciplinary network of relationships between scientists, experts, practitioners and professionals across multiple sectors within our Region - but we don't want to sing to the regular choir, we want to actively engage and include those who aren't usually singing with us. And that's where you and this podcast come in...

The Thought Leaders podcast features locally-based conversations that flowed out of world-leading expert conversations. We hope you are inspired to keep the conversation going - at your workplace, within your community, and with friends and family.

We'll provide a couple of conversation starters for each episode (a full series discussion guide will follow). Use these or come up with your own based on your knowledge and life experience:

Podcast Series Conversation Starters

- ◆ What are some of the biggest challenges that are facing the children in our community and their families today?
- ◆ Are there any that are specific/unique to the community you serve?
- ◆ How do these challenges/issues intersect with one another?
- ◆ How might conversations impact the work you do?
- ◆ Who is missing or would add value to your conversations?

Thought Leaders Podcast
bringing big ideas home

Seeing, Doing, Being

Listen, get inspired & continue the conversation

Find out more ella-wr.ca and download our discussion guide

Episode #2
“Seeing, Doing, Being”
Available Now

ella
waterloo region

In our 2nd Thought Leaders podcast Dr. Jean Clinton speaks with one of the world’s most pre-eminent cognitive neuroscientists Dr. Adele Diamond about the developing brain. She brings the conversation home to talk about how kids are coping in our region these days - with family physician Dr. Mekalai Kumanan and settlement worker Ana Luz Martinez who have been on the front lines of what stress looks like in our community.

Thought leaders:

- **Dr. Mekalai Kumanan**, Family Physician, Two Rivers Family Health Team, Chief of Family Medicine, Cambridge Memorial Hospital
- **Ana Luz Martinez**, Settlement Worker, KW Multicultural Centre

Region of Waterloo's Director of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion **Fauzia Baig** hosts this fascinating conversation

Discussion prompts:

How has this experience during the pandemic changed your perspective on the impacts of stress of the clients/colleagues/friends/family around you? How has it changed your approach?

- ♦ How well prepared are service providers to deal with stress in newcomers - children and adults? How often have you seen a pre-emptive diagnosis as an answer to behaviour that could be explained by stress/trauma - whether the child is too quiet while learning the language, or they can't focus, or behavioural issues.
- ♦ What gaps have to be filled in assessing newcomer families to make sure they don't fall through them?
- ♦ How well do we listen to our clients? Real active listening. Are we too focused sometimes on providing a solution? Could we do better by sometimes just listening and encouraging independent use of resources?

- ♦ How well do you know/reflect on your own executive functions: impulse inhibition, working memory, cognitive flexibility? Knowing that can transform people into the kind of support worker/educator/doctor they want to be - but also improve self-care.
- ♦ Do the relationships we have with our clients/students/patients diminish stress or does the system in place add to it?

Deeper Dive:



Dr. Mekalai Kumanan
 Family Physician, Two Rivers FHT,
 Chief of Family Medicine, CMH
 Twitter: @MKumananMD

Dr. Kumanan completed both a Master's degree in Health Administration and medical school at Dalhousie University. She then completed her residency at the University of Western Ontario before joining Two Rivers Family Health Team in Cambridge, where she has been practising for over ten years. Dr. Kumanan was drawn to the collaborative approach to primary care within FHTs and the close-knit family medicine community in Cambridge. She currently serves as the Chief of Family Medicine at the Cambridge Memorial Hospital. She describes herself as a wife and mother to two amazing kids. <https://kitchener.ctvnews.ca/we-felt-really-alone-kitchener-mom-opens-up-about-son-s-experience-with-bullying-1.5679203>



Ana Luz Martinez
 Settlement Worker, KW Multicultural Centre

Ana Luz Martínez has been working since 2003 at the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre, a community partner in the K-W city network of the Building Migrant Resilience in Cities partnership. She has played a leadership role in the Local Immigration Partnership of Waterloo Region, where she formerly chaired the Settling Action Group. Ana Luz was born and raised in Guatemala, where she was studying dentistry when the civil war led her to move to Mexico. There she met her husband and completed a Bachelor's of Education at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. She immigrated to Canada with her family in 1994.

<https://bmrc-irmu.info.yorku.ca/ana-luz-martinez/>

<https://www.therecord.com/news/waterloo-region/2015/07/18/at-first-a-haven-waterloo-region-is-now-home-for-guatemalan-family.html>



Dr. Adele Diamond, PhD, FRSC, Canadian Research Chair Tier 1 Professor of Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience at UBC. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, named one of the “2000 Outstanding Women of the 20th Century,” has been listed as one of the 15 most influential neuroscientists alive today, and her impact was recently ranked among the top 0.01% of all scientists across all fields.

Prof. Diamond co-founded the field of Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience and continues to be recognized as a world leader in both Psychology and Neuroscience as evidenced by her impact, awards, success in research funding, leadership roles, and abundant invitations to speak across disciplines, professions, and nations.

Prof. Diamond’s specialty is executive functions, which depend on the brain’s prefrontal cortex and interrelated neural regions. Executive functions enable us to resist temptations and automatic impulsive reactions, stay focused, mentally play with ideas, reason, problem-solve, flexibly adjust to changed demands or priorities, and see things from new and different perspectives. Prof. Diamond’s lab studies how executive functions are affected by biological factors (such as genes and neurochemistry) and by environmental ones (for example, impaired by stress or improved by interventions).

She has demonstrated that executive functions emerge and can be assessed as early as the first year of life, and shown that interventions can improve executive functions even in very young children.

<http://www.devcogneuro.com/>

<https://www.additudemag.com/webinar/executive-functions-adhd-children-adults-podcast-383/>



Dr. Jean Clinton of McMaster University is one of four renowned experts to advise the Ontario government on bold reforms to the province’s publicly funded education system. The clinical professor of psychiatry and behavioural neurosciences of the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine is a specialist in child psychiatry. Her expertise is in the development of young minds and she is recognized internationally as an advocate for children’s issues. Her special interest lies in brain development, and the crucial role relationships and connectedness play therein. She has authored papers on early child development and poverty, infant neglect, children’s mental health, resilience, and on adolescent brain development.

Dr Clinton holds a Bachelor of Music Degree in Education and a medical degree and Fellowship in Psychiatry from McMaster University. Jean’s greatest accomplishment is being the mother of 5 great kids who range in age from 21-31 years.

<https://drjeanclinton.com>

‘Love Builds Brains’ by Dr. Jean Clinton

<https://tallpinepress.ca/products/love-builds-brains>