6TH ANNUAL

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE DIGITAL AGE CONFERENCE

Presented by the Mental Health in the Digital Age Lab

JOIN US!



MONDAY,
NOVEMBER 30, 2026



6:30-9:00 PM (EST)



FREE VIRTUAL EVENT!

REGISTER NOW →

The MHDA Conference is for educators, parents, and community members to explore our relationship with technology and its effects on our well-being. Sessions will look at technologies' impacts on well-being across the lifespan, along with recommendations. Presented by the Lab and affiliated graduate students in the Frazer Faculty of Education at Ontario Tech University.

Participants can choose which sessions they attend throughout the evening.

Certificates of participation/recognition will be provided.

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CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

6:30-7:10 PM	**Welcome and Keynote Addresses** *Living Digitally Well: Reclaiming Our Humanity in a Hyperconnected World* with Lisa Chang *Digital Wellness, Youth, and Media Literacy* with Chloe Kitzito
7:15-7:35 PM	**Session A** (15 min. presentation + 5 min. Q & A) **Session A-1:** Growing Up with Screens: A Parent-Observed Case Study of Sleep, Attention, Learning, and Emotional Well-Being in a Five-Year-Old Child **Session A-2:** Appearance-Based Social Media Use and Adolescent Girls' Withdrawal from Sport **Session A-3:** Life at 2x Speed: Productivity Culture, the Guilt of Resting, and Student Well-Being **Session A-4:** Replaced or Resilient? Evidence-Based Strategies to Beat AI-Induced Job Insecurity **Session A-5:** Beyond the Screen: Exploring How Digital Self-Help Platforms Shape Mental Health Literacy in Adolescents
7:40-8:00 PM	**Session B** (15 min. presentation + 5 min. Q & A) **Session B-1:** Left on Read: Digital Stress, Response Expectations, and Peer Relationships in Early Adolescence **Session B-2:** Help or Hindrance? The Hidden Impact of Generative AI on Student Stress, Anxiety, and Self-Efficacy **Session B-3:** Beyond the Filter: The Influence of Social Media and Fitness Influencers on Body Image and Self-Esteem Among Young Women **Session B-4:** From Screen to Symptom? Explaining Functional Tic-Like Behaviours **Session B-5:** Problematic Technology Use in Grades 7 and 8: Impacts and Classroom Solutions
8:05-8:25 PM	**Session C** (15 min. presentation + 5 min. Q & A) **Session C-1:** Toxicity Exposure to Adolescents in Online Gaming Communities **Session C-2:** Behind the Screen: The Impact of E-Learning Stress on Emerging Adults' Academic Performance **Session C-3:** Relationality, Wholism, and Cultural Safety: A LeaderSHIP for Reconciliation Approach **Session C-4:** Beyond Blood Sugar: Exploring the Mental Health Impact of Living with Type 1 Diabetes **Session C-5:** Understanding and Addressing Anxiety in Kindergarten Students
8:30-8:50 PM	**Session D** (15 min. presentation + 5 min. Q & A) **Session D-1:** Conversational AI and Psychological Well-Being Impacts: Companionship, Emotional Support, and Mental Health **Session D-2:** Grief in the Digital Age: Exploring Loss, Connection, and Mental Health in Everyday Life **Session D-3:** Navigating Digital Distractions: Exploring the Effects of Digital Multitasking on University Students' Attention, Stress, and Well-Being **Session D-4:** Signing Out: An Autoethnographic Exploration of Social Media Detox
8:50-9:00 PM	**Closing Remarks** *Dr. Jennifer Laffier, Director of the Mental Health in the Digital Age Lab*

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



TV PERSONALITY & DIGITAL WELLNESS EXPERT
LISA CHANG



YOUTH ADVOCATE AND JOURNALIST
CHLOE KIZITO

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



TV PERSONALITY & DIGITAL WELLNESS EXPERT
LISA CHANG

MEET LISA CHANG!

Lisa Chang is a nationally recognized Canadian technology and digital wellness expert, television personality, speaker, and proud mom with over 25 years of experience in the technology industry. Long before digital wellness became a mainstream conversation, Lisa was advocating for a healthier, more intentional relationship with technology.

A trusted voice on Breakfast Television, CTV's The Good Stuff, and Global's The Morning Show, she combines professional expertise with lived experience to explore how technology shapes our health, habits, relationships, and well-being. Her approach is deeply human-centred, empowering people to navigate the digital world with greater awareness, confidence, and balance.



YOUTH ADVOCATE AND JOURNALIST
CHLOE KIZITO

MEET CHLOE KIZITO!

Chloe, a Grade 12 student, wants young people to have a say in how we talk about mental health in the digital age. She brings a youth perspective to these conversations as a national youth journalist, UN youth advocate, director of global engagement, and public speaker. She has been featured on CBC, TVO, and Kids News.

In 2026, Chloe became the inaugural recipient of MediaSmarts' Youth Leader Award, recognizing her work in digital media literacy and her efforts to encourage others to think critically about the media they encounter every day.

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE DIGITAL AGE LAB

SESSION A (7:15-7:35 PM)

BREAKOUT ROOM 1

Growing Up with Screens: A Parent-Observed Case Study of Sleep, Attention, Learning, and Emotional Well-Being in a Five-Year-Old Child

Presented by: Michael Bujna

This study explores how screen habits relate to sleep, attention, learning, and emotional well-being in a five-year-old child. Using a parent-observed case study supported by a literature review, it examines screen duration, timing, content, parental involvement, and family routines. Parent observations will be analyzed alongside existing research to identify patterns, potential moderating factors, and practical digital wellness strategies. Findings will inform an evidence-based parent guide supporting healthier screen habits in early childhood.

Keywords: early childhood development, screen time and mental health, digital wellness

BREAKOUT ROOM 2

Appearance-Based Social Media Use and Adolescent Girls' Withdrawal from Sport

Presented by: Kait Nienhuis

How might appearance-based social media use influence adolescent girls' confidence in their bodies and their decisions to leave sport? This presentation explores how appearance-based social media, body image and self-confidence may intersect with adolescent girls' experiences in sport. Drawing on existing research, it considers how online appearance pressures can influence body confidence and sport participation in adolescent girls and highlights opportunities to create more inclusive, supportive environments that encourage girls to stay active.

Keywords: parents and coaches, appearance-based social media use, adolescent girls in sport

BREAKOUT ROOM 3

Life at 2x Speed: Productivity Culture, the Guilt of Resting, and Student Well-Being

Presented by: Neha Kundan

In a world that pushes constant productivity and efficiency, when did slowing down start to feel like falling behind? From rushing through everyday tasks to feeling guilty about taking a break, many young adults experience pressure to make every moment count. My presentation examines how productivity culture shapes students' perceptions of time, rest, and personal well-being, inviting reflection on the importance of slowing down in a world that rarely does.

Keywords: hustle culture, time pressure, psychological well-being

BREAKOUT ROOM 4

Replaced or Resilient? Evidence-Based Strategies to Beat AI-Induced Job Insecurity

Presented by: Janice McCabe, Joe Presti, & Natalie Tremblay McDonnell

Daily workplace AI use has more than doubled since 2024, leaving nearly half of workers worried about job replacement. Drawing on a scoping review in organizational psychology, this session unpacks how AI-induced job insecurity and workplace loneliness fuel burnout, anxiety, and depression. Attendees will leave with actionable, evidence-based strategies, from building individual AI self-efficacy to fostering transparent, psychologically safe workplaces, that protect employee mental health during technological transitions.

Keywords: workplace AI adoption, job insecurity, employee mental health

BREAKOUT ROOM 5

Beyond the Screen: Exploring How Digital Self-Help Platforms Shape Mental Health Literacy in Adolescents

Presented by: Nicole Bodh & Sabrina Di Nuccio

The growing use of social media, mental health applications, and other digital platforms has transformed how adolescents aged 12-18 access mental health information, emotional support, and resources. As technology becomes increasingly integrated into adolescents' daily lives, digital platforms offer opportunities to strengthen mental health literacy within educational settings. This research will examine how digital self-help platforms and social media influence adolescents' mental health, mental health literacy, and help-seeking behaviours. It will also explore how educators can effectively incorporate social media-style content into school-based mental health education to improve mental health awareness, promote emotional well-being, and encourage informed help-seeking behaviours among adolescents.

Keywords: adolescent mental health literacy, digital self-help platforms, social media

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SESSION B (7:40-8:00 PM)

BREAKOUT ROOM 1

Left on Read: Digital Stress, Response Expectations, and Peer Relationships in Early Adolescence

Presented by: Erica Alexander-Allard

Everyday technology use can create a desire to be constantly available. Imagine an early adolescent navigating peer relationships, response expectations, location sharing and immediate notifications. These experiences may create stress for students and affect friendships. This workshop will explore Grade 6-8 students' use of platforms, their features, and digital stressors. Participants will receive a tip sheet with conversation starters and strategies to help educators and parents teach and navigate digital boundaries in early adolescence.

Keywords: digital stress, peer relationships, middle school educators

BREAKOUT ROOM 2

Help or Hindrance? The Hidden Impact of Generative AI on Student Stress, Anxiety, and Self-Efficacy

Presented by: Devon Cooper

Evaluating how the use of Generative AI relates to post-secondary student academic stress, anxiety, and self-efficacy. We will take a look at the moderators and the mediators of the use of Generative AI as well as strategies that can be put in place by educators and post-secondary institutions to support our students.

Keywords: generative artificial intelligence, stress, anxiety

BREAKOUT ROOM 3

Beyond the Filter: The Influence of Social Media and Fitness Influencers on Body Image and Self-Esteem Among Young Women

Presented by: Jasmine Lewis

How does scrolling through fitness content shape how young women see themselves? This session explores how fitness influencers on TikTok and Instagram may influence body image, self-esteem, and social comparison among women ages 18 to 25. Participants will consider how curated images and differing body types shape expectations and discuss strategies for critically engaging with fitness content while supporting a healthier relationship with social media and their bodies.

Keywords: body image, social comparison, young women

BREAKOUT ROOM 4

From Screen to Symptom? Explaining Functional Tic-Like Behaviours

Presented by: Stephanie Kuntz

Functional tic-like behaviours (FTLBs) resemble tics but differ in onset, presentation, and underlying cause. During the COVID-19 pandemic, clinicians worldwide reported a sharp rise in FTLBs, often associated with viewing tic-related content on social media. This review examines which individuals develop FTLBs after exposure and the mechanisms linking on-screen content to symptoms. It aims to inform provider education.

Keywords: functional tic-like behaviours, TikTok, social media

BREAKOUT ROOM 5

Problematic Technology Use in Grades 7 and 8: Impacts and Classroom Solutions

Presented by: Cassidy-Rose Archambeault, Kirsten Danter, Masooda Anwar, & Sydney Whitehouse

Technology is a big part of students' everyday lives, both inside and outside the classroom. This presentation looks at how technology use can affect students in Grades 7 and 8, particularly their attention, academic engagement, sleep, and overall well-being. We will share what research tells us about these challenges and discuss practical ways teachers can help students develop healthier technology habits while still recognizing the important role technology plays in learning.

Keywords: technology use, academic engagement, student well-being

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SESSION C (8:05-8:25 PM)

BREAKOUT ROOM 1

Toxicity Exposure to Adolescents in Online Gaming Communities

Presented by: Mark Stocks

This presentation follows a narrative literature review aiming to find common themes of how toxicity is perpetuated and perceived by adolescents in online gaming communities. This includes examining possible mediating and moderating factors for adolescents both experiencing and engaging in toxic behaviours.

Keywords: toxicity, adolescents, online gaming

BREAKOUT ROOM 2

Behind the Screen: The Impact of E-Learning Stress on Emerging Adults' Academic Performance

Presented by: Megan Sorichetti & Tanya Yip

Since the pandemic, e-learning has become more prominent in education. With e-learning comes the possibility of added stressors for students. In this presentation, we look to assess psychological distress, motivation/engagement, and academic performance in post-secondary emerging adult students (18-29). Our recommendations will provide insight into evidence-based strategies for better stress management, mindfulness, and overall positive academic performance.

Keywords: university-level, e-Learning, stress

BREAKOUT ROOM 3

Relationality, Wholism, and Cultural Safety: A LeaderSHIP for Reconciliation Approach

Presented by: Lyndsy Baillie, Krista Mcewen & Alessia Servidio

This project explores how relational learning with Indigenous peoples can support non-Indigenous Kindergarten-to-Grade 12 educators in understanding and applying Indigenous concepts of Wholism and Cultural Safety. Drawing on Indigenous scholarship, teachings, and resources, it examines how educators can reflect on existing assumptions, build respectful relationships, and incorporate Wholistic, culturally informed perspectives into their practice. Ultimately, this learning aims to strengthen educational approaches to student mental health and well-being while prioritizing Indigenous voices, knowledge systems, and perspectives.

Keywords: Wholism, Cultural Safety, K-12 Treaty Partners

BREAKOUT ROOM 4

Beyond Blood Sugar: Exploring the Mental Health Impact of Living with Type 1 Diabetes

Presented by: Vanessa Lourenco

For a person who lives with Type 1 diabetes, we see a constant need to manage only their blood sugar. We will also explore the emotional challenges that come with diabetes, which can include anxiety and diabetes distress. Examine the benefits and also the limitations of continuous glucose monitors and insulin pumps. Reflecting on personal life experiences and engage in everyday decision-making scenarios to better understand the importance of mental health support in diabetes care.

Keywords: diabetes, mental health, diabetes technology

BREAKOUT ROOM 5

Understanding and Addressing Anxiety in Kindergarten Students

Presented by: Nuzhat Khan-Noreen

This conference presentation explores how educators can recognize and support kindergarten students experiencing anxiety. It reviews current research, classroom impacts, and barriers to early intervention, then outlines a qualitative approach to examining effective practices. The project aims to inform the development of a practical digital toolkit with identification checklists, classroom strategies, guidance for family communication, and professional resources.

Keywords: anxiety, kindergarten, early intervention

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SESSION D (8:30-8:50 PM)

BREAKOUT ROOM 1

Conversational AI and Psychological Wellbeing Impacts: Companionship, Emotional Support, and Mental Health

Presented by: Mariah Lawrence

As more youth and young adults use conversational AI to support their well-being, it is important to consider why they use these tools and how they can foster mental health, especially through companionship and emotional support. Using a case study approach, this paper will explore AI Companions and chatbots such as Wysa and Replika. This information is relevant to educators, parents, and youth, providing guidelines for healthy personal and educational strategies for digital health and resilience.

Keywords: conversational AI, youth, resilience

BREAKOUT ROOM 2

Grief in the Digital Age: Exploring Loss, Connection, and Mental Health in Everyday Life

Presented by: Cieanna Walcott

How does engagement with social media influence the ways secondary school students experience, express, and navigate grief and loss? Through a narrative literature review, this research will explore how young people use social media to express grief, maintain connections, seek support, and remember those they have lost. It will also examine the positive and challenging experiences of navigating grief online and how these experiences may influence emotional well-being and coping.

Keywords: adolescent grief, social media, bereavement, digital mourning

BREAKOUT ROOM 3

Navigating Digital Distractions: Exploring the Effects of Digital Multitasking on University Students' Attention, Stress, and Well-Being

Presented by: Azim Taher

Technology plays an important role in university students' academic and personal lives, offering opportunities for learning and connection, but it also introduces challenges related to concentration and academic responsibilities. This presentation examines current research on how social media, notifications, and frequent task-switching may influence students' learning experiences. Participants will walk away with practical strategies for managing digital distractions and supporting healthier habits, academic success, and well-being.

Keywords: digital multitasking, university students, attention and stress

BREAKOUT ROOM 4

Signing Out: An Autoethnographic Exploration of Social Media Detox

Presented by: Diane Trudgill

Join me on my social media detox journey as I explore the benefits and risks of social media use and subsequent disconnection. As a 40-something student and working professional, I examine the reasons social media is so ubiquitous, and how it feels to quit 'cold turkey'. I will discuss mediators and moderators, including age, gender, and FOMO, before ending with a discussion of the implications for middle-aged adults and post-secondary educators.

Keywords: social media, digital detox, fear of missing out (FOMO), adults

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