

Connected and Protected: How Attachment Shapes Trauma Responses and Healing

This is an intermediate level workshop and a basic understanding of trauma outcomes in people with an IDD is recommended.

This workshop explores how early attachment experiences influence the way individuals respond to support throughout their lives. The session looks at how attachment patterns and trauma experiences shape emotional regulation, trust, communication, and behaviour - as it affects both development and personal safety. Through a trauma informed lens, participants will learn why someone may appear avoidant, reactive, withdrawn, or overly dependent, and how these attachment styles often reflect trauma coping strategies rather than intentional resistance.

The workshop highlights practical ways to recognize these patterns and how to respond using our trauma informed lens with understanding, safety, and connection.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Describe the connection between attachment experiences, trauma, and emotional development in individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).
- Identify how attachment patterns can influence emotional regulation, trust, communication, behaviour, and personal safety.
- Recognize common attachment-based responses such as avoidance, withdrawal, reactivity, or dependency as possible trauma coping strategies.
- Apply a trauma-informed lens to better understand behaviours that may otherwise be misunderstood as resistance or non-compliance.
- Explore how early relational experiences can impact a person's ability to engage in supportive relationships throughout their lifespan.
- Identify practical strategies to promote emotional safety, connection, consistency, and trust within support relationships.
- Strengthen supportive responses that reduce re-traumatization and foster healthy, relationship-based care practices.

Why Attend?

This intermediate-level workshop provides Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and helping professionals with a deeper understanding of how attachment and trauma influence behaviour, relationships, and personal safety in individuals with IDD. Participants will gain insight into the underlying reasons behind complex support responses and learn how to approach these situations with empathy, connection, and trauma-informed understanding. The workshop offers practical strategies that help staff build safer, more trusting relationships while improving communication, emotional support, and overall quality of care. Attendees will leave with enhanced skills to recognize attachment-related patterns and respond in ways that promote healing, dignity, and meaningful connection.

Presenter(s): Gail Clarke & Tiffany Forbes

Date: December 2, 2026

Time: 9:00 – 4:00

Cost: \$60.00

Location: VIRTUAL

Registration Details:

WORKSHOP ID: TICDEC2026

Name:

Email:

Agency/Organization:

Please forward the completed registration form to: rssadmin@woodstockhospital.ca