

## **Dr. Belinda Seagram – Bio**

Dr. Belinda Seagram is a registered clinical and forensic psychologist with more than 30 years of experience in the field of trauma recovery. Belinda has served as the Executive Director of a shelter for abused women and children, as Acting Chief Psychologist in one of Correctional Service of Canada's largest federal penitentiaries, and as Wilderness Therapist and Clinical



Director in a residential treatment program for adolescents with serious substance abuse. Belinda has delivered training programs for the Crisis Negotiation Team of the Ontario Provincial Police, the RCMP, and the Nova Scotia Department of Justice. She has been involved in forensic investigations in Ontario and Nunavut and has served as a consultant in coordinating the trauma response for the survivors of the shipwrecked Concordia. In 2017, Belinda founded Landing Strong, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting

Veterans and First Responders struggling with Operational Stress Injuries. Belinda has published multiple books and articles on the topic of first responder health and trauma recovery. In 2023, Belinda was awarded the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Award and APNS Community Service Award in recognition of the work she has done teaching, leading and supporting those who have been injured.

### **Presentation Overview**

#### **Summiting Your PTSD Mountain: Lessons from Kilimanjaro**

After seven years acting in the role of Chief Psychologist in one of Canada's largest federal penitentiaries, Dr. Belinda Seagram was no stranger to the effects of trauma. She witnessed it in the lives of inmates she worked with and recognized the toll this work had taken on her own personal health. Her journey of recovery took her to unexpected places: most notably the top of one of the highest free-standing mountains in the world. This talk is based on her newly published book with the same title. It is filled with insights gleaned from her own personal climb and journey, as well themes rising from the work she has done with veterans and first responders. Through personal anecdotes, photos, and inspirational stories, Belinda offers a talk about hope, recovery, and discovering new horizons.

## Bio – Liane Vail



Liane Vail is the co-founder of Prevail Mental Health Solutions and a retired member (23 years) of the “J” Division Royal Canadian Mounted Police where she held many roles. Highlights in her career that impacted the work she does now was the countless hours of support to RCMP employees as the Employee Assistance Program (MEAP) Coordinator. The trust of members was humbling during her years as the Return to Work (RTW) Coordinator and Medical Discharge Advisor. Most impactful on how she does business to this day was the year 2014. As the I/C of Health Services, Liane was responsible for the deployment of a Health team to Moncton shooting incident June 4th. Four months later, the loss of a friend and colleague who died by suicide.

A proud moment in her career was when she took the initiative to adopt and modify the Canadian Forces’ Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR) program for the policing environment. This was the first step taken in the RCMP to address mental health in the workplace. She was instrumental in having the training approved as the first mandatory mental health training for all RCMP employees across the country. Liane continues to teach as a Master Trainer for the Mental Health Commission of Canada. The idea of Prevail Mental Health Solutions evolved early in her retirement based on her experiences in the RCMP and her personal lived experience with operational stress injuries. This idea grew from supporting a small group of local public safety personnel into a province wide business serving over 1000 employees working in high risk professions in various organizations. Liane is married to a first responder. They have an adult son and two fur children. Her self-care includes glamping, pottery, and nature therapy. Her words of advice to anyone who will listen: it’s okay not to be okay. You are not alone in getting back to being okay.

### Prevail Solutions Overview

Prevail Solutions Mental Health Inc. formally launched its public Mental Health Monitoring service on June 1, 2020. The service was designed to support better mental health outcomes for Public Safety Personnel (PSP) in the province of New Brunswick. With the use of an electronic mental health monitoring tool, the staff at Prevail can monitor the well-being of PSP, inform individuals when there may be a concern, and connect them with professional resources in a timely manner when warranted.

**Mission:** To promote mental resilience in high-risk work professions

**Vision:** Resilient Front Line, Healthy Organizations and Safer Communities

**Values:** We believe resilience thrives in an atmosphere of courage, compassion, and connection

### Our Process

**Monitor, Inform and Connect.**

Join Liane as she describes the Prevail Solutions program and how they can help your organization.

## Superintendent Dustine Rodier

Officer in Charge, Administration and Personnel

Superintendent Rodier began her career with the RCMP in 1994 as a dispatcher at the Surrey Detachment and an auxiliary member/firearms instructor. In 2000, as a regular member, she was posted to general duty at British Columbia's Richmond Detachment. She worked in the Plain Clothes Section; Property Crimes and the Serious Crimes Unit. In 2010, Superintendent Rodier helped establish the first Special Victims Team within the Richmond Serious Crimes Unit, targeting major offences against the most vulnerable.

Superintendent Rodier transferred to [New Brunswick's](#) Federal Policing Unit in 2013, focusing on organized crime, proceeds of crime and money laundering. In 2016, she was promoted to Sergeant as the Detachment Commander for Hampton.

In 2018, Superintendent Rodier was promoted to Inspector and transferred to Nova Scotia as the Officer in Charge of Operational Support and the province's state-of-the-art Operational Communications Centre.

From 2021-2022, Superintendent Rodier was assigned as the Executive Officer to the Commanding Officer, where she worked on Division-wide initiatives supporting the RCMP's mandate across the province.

In 2022, she was promoted to Administration and Personal Officer and oversees recruiting, training, human resources, mentorship and the strategic support of operations. She is an advocate for employee wellness and ensuring healthy, respectful workplaces for H Division.



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## Janice Landry (Journalist Storyteller) Bio



Janice Landry has won three national awards for her books and mental health advocacy work.

Janice is a proud Haligonian and is currently working on her seventh non-fiction title which will be published by Pottersfield Press in spring 2025. Her most recent book, *Eye of the Ocean*, (2022), was a bestseller. All her proceeds from sales of that book are being donated to the Hants East Assisting Refugees Team, (HEART) Society of Nova Scotia.

Janice's biggest inspiration is her family, husband, Rob, and daughter, Laura.

She also honours her late parents, Baz and Theresa, with her books, and began writing longform to tell the gripping story of her father's national Medal of Bravery for rescuing an infant from a harrowing house fire.

## Bob and Johan Grundy – Rally Point Retreat



Bob and Johan met in 2001 and were married on Oahu in 2006. They have a melded family of four children and six grandchildren with another on the way. Bob's PTSD was not diagnosed until 2004 while still Serving the RCAF, and his Parkinsons diagnosis came in 2013 shortly after retirement.

Rally Point Retreat began as an invitation to Group Therapy participants in May 2015. The concept evolved into a registered not for profit Society in February 2016, and continues to evolve 24/7, 365 days a year ever since.

Together, Bob and Johan bring a wealth of knowledge and experience with the day-to-day challenges of PTSD, Parkinson's Disease, and the perfect storm when the two conditions overlap. The insight into how the conditions impact family, friends, social interactions, personal growth and life outlook is invaluable.

Both have completed Peer Support Training with Mood Disorders Society of Canada and MHI.

Bob is training to be a Lego Serious Play facilitator, and Johan has completed the Mental Health First Aid (Veterans course)

**Bob and Johan will touch on:** Their  
Life experience with PTSD What is  
RPR?  
Why is RPR?  
How to apply to visit.  
How to get to RPR and what to bring?  
What do we offer and how? (Temporal program)  
Q&A

## **Scott C. Nichols BBA, QAFP, EPC**

### **BIO**

As the president and owner of Harvest Wealth Management, Scott understands the importance of providing excellent financial advice and service. With his experience and team, he is committed to maintaining the reputation of HWM as a world-class financial planning organization. Scott was born and raised in the Annapolis Valley, so he understands the needs and values of Nova Scotians. Scott graduated at Acadia University with his Bachelor of Business Administration and joined London Life Insurance in 1999 with his mentor Stephen Healy. In 2012, Scott opened Nichols Wealth Management which is now Harvest Wealth Management. Scott has also continued his education and received his Elder Planning designation (EPC) and has successfully completed the Qualified Associated Financial Planner (QAFP) designation and is working towards his Certified Financial Planner (CFP) and Certified Executor Advisor (CEA) designations as well. He loves living in the Valley spending his spare time with his wife and children, watching his children's sporting events (hockey and horseback), occasionally golfing, or working on home improvements.



### **Overview of Presentation**

Scott will be sharing his experience in dealing with some of the common and unique issues and opportunities First Responders (and their families) are faced with in their financial planning. Scott has worked closely with First Responders since his first weeks in practice nearly 25 years ago. Scott will explore with you the opportunities and threats to your financial plans and some high-level strategies that can be implemented to help you navigate what can be stressful times during your careers and lives as First Responders today and in the future. During Scott's talk he will also be sharing with the group his own struggles he has faced and the opportunities he has found in helping support the First Responder and Veteran Communities locally and beyond. All while keeping with his vision of helping people achieve their financial security, giving back to those who give so much and help Keeping Strong People Strong.

## Mitch Tate - Bio



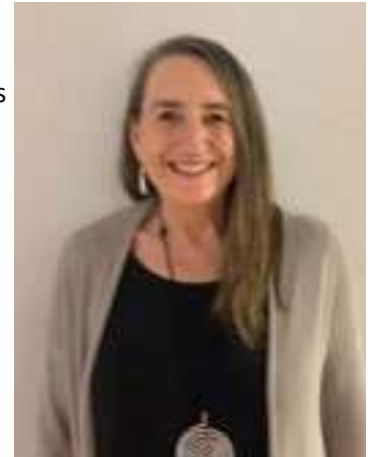
"Mitch Tate is a physiotherapist with Julie Skaling Physiotherapy in Kentville. He has experience with various methods of physical training, and currently teaches Taiji in the community through the Black Feather Academy of Physical Cultivation. Mitch will be presenting on the importance of correct body positioning and movement skills for First Responders to improve strength expression and reduce risk of injury while on the job."

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## Mary Hanneman - Bio

### Presentation Overview

Mary Hanneman began her involvement with the Provincial Fire Service Team CISM team shortly after its inception 30 years ago. Her interest was sparked in this work from a master's thesis research paper titled "An evaluation of Critical Incident Stress Debriefings as perceived by Volunteer Firefighters in Nova Scotia ". Mary is employed with the Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education as trained as School Counsellor and recently as a Vice Principal. She is also the Chairperson of the AVRCE Crisis Team. Currently Mary is serving as the Clinical Director for the FSANS CISM Team.



### The Firefighter - Grief and Traumatic Loss

What is grief? And why can it be so complicated? It is inevitable that firefighters, especially in rural communities, encounter traumatic loss. The emotional impact of responding in their communities' can sometimes hit close to home. These losses can have a profound impact on the mental and physical health of firefighters. *Do firefighters cope differently? What can make a difference?*

## Kristy Falconer

Serenity Acres Family Ranch  
[www.serenityacresranch.com](http://www.serenityacresranch.com)

### How Does a Horse Teach Life Skills?

Horses are among the most intuitive of teachers. As a prey animal, horses are sensitive to their environment and everyone who surrounds them for their survival. They ask for leadership and direction. As teachers, they react to the slightest stimulus both positive and negative. They sense changes in posture, breathing and body language of animals and people around them. They provide constant nonverbal feedback based on the stimulus provided by the participants. This allows them to respond honestly and to be nonjudgmental barometer of our conscious and unconscious feelings and behaviours. This can help participants to better understand and learn how our verbal and nonverbal communication might be impacting or influencing others in their lives.



Join Kristy to learn more about Equine Assisted Therapy, how it works, and more importantly, what's in it for participants.

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## John White



John has recently retired from an active 22-year career with the Glace Bay Fire department. He is a mental health professional who volunteers with the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia (FSANS) Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team and as a trained counsellor, he understands that individuals make sense of their daily encounters based on the outcomes of previous experiences.

John draws a comparison of the human life cycle to a river; just as sediment picked up along the riverbed changes the water, each life encounter has an impact on the individual's response to future events.

On July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2005, John and his wife encountered turbulent waters when they suddenly became victims of an intoxicated driver. This encounter triggered a tsunami requiring interventions such as psychological trauma support, occupational therapy, and prescribed opioid pain management.

John invites you to share in the lessons learned from this voyage of personal conflict, strife, and determination. He will take you on a journey through his experiences with pain management, psychological trauma and an over dependence on medication

## Clarissa Smith, RD



"Clarissa's passion for nutrition started when she saw the difference it made with managing her own health conditions. Since studying dietetics at Mount Saint Vincent University and completing her internship at The Hospital for Sick Children, Clarissa has been working in many settings in the Annapolis Valley including long term care, private practice, and Nova Scotia Health. Clarissa has an inclusive approach to nutrition and believes that a person's relationship with food is as, if not more, important than the food itself.

Clarissa will be discussing what day to day eating patterns will help maintain your health overall, how to fuel your body during an incident, as well as how to best recover from an incident."

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## Dave Sutherland, RCMP Chaplain, Chaplain with FSANS CISM Team



Dave Sutherland is a chaplain who has served in Canadian Forces as a Naval Officer, Officer with the Military Police and as a Chaplain during the war in Afghanistan. He now volunteers his service with the RCMP and FSANS CISM Team. He was trained as a shipboard firefighter in the military and was a Level One trained firefighter for 10 years in Nova Scotia after retiring from the CF. Dave has had experience with Next of Kin (NOK) notifications and dealing with the aftermath of many traumatic incidents. He is married, living on the South Shore of Nova Scotia and has two adult children.

### **Spiritual Wellness:** What it is and why it's important...

What happens when you go to the well and find it dry? You can't drink from a dry well in a desert. So how do we keep our well filled? This workshop is intended to help you identify the source of your spiritual well and to help you identify what you need to do to ensure that you can find the refreshing you need, even in the middle of the desert. Let's be honest, in 30 minutes we won't be able to completely change everything for the better, but what we hope to leave you with is a reminder of how important it is know how to identify and tap into what you need to keep moving forward in tough times.



## Chris Kennedy – Relaxation and Grounding Techniques



### **Bio**

Chris has been involved in the fire service for over 30 years serving many roles from black hat to captain and chief of a rural department for 12 years. He is also a peer member of the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia (FSANS) Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team. Currently he works as the Fire Services Coordinator for the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg.

For the past 8 years, he has been training in resiliency for first responders and how we can learn to understand what our body is telling us when we are feeling the effects of stress and anxiety.

### **Overview**

Chris will lead a brief discussion about resiliency and then move into a couple of practical and fun exercises that can be tools in our toolboxes. By practicing these simple exercises, they can be life saving in times of need.

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## Colleen Kamps



### **Bio:**

Colleen is a licensed psychotherapist with 45 years of clinical experiences across a variety of settings including inpatient and outpatient mental health, crisis intervention, specialized trauma programs, education, and private practice. Colleen is the Director of Program Development and Advisory Services with the Tema Foundation, a not-for-profit organization that supports first responders and frontline workers in mental health training and curriculum development, and peer support. Her passion, commitment, and dedication to helping others are what keep her striving forward to make life easier for those who need support.

### ***The Cost of Caring:***

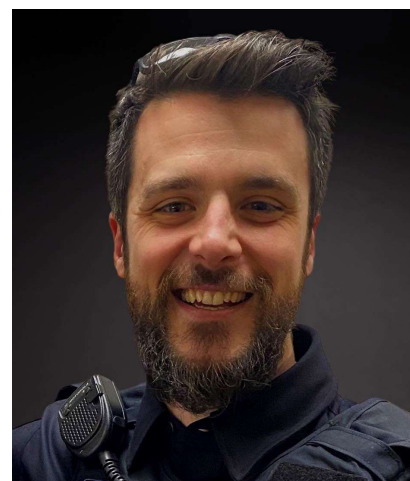
The loyalty and commitment of those working the frontlines is fierce. Striking a healthy balance with work and life is of great significance, especially with the many experiences/exposures first responders endure while at work. This workshop will focus on understanding the stress of working the frontline, recognizing the impact of this work, and learning that there are important elements to maintain a good balance between work and life in order to improve one's overall mental health and wellbeing.

## Deven Kennedy

After 9 years of policing, Deven was involved in a near-fatal incident while on duty, when a suspect attempted to run him over. He narrowly escaped, but not without physical and psychological injuries. A career in policing was everything Deven had wanted in life and the incident left him feeling lost and lacking confidence.

Through his recovery, he used fitness, healthy lifestyle choices combined with medical and psychological treatments to aid in his full return to duty.

"Resilience Through Fitness" was born out of this journey back to homeostasis. Combining a decade of policing experience with being a certified Sleep, Stress and Recovery coach, Level 1 Nutrition coach with specialization in Athletic Nutrition and CrossFit Level 1 Coach, Deven was able to build out programs to help those who serve. By utilizing completely personalized coaching, tailored to each individual client, allows the client to make progress while allowing adequate time for recovery from shift work.



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**Presenter: Cpl. Brad Beadman** – Wellness Co-ordinator RCMP “H” Division

The Leaders Wellness Workshop “Strengthening Our Leadership, Strengthening Our People”.

This session is a condensed version of the 4 hour workshop we provide to our leaders, supervisors, and managers in Nova Scotia. We discuss the role of a leader, building relationships, having difficult discussions, signs and symptoms of stress, operational stress injuries, building resilience, leadership stress, critical incident stress debriefs, case studies and supports and services. The workshop is created by feedback from employees, supervisors, managers, unit commanders, and leaders in H-Division.

## REgen Resilience Consulting

REgen Resilience Consulting is owned and operated by First Responders who have also supported spouses that work the Frontlines. We collectively have decades of experience in this type of work with intimate experience in Fire, Law Enforcement, Paramedicine and Military. Our mission is to Cultivate PROACTIVE wellness in First Responders, Frontline Workers, and Military Members while providing REACTIVE support.

Using our peer-led, expert-backed approach, REgen's programming and resources aim to navigate life both in and out of the uniform. REgen offers resilience education to individuals, departments, and institutions through in-person, online, and hybrid options.

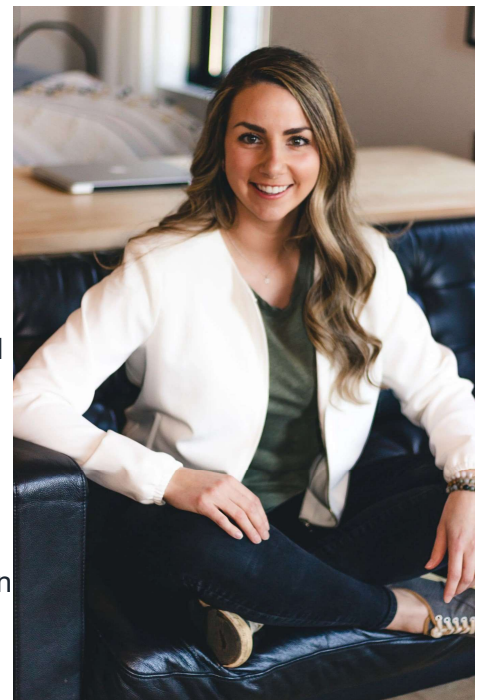
Website: [www.regenwithus.com](http://www.regenwithus.com)

Socials: @regenwithus

### Charlie Hayes

#### Co-Founder & CEO of REgen Resilience Consulting

Charlie Hayes, Co-Founder and CEO, is an ex-first responder and a first responder spouse. She has worked in diverse fields, all designed to help her better serve community and bridge service gaps. Among her achievements as a Paramedic, Birth Doula and Educator, and trauma-informed Yoga Teacher, Charlie has also worked in Wildfire, dispatch, and as a volunteer firefighter. She has seen first-hand the lack of mental health education and support in first responder fields. As CEO, Charlie implements strategies to ensure REgen is providing the most current and researched-backed tools to restore balance in and out of the uniform. Through collaborative approaches and training, her goal is to help frontline workers have long, meaningful careers, facilitate a graceful transition out of the uniform, and reconstruct the identity piece when needed. In her personal life, you can find Charlie chasing her kiddos, being in nature, cooking up a storm, and studying for a master's degree in Counselling Psychology.



## **Jenna Rushton-Stevens**

### **Co-Founder & COO of REgen Resilience Consulting**

Jenna Rushton-Stevens, Co-Founder and COO, is an ex-first responder and active Military member. Jenna is REgen's Lead Program Developer and Lead Instructor. After starting a career as a Medic in the Canadian Armed Reserve Forces in 2014, she found a passion for the fire service. Jenna dedicated herself to a fire department and was soon a certified NFPA 1001 Level 2 Firefighter, and NFPA 1041 Level 1 Instructor. In addition to Municipal Firefighting, she had the privilege of creating and teaching provincial training programs and deploying throughout Alberta, fighting fires that were threatening communities. As COO, Jenna aims to find ways to get ahead of the statistics, and interrupt the cycle of destruction in the lives of those on the frontlines. When off duty, Jenna is completing the First Responder Trauma Prevention and Recovery Program through Simon Fraser University, outside in nature, or let's be honest, getting groceries.



### **Session Description**

Charlie and Jenna will be presenting on first responder tendencies towards over identification to the uniform, how this can get tricky at work and on the homefront, and the importance of cultivating resilience proactively. Participants will have an opportunity to fill their toolbox with a few of our favorite tools while learning about themselves or those they support.