

Smartphones and the Pursuit of Wellness



Session Description

Smartphones have been blamed for everything from shorter attention spans and depression to the destruction of our youngest workplace generation. One is left wondering where the truth ends and hysteria begins.

This session examines what current research is telling us about the impact smartphone technology has on our behaviour, emotional life, physical selves, personal interaction and cognitive processes. We will consider the challenge we all face balancing the increasing demands for productivity and efficiency with the need to support and promote mental health and wellness of people in their personal and professional lives.

The session will also examine strategies to deal with the more harmful impacts of smartphone technology. While few advocate throwing our phones away, we can adopt practices which leverage the power of the technology, while maintaining personal autonomy so that we can work and live more productively. Because developing a healthier relationship with our smartphone is not a "one-size fits all" proposition, we will overview a range of concepts and approaches in order to provide participants with strategies that fit individual circumstances.

To facilitate audience participation, please bring your phone, tablet or laptop as we will be doing polling during the session.

Jim Lees, RSW, MSW, MBA

Jim Lees is a registered social worker and private consultant working out of Thunder Bay. He is currently "transitioning" from three decades in the college system as a teacher, counsellor, researcher and a manager in student services at Confederation College. Jim just graduated with an M.B.A. from Lakehead University, holds an M.S.W. from Dalhousie University and has studied economics, outdoor recreation, political science and community development along the way. Jim is past Chair of the Ontario College Counsellors (OCC) and was honoured with the OCC Leadership Award in May 2012 and a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016 for his contribution and leadership at the provincial level.

Jim has a special passion for promoting the mental health of young people, leading the development of a Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy at Confederation (the first of its kind at an Ontario college) and was also the Co-Chair of the Mental Health in Ontario Postsecondary Working Group which worked to improve campus environments to support mental health and well-being across Ontario. He currently serves on the Board of the Children's Centre Thunder Bay which provides mental health services to children, youth and their families.

Jim has a reputation as an entertaining and engaging speaker with over 30 years of experience doing presentations on a wide variety of topics including interpersonal communication, personal growth and development, multigenerational workplaces, team work, conflict management, suicide prevention and mental health awareness.