

## **Keynote**

**Presenter: Gus Murray**

### **Healing the legacy of transgenerational trauma with EMDR Therapy**

There is growing consensus that trauma can arise not only from the direct impact of adverse experiences, but also from transgenerational transmission. A growing body of research points to the influence of epigenetics. While DNA carries our inherited genetic coding, epigenetics is an additional layer that guides gene expression. Through interaction with our early developmental environment, epigenetic chemical marks are accumulated, determining how much or little a gene is expressed. Early traumatic experiences can rearrange these epigenetic marks, leading to impaired neural connections as well as an impairment in physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and interpersonal functioning. These modifications, which occur outside of conscious awareness, are encoded primarily in lower brain regions, becoming stored primarily in the body and emotions, and have been found to pass on to offspring and to future generations. For example, traumatic wounds expressed in chronic shame and addictive behaviours may be giving external expression to implicit memories that had their origins in earlier or repeated traumatic circumstances and may have been transmitted over several generations.

This presentation will provide an overview of the key pathways that lead to the development of transgenerational trauma at the geopolitical, community and family levels. The key clinical manifestations of transgenerational trauma will be identified and framework for its assessment and treatment with EMDR therapy will be presented and illustrated. The challenges of identifying and processing transgenerational trauma memories that are held implicitly, outside of awareness will be addressed.