



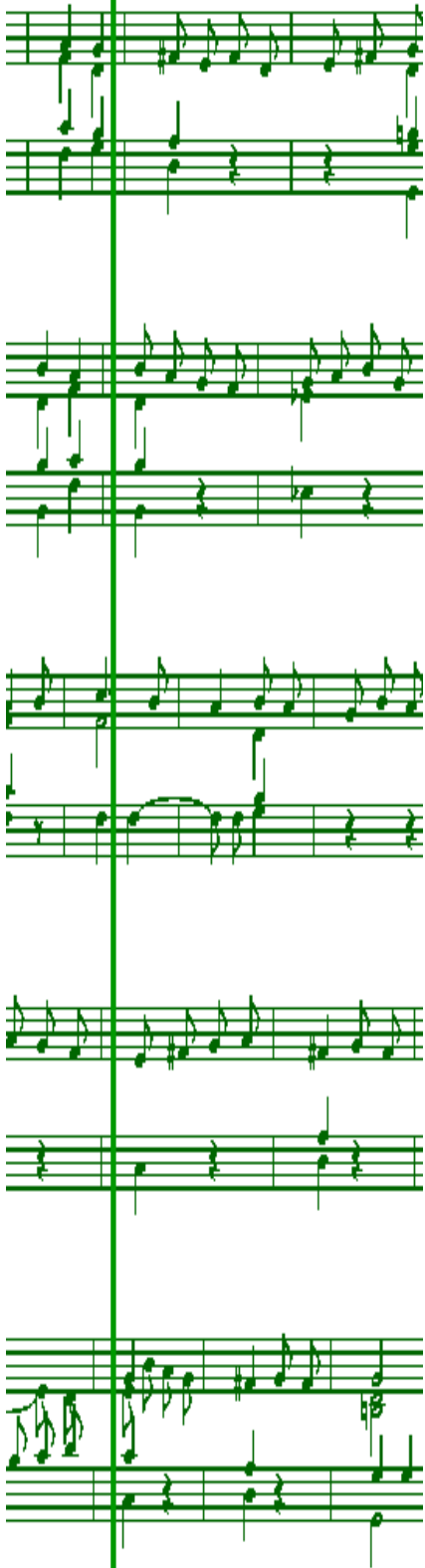
National Arts Centre

October 4, 2008



Roundtable on Media, Communications and Technology:

Healthy Mental Development for Children and Youth



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Dear Reader:

For the past three years, the National Arts Centre Roundtable has shone a spotlight on the link between music, the arts and health. This year, the fourth in the series, took a deeper look at Healing and the Arts, focusing on *Media, Communications and Technology: Healthy Mental Development for Children and Youth*. We were extremely lucky to have not only some of the foremost thinkers on this issue in the country, but also people who work in the new media industries—film, gaming and television—as well as several young people who have found the arts to be profoundly helpful as part of their treatment for mental health problems.

We learned that mental health issues affect children and youth across the spectrum, from the earliest age when diagnosed with diseases such as autism or other neuro-psychiatric disorders, to teenagers struggling with ADHD, addiction, depression, anxiety and schizophrenia. And we also learned that environmental factors—such as new media—have a huge impact on the brain and mental health. In their keynote address, Broadcaster Valerie Pringle and her daughter Catherine Pringle talked about their experiences—Catherine’s with issues stemming from anxiety attacks and Valerie’s from her perspective as a mother looking to help her daughter—and the decision to publicize their struggle.

We learned that the arts present a compelling opportunity, with untapped potential for healing to help young people deal with the challenges that they face in society today. We also learned of the potential and the threat of many of the new media available to youth to cure and to cause more trouble. We learned about “good” content and “bad” content in many media and how this affects many people who use it, bringing up questions of addiction, violence, relationships, sexual exploitation and more.

Our Roundtable discussion was augmented by a Wired World Workshop in the NAC Foyer. Eight computer stations were set up to demonstrate the most cutting edge media, communications tools and technologies available to young people today. NAC staff members explained social networking, cloud computing, e-commerce, mobility, MMORPG, search and reference tools, and Dr. Stéphane Bouchard, from the Université du Québec en Outaouais, demonstrated his use of virtual reality to treat phobia.

We hope that this Roundtable will lead to many more invigorating discussions on an important topic, as well as action. Now is the time to forge concrete links between the worlds of the performing arts and health care.

Sincerely,

Peter A. Herrndorf
President and CEO
National Arts Centre

Darrell Louise Gregersen
Chief Executive Officer
National Arts Centre Foundation

**MEDIA, COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY:
HEALTHY MENTAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

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**Proud Sponsor of the 2008 Roundtable on Media, Communications and Technology:
Healthy Mental Development for Children and Youth**

Introduction

This report summarizes the discussion at the National Arts Centre Roundtable on *Media, Communications and Technology: Healthy Mental Development for Children and Youth* that took place on October 4, 2008. It was the fourth in a series of roundtables on Healing and the Arts.

Over the course of three and a half hours, community leaders from the worlds of science, business, the arts and philanthropy, as well as beneficiaries of arts programs used to treat mental health issues, engaged in discussion that ranged from exploring the impact of new media on the mental health of young people, to how the arts, media and technology can be beneficial to those who suffer from mental health issues.

The Roundtable was designed to address the many facets of mental health for young people and how these may interact with the arts, media, communications and technology. Broadcaster Valerie Pringle and her daughter Catherine Pringle delivered the opening address, in which they talked about their own experiences with mental illness, from the patient and parent perspectives, and stressed the need for less shame and more openness when it comes to talking about the subject.

Dr. Stan Kutcher, Sun Life Chair in Adolescent Mental Health at Dalhousie University, addressed the question of Media and Communication Technology: Brain Plasticity and Neurodevelopment. He provided the medical context for the intersection between our brains and our development, while describing the impact of new media on the brain. He explained how our brains adapt to the media to which they are exposed and showed us that environmental factors are far more important for brain health and development than previously considered.

Subsequent speakers addressed questions concerning mental health, new media and the arts from a medical perspective. Dr. Bruce Ballon, Head of Adolescent Clinical and Educational Services for Problem Gambling, Gaming and Internet use, CAMH, and of the new Psychiatry Simulation and Innovation Center at Mount Sinai Hospital discussed the perils of the Internet for mental health. Dr. Michael Rich, Director of the Centre of Media and Child Health at Harvard and Children's Hospital Boston spoke about understanding illness from a patient perspective using technology. Dr. David Wolfe, RBC Investments Chair in Children's Mental Health, CAMH, described the link between media violence and its impact on child abuse, sexual violence and neglect.

Following the formal presentations, Dr. Margaret Clarke and Amanda Calkins gave a glimpse into the Calgary Youth Roundtable which grew from the seed planted at the 2007 NAC Roundtable.

A wide-ranging discussion then took place that touched on the following questions:

- a. How can Canada's innovators in the media, technology and communications worlds contribute effectively and creatively to improved mental health for children and youth?
- b. Can arts organizations make important contributions to building a better understanding of the issues by working effectively within our communities?
- c. How might Canada's healthcare providers and the research community respond effectively and creatively to a growing understanding of the relationship between healthy mental development and the worlds of communication and technology?
- d. Is there a role for all of us together in ensuring powerful and positive ways to harness and apply technology to ensure healthy mental development for young people?

Mr. Don Newman, Senior Parliamentary Editor at CBC Television, moderated the discussion.

The 2005 Roundtable on Music and Medicine began the National Arts Centre's public exploration of the arts as a healing and treatment tool in human health. It focused on the impact of music in the treatment of cancer, heart disease and stroke, traumatic brain injury, and aging and dementia. Participants—prominent leaders in the medical and social policy fields, as well as arts supporters and senior public policy makers—discussed both pure scientific and clinical applications, with particular emphasis on the untapped potential of music to improve well-being. Since 2006, the NAC Roundtables have delved further into the topic with their exploration of Mental Health and the Arts.

Prior to the series on human health and the arts, the first three National Arts Centre Roundtables addressed issues relating to corporate sponsorship and individual philanthropy in the performing arts, as well as public and private sector partnerships. The Roundtables have featured a wide range of Canadian and international participants, including keynote speakers James Wolfensohn, then president of the World Bank and Chairman Emeritus of the John F. Kennedy Center of the Performing Arts; the late Richard Bradshaw, then General Director of the Canadian Opera Company; former federal finance minister John Manley; Michael Wilson, Canadian Ambassador to the United States; and Frank O'Dea, founder of the Second Cup coffee company.

This year's Roundtable discussion took place on the same day as the 12th annual National Arts Centre Gala, which raises money for the National Youth and Education Trust, the primary source of funds for the National Arts Centre's youth and education programming. The National Arts Centre Roundtable was supported by Presenting Sponsor Sun Life Financial, and Associate Sponsors University of Ottawa and Rx&D.

Agenda

National Arts Centre, Le Salon October 3, 2008

Hosts: Mr. Peter A. Herrndorf, President and CEO, National Arts Centre
Mrs. Gail O'Brien, Chair, National Arts Centre Foundation

Keynote Speakers: Valerie Pringle, Broadcaster and Catherine Pringle

Moderator: Mr. Don Newman, Senior Parliamentary Editor, CBC News

Special Guest:

Maestro Pinchas Zukerman, Music Director, National Arts Centre Orchestra

Roundtable Organizer:

Mrs. Darrell Louise Gregersen, CEO, National Arts Centre Foundation

-
- 8:30 a.m. Breakfast and Wired World Workshops, NAC Foyer
- 9:00 a.m. Welcome and Introductions:
- **Mr. Peter A. Herrndorf**, President and CEO, National Arts Centre
 - **Mr. Don Newman**, Senior Parliamentary Editor, CBC News
- 9:20 a.m. Opening Address:
- **Mrs. Valerie Pringle**, Broadcaster, and **Ms. Catherine Pringle**, Daughter - speak from personal experience about mental illness
- 9:35 a.m. Media and Communication Technology Context: Brain Plasticity and Neurodevelopment
- **Dr. Stan Kutcher**, Sun Life Chair in Adolescent Mental Health, Dalhousie University
- 9:45 a.m. Medical Perspective on why this is important:
- **Dr. Bruce Ballon**, Head of Adolescent Clinical and Educational Services for Problem Gambling Gaming and Internet Use, CAMH, and of the new Psychiatry Simulation and Innovation Centre at Mount Sinai Hospital
 - **Dr. Michael Rich**, Director of the Center on Media and Child Health and Children's Hospital Boston
 - **Dr. David Wolfe**, RBC Investments Chair in Children's Mental Health, CAMH
- 10:15 a.m. Initial Questions

- 10:30 a.m. Break / Wired World Workshops
- 10:45 a.m. Youth Perspective on the Role of Media Arts in Mental Health: *glimpse into the Calgary Youth Roundtable*
- **Dr. Margaret Clarke**, Professor, Faculty of Medicine, Departments of Pediatrics and Psychiatry, Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry, University of Alberta, Fraser Mustard Chair in Childhood Development, University of Calgary and Executive Director, Sinneave Centre for Autism project
 - **Amanda Calkins**, Women's Studies student, University of Calgary and Supervisor of Community Programs, Alberta Youth in Care and Custody Network

10:50 a.m. Roundtable Leadership Discussion

Discussion Concepts:

- a. How can Canada's innovators in the media, technology and communications worlds contribute effectively and creatively to improved mental health for children and youth?
- b. Can arts organizations make important contributions to building a better understanding of the issues by working effectively within our communities?
- c. How might Canada's healthcare providers and the research community respond effectively and creatively to a growing understanding of the relationship between healthy mental development and the worlds of communication and technology?
- d. Is there a role for all of us together in ensuring powerful and positive ways to harness and apply technology to ensure healthy mental development for young people?

Discussion Outcomes Sought:

- a. Canada's arts organizations commit to developing relationships with their communities in new ways, helping build awareness and support in new sectors.
- b. Grow public awareness of the importance of mental health for children and youth, and of the ability of the media arts to serve as a powerful tool for their well-being.
- c. The public sector is more engaged in fostering collaborative work between technology, media, arts and health sectors.
- d. The scientific, medical and government sectors commit to exploring the potential more rigorously together.

Respondents:

Ms. Gail Asper

*Corporate Secretary, CanWest Global
Communications Corporation
President, CanWest Global Foundation
Managing Director, The Asper
Foundation
NAC Foundation Director*

Dr. Stéphane Bouchard

*Canada Research Chair in Clinical
Cyberpsychology, Department of
Psychology, Université du Québec en
Outaouais*

Dr. Simon Davidson

*Chief of Psychiatry, CHEO, Medical
Director, Mental Health Patient Service
Unit at CHEO and Executive Director of
Planning and Development, Provincial
Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth
Mental Health at CHEO*

Mr. Andrew Fisher

*Executive Vice President,
Wesley Clover International Corporation*

Mrs. Julia Foster

Chair, National Arts Centre

Ms. Shari Graydon

Author

Dr. Antoine Hakim

*Director, Neuroscience Research
Institute, University of Ottawa*

Mr. Trevor Matthews

*Actor, Producer and Writer
Co-Founder, Brookstreet Pictures*

Ms. Linda Schuyler

*CEO and Executive Producer,
Epitome Pictures, Inc.*

Mr. Donald J. Taylor

Chairman, Engineered Air

Dr. Ruth Taylor

Artist

Ms. Suzanne Vinet

*Associate Deputy Minister of Health,
Health Canada*

Ms. Danielle Williams

Artist

Ms Janet Yale

*Executive Vice-President, Corporate
Affairs, TELUS*

- 12:10 p.m. Final Reflections: All participants
- a. Personal perspectives on why this is important
 - b. What will we each commit to doing as a result of this Roundtable?
- 12:30 p.m. Summary Remarks, Thank you and Adjournment: *Don Newman* and *Peter Herrndorf*

Opening Address

Mrs. Valerie and Ms. Catherine Pringle

“Catherine and I have become the poster children for addiction and mental health,” said broadcaster Valerie Pringle. She went on to describe her own daughter, Catherine’s descent into panic attacks, anxiety and depression and the campaign that sees their faces all over bus shelters and their voices on radio stations in Toronto. “I’m very proud of the role she’s taken to speak out about her problems.”

Catherine Pringle spoke after her mother and described her experience with anxiety attacks. What started as extreme nervousness in situations of pressure or the unknown, manifested by crying attacks before exams and sports competitions, then developed into a leave of absence from work and an inability to get out of bed, shower, get to work or function in a “normal” way. When she returned to work, Catherine didn’t know what to tell her colleagues. It was her father who suggested she simply tell them the truth. “It was interesting that when I told people, so many said, ‘oh, my friend, my wife, has something like that.’ It’s just surprising how few people talk about it, but when you offer it up, it’s amazing how often people will say they know someone.”

It’s always a worry that those close to you will give up on you. Support is the most important thing.

Catherine described how she has learned to deal with her illness, but stressed how important it is that people support you, and that people understand how to cope with you when you are struggling. It’s always a worry that those close to you will give up on you, she explained. Support is the most important thing.

The issue of the stigma of mental illness also came up during the Pringles’ presentation. Both re-iterated how important it is to continue to bring mental health issues in to the open to raise awareness. “People need to talk about it more, so that we all understand how common these issues are. But there’s not enough talk about it, and if my talking about it will help someone else, then that’s important for me,” said Catherine.

Valerie Pringle finished by describing how important it is to seek help once you realize the problem is beyond your competence. She found that help for her daughter at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), in Toronto. She referred to one of the most recent interviews she did with Leonard Cohen, who has struggled with issues of serious depression, which he treated with Buddhism, alcohol, drugs and Prozac, she said. He told her that he felt his art had been produced as a victory over suffering, not as a result of suffering. He told her that the best line he’d ever written was from *Anthem*:

**“Ring the bells that still can ring,
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That’s how the light gets in.”**

Media and Communication Technology Context: Brain Plasticity and Neurodevelopment

Dr. Stan Kutcher

The next presentation by Dr. Stan Kutcher, Sun Life Chair in Adolescent Mental Health at Dalhousie University and an internationally-renowned expert in the area of adolescent mental health and a national and international leader in mental health research, advocacy, training, policy, and health services innovation, provided the medical context for the effect of media on the brain. He clearly described for listeners the plasticity of the brain and the effect of media and communications technology on us all.

Dr. Kutcher was a founding member of the Canadian Association for Mood and Anxiety Treatment, the Advisory Board for the Institute of Neuroscience, Mental Health and Addictions (Canadian Institutes of Health Research), the Science Advisory Committee of NeuroScience Canada, and the Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research. He currently serves as board member for the Canadian Psychiatric Research Foundation. In 2003, he was chosen by Atlantic Progress Magazine as one of the top 20 innovators in Atlantic Canada. He was named as the 2004 National Champion of Mental Health, Research by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health and received the 2005 Mary Seeman Award from the Canadian Psychiatry Research Foundation in recognition of his lifetime achievements in mental health work. He is a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences and has received numerous other awards and recognition for his work in clinical research, mental health promotion, and advocacy.

Dr. Kutcher is also a nationally and internationally active speaker, reviewer and consultant in psychiatry working in various countries around the globe and for various international groups including the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization.

*The technological world that we live
in wires our brains as we live in that
world.*

Dr. Kutcher started by asking who knew what a VCR is. He described the flashing red light of his VCR, which did this because he never learned to program it. His kids were constantly telling him how useless he was because he couldn't make it work. But now, he doesn't have to know how to program a VCR because it doesn't exist anymore! "I figure if I can live long enough, I don't have to figure out how to work a DVD," he said. The moral of Dr. Kutcher's story is that, "I am a digital immigrant, not a digital native," he stated. In other words, he has had to adapt and learn to use new media technologies, but it is not something that comes naturally to him. However, this will change for future generations as the environmental impact of new media becomes apparent and we pass our gained knowledge down to our descendants through our genes.

The concept of plasticity in neurodevelopment starts with the brain. The brain has more connections than stars in the universe. It connects you with your environment. About 90% of what we've learned about the brain, we've discovered in the last 15 to 20 years, which makes brain discovery the new frontier, said Dr. Kutcher.

"As technology has evolved to study the brain, so has it changed our brains. Our brains are plastic. That means that they change our environments and at the same time are changed by our environments. You are what your environment is. You are also the sum total of all your ancestors' previous environments. You actually may be what your grandmother ate," said Dr. Kutcher.

The complexity of the interaction between genetics, environments and who we are as people is just now beginning to be a glimmer in our understanding. There is an entire field called epi-genetics, that didn't exist a decade ago, which suggests that the environment turns our genes on or off. It shows us how important environments are for helping each human to recognize the full potential of their lives. It also shows us how complex this delicate play between who we are because of what we are born with, how we modify, and how our environment modifies and changes us. Even further, it shows how we may pass this on to our children, our children's children and so on. For the first, time we have a metaphor that lets us understand how this happens. The metaphor doesn't tell us we're stuck.

Dr. Kutcher went on to compare the spatial recognition components in the brains of London taxi drivers to those of bus drivers. Taxi drivers' brains in a particular area are large as they have to find their way around the city each day; bus drivers' are not as they repeat the same route each day. When you compare those parts of the brain associated with active musical listening, the brains of professional musicians are very well developed compared to amateur musicians. Dr. Kutcher also illustrated brain plasticity and the interplay of technology and the brain in the case of laparoscopic surgeons. Surgeons who played a lot of video games when they were kids are much better at what they do, explained Dr. Kutcher.

Information coming in to the brain changes the way we see the world, explained Dr. Kutcher. Information that comes in fast helps us orient to stimuli, but one of the questions that a number of social commentators have raised is whether the way the information comes in makes it more difficult for young boys to concentrate and excel at math. "The technological world that we live in wires our brains as we live in that world," said Dr. Kutcher.

About 90% of what we've learned about the brain, we've discovered in the last 15 to 20 years, which makes brain discovery the new frontier.

“The way we experience the world changes our brains. It may even change our empathy,” said Dr. Kutcher, before musing, “Do MySpace or Facebook change our nature as empathetic human beings? Will those capacities to reach across nations, oceans, voids bring us closer together or drive us further apart? We know it will do something as that technology is doing it to us all the time. What the technology offers to us is hope. What plasticity offers is hope.”

If we want to help a young person optimize their capabilities, we have to find their unique strengths. They also have to realize that they have something to give and so our roads must mesh seamlessly to share our path.

Dr. Kutcher concluded with some lines from Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young:

“Teach your children well, teach your parents well.”

Medical Presentations

Dr. Bruce Ballon

In this presentation, Dr. Bruce Ballon gave listeners a clear picture of how the Internet might interact with mental health issues. To the surprise of many, he also distributed cards and asked listeners to play a game of bingo throughout his presentation, drawing numbers as he went along. His bingo served to focus our attention on his central point—how new media applications and content, much of it found on the Internet, can manipulate our opinions, our choices and our lives.

Dr. Bruce Ballon is a psychiatrist and an Assistant Professor for the University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine. He is also the section Chair of Innovation in Teaching Methods for the Association of Academic Psychiatry, the Director of the Psychiatry Simulation Innovation (P.S.I.) Centre for the University of Toronto, based at Mount Sinai Hospital, and he is also the Head and developer of the new initiative, the Adolescent Clinical and Educational Services (ACES) for Problem Gambling, Gaming and Internet Addiction at CAMH. Dr. Ballon also consults widely on medical education topics as an Academic Educator for the Centre for Faculty Development at the University of Toronto.

He opened his talk by illustrating how pervasive media has become—cell phones, Blackberries, Internet, email—and how it affects us all. We talk about it affecting youth, but we must recognize how it is affecting us first. He asked, “Who checked their Blackberry or email after 9 p.m. last night?” There was a show of hands from the audience.

Technology appeals to youth because it is a fashion, it is a statement, he said. Any technology is as good as the user and the morals of the person who uses it. But this brings us to Internet addiction. When does it become a problem? When it starts affecting time, money and relationships, said Dr. Ballon.

**“I’m not young enough to know everything.”
Oscar Wilde**

“I knew I was an adult when I couldn’t understand technology any more,” said Dr. Ballon. “Kids have time to play with these things, learn about them, that’s why they can explain things to their parents.”

Dr. Ballon touched on the Internet’s ability to shield identity and protect anonymity, making it easier to forge relationships because users don’t have to face one another. This can be a problem—it sets people up to believe that they are anonymous, when in fact they aren’t. He went on to show how drugs are available over the Internet, the dangers of chat rooms, video sites such as YouTube—we are all constantly being watched and filmed—eBay and shopping addictions, Facebook’s ability to allow you to find “old” friends and stalk them, and how Internet casinos, sex, gambling, video games and fan sites can all

become addictive. Dr. Ballon told listeners that 80% of netspace is sex trade related. This will affect young adults and make it increasingly difficult for them to decide what a normal relationship actually is. Then there's the connection between video games, the Internet, violence and gaming addiction. He gave the example of Grand Theft Auto—a game where players procure sex from a prostitute, then murder her and get money for doing so. "And this doesn't affect the players?" asked Dr. Ballon.

Throughout his presentation, Dr. Ballon pulled out numbers for the bingo game and players dutifully scratched them off their cards. Once he'd finished his presentation, he pulled out the remaining numbers for the bingo cards. The final number produced a chorus of winners around the room—all the players jumped to their feet at once—and then, to everyone's amusement, they realized they'd been played. "This is a metaphor for the Internet," said Dr. Ballon. "It's fun, camaraderie, gambling, but you've been manipulated."

Dr. Michael Rich

In this presentation, Dr. Michael Rich made a strong link between the use of technology and health care. He explained how he has used technology to better understand illness from a patient perspective, and how this technology has empowered his patients, actually improving their conditions. He also described the pervasive nature of media in young people's lives and the pressing need to use these media to improve the human condition, not to destroy it.

Dr. Michael Rich is the Founder and Director of the Center on Media and Child Health at Children's Hospital Boston, committed to pursuing research on the positive and negative influences of media on the health and development of children, to creating health-positive media, and to developing interventions on negative health effects of media. He is Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School, Assistant Professor in Society, Human Development and Health at Harvard School of Public Health, and practices Adolescent Medicine at Children's Hospital Boston. Dr. Rich is a former filmmaker and writer who worked in the film industry for 12 years, including two years in Japan as assistant director to Akira Kurosawa on *Kagemusha*, before attending medical school at Harvard.

"Coming from outside medicine, I saw some things that I thought might have been missed by those people coming up within medicine," explained Dr. Rich, as a prelude to his view of the doctor-patient relationship.

To my mind, as humans, we own our health; we own our illness and our path out of it to health.

"Doctors own medicine. We diagnose what constitutes illness and health, we define disease, we write our orders for our patient and the first place the patient gets involved is if he or she complies," said Dr. Rich. "To my mind, as humans, we own our health; we own our illness and our path out of it to health."

"Asthma and obesity—why are we not better at treating these conditions? Why don't we ask the experts?" said Dr. Rich. "Let's ask the experts—the kids. Kids have no power in our society and are dependent on us to advocate for them. But the power of the media is to give control of the information stream to the kids, and through that we will learn what is going on with them and give them the power to advocate for themselves," he said.

"Kids spend more time with media than they spend at school, in church, with their parents and sometimes in sleeping. It is an environmental health influence. None are exempt. I try to understand how these media affect us in positive and negative ways and how to use them to put them towards the kind of people we want to be. Technology offers hope, but only when we engage with it to make it happen. We can't vilify it—the Internet, television and video games—are making kids more violent, depressed. It's what we do with it that can affect this. Give those kids a voice. We have to listen to what we hear," advised Dr. Rich.

“I started giving out video camcorders and asked my patients to teach me what it is like to live with asthma. Disease is profoundly sensitive to the environment in which people live—physical and psychosocial. What we got was a window on the illness experience from the inside out, but also we got real life experience.” Dr. Rich went on to describe a video of a 17-year-old girl who grabbed a camcorder as she was driven to hospital with an asthma attack. This footage allowed doctors to glimpse a part of the patient experience that they never usually see. Through the use of video cameras, Dr. Rich found a way to use media and technology for patients to collaborate in their care, to become true partners. “They bring wisdom and strength to the table,” he said. “We are partners in their care. We are a service industry. They taught us a lot, and they also got better.”

What happened here is that kids were able to use the media to recognize in themselves things that they knew they should be doing but they weren't. It wasn't their emotions that changed. It wasn't the disease that changed, but their activity level changed. They self-corrected. They got more active.

One young person explained to Dr. Rich why it worked. “You came to me and said teach me, giving me an expensive piece of equipment that I planned on selling when I got out of hospital. But as I starting taking pictures I realized that I could take control of my life story, so maybe I can take care of my life.” This girl learned to master something that she could translate to her own life.

“Art is truth plus light. It's finding the truth but it's also about sharing it.”

Dr. Rich then told a story about one of his patients, Nicholas, a young boy dying from cancer. Nicholas ultimately used email to ask his doctor, Dr. Rich, if he was dying. “I'm dying, right?” the boy typed while Dr. Rich was out of the room. The story brought tears to the eyes of many in the room, and the lesson the young man taught Dr. Rich was profound.

“You can't always cure, but you can always heal,” said the boy.
“The lesson,” said Dr. Rich, “is that being creative can heal.”

In 2002, Dr. Rich founded the Center on Media and Child Health (CMCH). Based at Children's Hospital Boston, Harvard Medical School, and Harvard School of Public Health, CMCH has been established as a center of excellence to educate and empower children and those who care for them to consume and create media in ways that optimize children's health and development.

For more than a decade, Dr. Rich has been an international leader, serving as the spokesperson for the Center on Media and Child Health and for the American Academy of Pediatrics. Dr. Rich was a contributing author of the Children and Media Research Advancement (CAMRA) bill introduced by Senators Hillary Clinton, Sam Brownback, and Joe Lieberman and currently making its way through Congress. In the past year alone, Dr. Rich has received coverage on CNN, MSNBC, CNBC, PBS, USA Today, the BBC, NPR, the New York Times Magazine, the Washington Post, the Boston Globe and the San

Francisco Chronicle. He has been asked to serve as a visiting professor at a number of America's leading universities and on editorial boards of both *Pediatrics*, the leading child health journal, and *Parents*, a top parenting magazine. Married to another pediatrician, he is a parent of four children.

Dr. David Wolfe

In this presentation, Dr. David Wolfe outlined for listeners his experience with young people suffering from child abuse, neglect and adolescent violence. He explained the lifelong impact of these actions, and made us consider the pervasive nature of violence that surrounds young people today, not only in their relationships, but in the media that they absorb. He offered hope, however, by describing a school program he introduced in Thames Valley, Ontario, to help young people with their relationships before they become abusive and violent. He also pointed out that some of the negative impact of new media can be counterbalanced by making young people aware that they are being manipulated by much of the media that they consume. Young people do not like to be manipulated.

Dr. Wolfe is a psychologist specializing in child abuse and neglect and holds the RBC Investments Chair in Children's Mental Health at CAMH. After completing his PhD in Clinical Psychology at the University of South Florida in 1980, Dr. Wolfe pursued an academic career in Canada focusing on child abuse and domestic violence. His interests in prevention have culminated into a comprehensive school-based initiative for reducing adolescent violence and related risk behaviors. He holds the inaugural RBC Chair in Children's Mental Health at CAMH, and is Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology at the University of Toronto.

"I strongly believe that we should focus more and more on prevention," said Dr. Wolfe. "Child abuse and neglect is everyone's distant cousin, but no one's baby." He went on to explain that the health profession does not do well at addressing the stigma associated with the violence with which kids are growing up.

"The biggest problem facing adolescents today is violence and abuse in their lives—from bullying to the severe forms of physical assaults," said Dr. Wolfe. "Child abuse and neglect is easier to prevent than it is to treat. You can't treat it successfully typically because there's been harm done that is irreversible. This doesn't mean that you can't reduce it."

In the course of his research, Dr. Wolfe concluded that domestic violence, dating violence and sexual abuse of children are all similar, although we currently treat them separately. They are all variations of relationship-based disorders. "What is really harmful to children is that they've grown up learning that you're either a victim or a victimizer," said Dr. Wolfe. "Is that reversible—absolutely—but have we done anything about it? Nothing. We put all of our energy into catching problem people and not nearly enough in to helping them."

Violence has become entertainment in our society. Adolescence is a critical phase and we should be putting as much energy into this as early childhood, said Dr. Wolfe. He has been focusing on high schools and was involved with the introduction of the fourth R—for

relationship—into health classes in Ontario. Then it became a part of English classes and it is available to teachers as a part of the English curriculum for Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12.

After the initial trial phase of the introduction of the “R” program in to the curriculum in the Thames Valley Schools, the results, said Dr. Wolfe, were remarkable. Boys showed less dating violence. They were three times less likely to be beating up their girlfriends and there were reductions in unsafe sex, drug use and abuse after just 28 hours in the classroom. “Imagine what we could achieve if we spent as much time on this as math or English,” said Dr. Wolfe.

Dr. Wolfe went on to explain how he believes that youth can be involved in helping themselves to deal with the violence to which they are exposed. “I think we can neutralize a lot of the harm with which children are bombarded through media. We can never compete with Hollywood and Madison Avenue,” he said, “but we can educate kids to show them what they are being bombarded with. They don’t like to be manipulated, so they can be a part of the solution.”

Child abuse and neglect is easier to prevent than it is to treat. You can't treat it successfully typically because there's been harm done that is irreversible. This doesn't mean that you can't reduce it.

Youth Perspective on the Role of Media Arts in Mental Health

Dr. Margaret Clarke and Ms. Amanda Calkins

In April of this past year, Dr. Clarke spearheaded the Calgary Roundtable for Youth that was the direct result of a promise made at the NAC Roundtable in 2007 to continue the work, energy and momentum started at the NAC.

Dr. Clarke is the Division Chief in Developmental Pediatrics for the Calgary Health Region. She is also a Professor in the Faculty of Medicine, Departments of Pediatrics and Psychiatry, University of Calgary. She attended the NAC Roundtable in 2007.

For me, the mental health system has been so difficult. It gives me hope to hear what people have said here today. Music has kept me sane—it has been my life, my peace and at the piano was where I was safe.

Amanda Calkins is a Women's Studies student at the University of Calgary, and plans to become a social worker. She currently works as the Supervisor of Community Programs with the Alberta Youth in Care and Custody Network and is passionate about helping youth become empowered, independent, healthy and happy. She was a participant in the Spark! Program in which she made a digital story about her experience as a youth growing up in the mental health system.

Singer July Black spoke at the Calgary Roundtable organized by Dr. Clarke in April 2008. It was a call to action for Calgary Youth to tell us how they would like to represent their experiences, explained Dr. Clarke. The result was Spark!—born during a hot two weeks in August—and it grew out of the momentum of the 2007 NAC Roundtable.

Dr. Clarke and Amanda Calkins opened their presentation with a video made by Amanda, about Amanda and her battle with mental health issues and the way that music has helped her overcome many of the problems that plagued her, as she described it, “growing up in the psych ward.”

Amanda described her long career as a mentally ill teen beginning at age 12 in the psychiatric unit. She described how she relied deeply on her “friend”, the piano. “I would run, often crying, to the piano room and play my heart away. Immersed in the music, I let my tears flow until I forgot where I was. And something happened. The other patients in Five North could hear my music and they came. After two or three songs, I would look back and see three or four of them, in silence, sometimes with their own tears. I was little Miss Sunshine growing up in Five North. So I did what made me happy and they joined in.”

Amanda went on to describe her life of mental health issues and living in the psychiatric ward for half of her teenage years. She re-iterated how important it is to listen to the youth voice. “It is so important to be heard, listened to and empowered,” she said. “For me, the mental health system has been so difficult. It gives me hope to hear what people have said here today. Music has kept me sane—it has been my life, my peace and at the piano was where I was safe. Thank you.”

“We are convinced that the intersection of youth voice and a powerful media tool called digital storytelling occurring in an arts enriched environment is part of the reason for the success you see here today,” concluded Dr. Clarke. “It has been a transformative experience for all of us.”

Roundtable Leadership Discussion

The first question to stimulate discussion was posed by moderator Mr. Don Newman.

- Our experience tells us that the media that we are exposed to shapes who we are. People now are growing up with media exposure that their parents would find it impossible to understand. Even within one generation siblings who are five years apart can be exposed to different media. Is the generation gap going to become permanent?

Dr. Stan Kutcher asserted that you can teach an old dog new tricks. Exposure to novelty, new ideas, and new modes of expression enriches us all and can in fact change our brains as well. Research shows that the idea that there are critical periods in our brain development that only last for a short period of time is wrong. There is capacity for our brains to change themselves over time. We need to seek out new things, new challenges and new learning experiences and then we change ourselves. I don't think the generation gap is getting wider. I think it's narrowing. The technological interface allows us to understand each other so much better. The connection between the generations is getting tighter and so our ability will improve over time.

Dr. Bruce Ballon: However, one of the questions to ask is what is the connection? There is some old school of thought of what is the parents' connection with their kids? Why wouldn't parents stop to talk to their kids about their Facebook page? Am I spending as much time with my kids as I should? Is it more than just a shallow little email? It's about working on relationship issues.

Dr. Simon Davidson, Chief of Psychiatry at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO), Medical Director of the Mental Health Patient Service Unit at CHEO and Executive Director of Planning and Development of the Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO, talked about parenting. Parenting—what goes around comes around, he said. “For years there have been many of us who have talked about the issue of responsibility in raising children. For adults who decide to raise children, it is our most important adult function in life. How can we do it so that we are equipped to be parents?” Dr. Davidson suggested modules of parenting available in multi media ways for parents to learn and that all parents should have to take a test. “The point is that if you can ensure a strong and open line of communication between generations, between parents and children, it doesn't matter what new technology comes along, our children and their children will be secure because reciprocity kicks into place,” he said. Dr. Davidson is a Professor and Chairman of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Ottawa. He has recently been appointed Chair of the Children and Youth Advisory Committee for the Mental Health Commission of Canada. He is also a Past President of the Canadian Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry (CACAP).

Ms. Shari Graydon is a Toronto-based writer and activist and the author of two award-winning media literacy books for young people, *In Your Face – The Culture of Beauty and You* and *Made You Look – How Advertising Works and Why You Should Know*. In her books and presentations on the social impacts of media, she draws on her diverse experiences working as a PR executive, television producer, newspaper columnist, TV and radio commentator, university instructor and political press secretary. She served as the president of MediaWatch for eight years and currently supports her volunteer work by writing speeches and opinion pieces for others. “I’ve been working on a book for youth about media violence and I am interested in the context of prevention, education and commerce,” she said. “We haven’t talked about the commercial implications of the media that we are seeing. For me, part of the tragedy in contemporary media is not just the vast wasteland of violence-driven stories, but the space they take up, to the detriment of art—defined here as truth plus light. In speaking to a parliamentary committee hearing about a TV violence bill earlier this year, one of the recommendations I made was that producers of violent media should be taxed in order to help fund the kind of work that Dr. Davidson and Dr. Clarke are doing.”

The point is that if you can ensure a strong and open line of communication between generations, between parents and children, it doesn't matter what new technology comes along, our children and their children will be secure because reciprocity kicks into place.

Dr. Antoine Hakim, Professor and University Chair of Neurology at the University of Ottawa, Director, Neuroscience Research at the Ottawa Health Research Institute and CEO and Scientific Director of the Canadian Stroke Network, spoke about stroke victims. “I deal with stroke, with people whose brains get damaged. The messages and examples we heard today confirm my day-to-day experience with stroke patients: it is a condition that is treatable and repairable, and the recovery of the patients depends on how they interact with their environments. The brain hates to be handicapped and has many methods to recover from deficits. In terms of our children, and speaking as an informed parent, all the messages we’ve heard about social environment show that when our kids go into that “tunnel,” all the investments we have made in them will pay back. Just remember that the brain, whether in our offspring or our patients, fights against all forms of handicap.”

Ms. Linda Schuyler co-created and has executive produced the original multi-award winning Degrassi television series, from *The Kids of Degrassi Street* through to its current incarnation, *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, now shooting its eighth season. Linda also executive produced the series *Instant Star*, *Riverdale* and *Liberty Street*, and is currently working on the pilot for a new series. A founding member of the Association for Media Literacy, she is also a past Chair of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Film and Television Producers Association. In 2007, she was recognized with an Arbor Award for outstanding voluntary service to the University of Toronto. Linda was awarded the Order of Canada in 1994. “There’s no question that commerce is important in television. I run a private production company that is here to make money, but I have also been dedicated to messages of empowerment in what I do,” she said. “We have a challenge as we’re trying to take the genuine messages of empowerment, but at the same time we have to compete with

the many messages of violence elsewhere. I have to entertain people first before I can get to messages of empowerment. I have tried to create a safe environment for youth to drop into where they feel that they are going to be respected and not talked down to. You have to get their respect,” explained Ms. Schuyler. “When I tried to introduce a story line about a character with Asperger’s Syndrome, my broadcaster was not enthusiastic as it’s not a sexy storyline. But we’ve done it, slowly and now at episode 10, he’s been diagnosed. But now broadcasters just want him to get better. These are smart people who want our show to stay on the air—but this illustrates the difficulty of the three-pronged approach, the prevention, education and commerce It’s very complex being able to take these stories and put them on TV, but I count myself lucky to be able to do so, albeit with compromises that I don’t want to make, but compromises that are necessary for survival.”

Ms. Danielle Williams is a Toronto-based artist, curator and educator. Employing a range of media including video, performance and installation, her works have been inspired by the psychological effects of ‘trauma’ as they pertain to storytelling and narrative. Ms. Williams is currently an artist in residency at the Canadian Film Centre. “I wanted to bring a few voices to the table not represented here,” said Ms. Williams. She then told the roundtable about a documentary artist Katerina Cisek, who is at St. Michael’s Hospital, Toronto. Ms. Cisek has developed a program for teenage mothers coming from addiction backgrounds. She gave them cameras and they began documenting their lives. The program was shared with their doctors and then they developed a web platform where these young women are uploading photos, stories, etc., and it grows daily. It’s a user-generated platform where people do have a voice and are empowered. Darren O’Donnell is doing a residency at Parkdale Public School, where he has been for a year, present with kids and youth from low-income areas. He’s spent time with the kids, with no set program; he was there to hear their stories. He has recently done a show at the Gladstone Hotel with performers working with the kids. The idea was to bring the kids into the adult sphere from which they are totally disenfranchised. The night offered a mix of ages—kids, early twenties, their parents—all mixing. “It’s easy to see how this is building a community,” said Ms. Williams. Mr. O’Donnell has also created Haircuts for Kids—a reversal of power dynamics. “It would be nice to brainstorm about ideas and strategies to get these kinds of programs out there,” concluded Ms. Williams.

Mr. Don Newman, moderator: “Let’s ask what role arts organizations have in initiating these kinds of things rather than the medical profession coming to them?”

Dr. Stéphane Bouchard holds the Canada Research Chair in Clinical Cyberpsychology and he teaches cyberpsychology and psychotherapy at the Université du Québec en Outaouais. His research interests focus on the use of technology to understand, assess and treat mental disorders, especially using virtual reality and telehealth. He is also conducting experimental research to study the illusion of being in virtual environments, also known as the *feeling of presence*. He has received more than \$7 million in infrastructure and research grants, published more than 60 scientific articles and book chapters and delivered hundreds of scientific communications around the world.

“I want to talk about the subtle power of art,” said Dr. Bouchard, before explaining a program that he ran in schools. “We ran primary prevention programs in schools for kids at risk of disorders and the parents didn’t show up for the prevention workshop. It’s simply because these anxious kids don’t bother people—they don’t play up, they don’t have ADHD, and they’re not taking drugs and are silently suffering. It was really difficult to mobilize these parents. This is where art is interesting. It has the power to get into our homes without knocking at the door. Through art, you can have access to people’s homes to foster good mental health more effectively than in the classroom. We have a need for a deeper understanding of good healthy behaviour in our culture and art is one way to approach this,” recommended Dr. Bouchard.

Mr. Andrew Fisher is an Executive Vice President of Wesley Clover, and is responsible for new venture creation. He is responsible for government and University outreach programs globally. In addition, Mr. Fisher runs the Mitel Affiliate program that is responsible for identifying and commercializing gaps in existing portfolio investments. He co-founded New Heights Software Corporation, sold in 2007, where he managed all service provider, large enterprise and vertical market accounts. “Not all violent video games are bad,” asserted Mr. Fisher. “Trevor (Matthews) and I have spent countless hours shooting each other in the head. We know it is fantasy and entertainment, but the difficulty comes when you have someone who can’t see the difference and it’s a delicate balance. In terms of financing, we look at all projects for their rate of return and that’s based upon demand. People are demanding these things. Go back to the Roman times—this violence is not new to human culture—so to point at video games and modern media as this great evil is wrong. We need to encourage mechanisms to get out “good” content rather than “evil” content. One of the good things, though, is that the balance of power is shifting away from the broadcasters and distributors to the creators and producers themselves. As Canadians, we have to get good at financing media and content to get our messages out. We’ve got to find a way to get the content on the Internet and get the eyeballs on it—to let people get their content out to end users. We, as Canadians, need to encourage this.”

Dr. David Wolfe: “I think we do have to be honest with ourselves that we do find it entertaining, but the sad part is it is getting worse and worse. Watching violence does not cause someone to be violent—it desensitises him or her. But it is a significant risk factor. We have to tax it or regulate it, but, even more importantly, we have to educate to help people to self-restrain. My daughter won’t date a guy who wants to go play Grand Theft Auto IV, so, in this way, it becomes self-regulating. Have we ever asked ourselves why girls are becoming more violent, why there are girl fights on YouTube? Why is it so entertaining? It’s a new area to exploit. Male violence isn’t entertaining anymore. It’s all available on the Internet. If I am 16 and want to kill myself, if I type this to the Internet, the first thing I’ll get is a help site, then 10 sites of how to do it. The lowest common denominator on the web is gravitating towards gratuitous violence and abuse and we have to teach kids about this. In the past, this has been male driven.”

Mr. Don Newman: Is it the age at which you are first exposed to it?

Dr. Stan Kutcher: “The environment is rich and is full of things that can be pro-social or anti-social. There is a historical perspective. Human beings have taken centuries to evolve and we are hard-wired from centuries ago. We have been able to create wonderful music, art, and architecture as a result of that evolution. However, there also remain remnants of the past that may impede our ability to live in harmony with one another. But this is something that I believe we can overcome. Our capacities to create social structures have been driven by the need to avoid our propensity to self-destruct or destroy others. We can modify our environment so that it becomes pro-social, pro-peace, or we can choose to move it in the other direction.”

Ms. Janet Yale is Executive Vice-President, Corporate Affairs at TELUS. She leads a national team responsible for the creation, execution and oversight of all aspects of TELUS corporate affairs. Ms. Yale was president of the Canadian Cable Television Association prior to joining TELUS and has held senior leadership positions at AT&T Canada, the CRTC and the Consumer's Association of Canada. She has won numerous awards for business, leadership and her volunteer work. “I want to focus on the issue of prevention in the education system,” said Ms. Yale. “As the mother of two boys—one into sports and one who isn’t—for the one who isn’t, his coping from a mental health perspective is the trumpet. Art, music, dance, drama have been his solace and we can provide that for him because we have the means to do so. But when I think about the funding of arts, it’s considered a “nice to do” rather than a “need to do” in our education system. TELUS’

Watching violence does not cause someone to be violent—it desensitises him or her. But it is a significant risk factor. We have to tax it or regulate it, but even more importantly, we have to educate to help people to self-restrain.

corporate philanthropy is focused on youth. We’ve funded Maria Hawkins to go into some of the Beacon schools in Ottawa to provide music, dance and self-esteem to students. The reaction she gets is quite extraordinary. What an investment at that level could mean for prevention, in terms of healthy mental health for boys and girls, to give them access to arts and culture, media arts as a vehicle for empowerment—self-expression could be so important.”

Dr. Margaret Clarke: For the longest time, the project supporting the development of Amanda’s film, and others, was self-funded. Just before the project began, we were able to get some funding from the now defunct Alberta Mental Health Board. It was funded with \$20,000, but it was extremely difficult to find funding in Calgary.

Dr. Michael Rich: In listening to this discussion I am struck by the language we use and think it might be stopping us from moving forward. It is all values driven, with words like “inappropriate.” We need to move the discussion from subjective to the objective. I think we need to take a step back from the *we’ve got to protect our kids versus the freedom of expression argument* and say, what kind of a world, what kind of kids do we want? What are we going to do to get that outcome? We spend a great deal of time worrying about our kids’ nutrition, but we don’t do any of that for their minds. If we can step back from the

emotion of “I have the right to virtually shoot my friend in the head,” to what does that do to a four-, seven- or 13-year-old? Do I want that? Not to restrict or censure, but to give that child the information to know how that is affecting him or her. “Give them an active choice and let them own the message and the medium,” said Dr. Rich.

Dr. Ruth Taylor has worked as a teacher, school counselor and vice-principal. While raising two boys, she earned a doctorate in education from the University of Alberta, where she wrote a dissertation on home education. She also holds a master's degree in education from San Diego State University and a bachelor of education degree from the University of Alberta, with a major in fine arts. She is strong proponent of utilizing the arts to engage youth and promote healthy mental development. Dr. Taylor opened by remarking how little money is put into programs for children in their years of need. “When I first began my career with children, I was a fine art teacher and a counsellor. My classrooms were full. Children would come to create and it was a place where they could talk. It was a safe haven for them,” she said. “But people who make the decisions saw that it was most expedient to withdraw that funding. The arts and counselling took a back seat for sports. More of the dollars are being spent for sports and there are many schools now that don't have a counsellor. They don't have them in every school and they are also being asked to cut back on the number of hours per week for teaching fine art programs. We need to balance it more and offer more of these programs. We need to teach parents to also recognize when children are struggling in their environments.”

Dr. Simon Davidson: “I really acknowledge how visionary Darrell [Gregersen] and the NAC have been in bringing mental health and the arts together. Amanda, how do we know how much your music has been responsible for your wellness? We don't really know, but it's very important. At Youthnet, we recognize that youth are the experts. We design a program, they modify it and they know what they need. Pens and Paints is a program where youth come to express themselves through art to deal with stresses and strains. When we look at intervention for people with mental health problems, we use a combination of psychotherapy and medication and yet we know that a large number of people do a whole lot better with other forms of intervention, such as music, theatre, or dance. We would consider these non-traditional forms of intervention, but they are vital and must become part of our overall approach.”

Ms. Danielle Williams: “I really agree with your points Simon and we've talked about art as a way to deal, to cope and as a way to escape, but we could also see it very much also as an active medium to affect change on a bigger scale not just in your own personal life. Why can't we see art as an integrated tool to discuss science, math etc.? The media program that I am in is a TELUS-funded program. It would be invaluable if programs like this existed for teenagers and youth in this field. We know the problems with violent media exist—the more interesting way to frame it is to start talking about what can be created rather than just what we ingest. Instead of being only a victim to the content that is out there, each of us has the ability to upload content through open source platforms to counter the negative stuff that is out there.”

Ms. Gail Asper is Corporate Secretary of CanWest Global Communications Corporation and is President of the CanWest Global Foundation. She is also Corporate Secretary and Managing Director of the Asper Foundation, a private charitable foundation, which is currently spearheading the creation of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg. "How many politicians, decision makers and school superintendents are in the room here today?" asked Ms. Asper. None. "We have to stop talking to ourselves. Who decides that memorizing the periodic table is more important than learning music or being in a play? We have had a weird shift of what is normal. As a parent, if you walk into a video store and 99% of the films are violent, then you begin to consider that normal. I guess as parents we need to be focusing on something positive, at least in our own homes."

Dr. Bruce Ballon: The trouble with life is that it is very ambiguous. People love to come up with solutions based on their own experience rather than taking a step back. The significant small percentages of people who have trouble can have major impact. The Internet is a very strange place. Is it worse now because it's not on the streets? Has the Internet allowed people to engage in things that they wouldn't do in public? How much is driven by moneymaking? Art is amazing because it reflects life. It's about reflection.

Ms. Amanda Calkins: How can you help youth unless you engage them? Adults have to go to youth and listen to youth. It's about kids being able to be normal and I think that's often forgotten. I think we have to learn what youth are saying because they're not being listened to. Art is expression; it's not necessarily fine arts. Everyone can have access to art. Adults have to put their heads in a different space to understand what is needed by youth. Allow them to understand that they have something important to say.

Mrs. Valerie Pringle: To the experts—are you aware if there are gender differences? Is it more women or not? Is it that girls speak up more or it's more difficult for boys to speak up?

The best thing that doctors can do is listen. It needs to come from the people who are affected, and that's how you'll ultimately get the answers.

Dr. Michael Rich: The short answer is yes, there is a difference, but the question is whether it is imposed upon us by our chromosomal make up or society? Do we learn to be boys and girls, or are we boys and girls? Aided and abetted by these technologies we can choose which parts of the guy-girl dialectic we want to perpetuate. But we have to start allowing emotions; however, we make it masculine and feminine instead of making it human.

Dr. David Wolfe: These are gender issues. When we first started to acknowledge violence against women, men didn't think it existed. Then we started to look at the subtle ways it is in our culture. Violence against women isn't a women's issue, it's a men's issue. And that's not right. The boy code is stronger than ever. You will be called "gay" as soon as you get in touch with your feelings. Homophobia has taken over where racism or sexism used to live. The gendered issues are there and we are not doing our job around educating boys.

Ms. Catherine Pringle: Listening is the most important part, whether it is from a youth perspective or a mental health perspective in general. The best thing that doctors can do is listen. It needs to come from the people who are affected, and that's how you'll ultimately get the answers.

Dr. Stan Kutcher: We have a shared responsibility to improve the human condition. This has to be done across the whole life span—with the elderly, the in-betweens and the young. It's a shared responsibility. In our fragmented society, we have forgotten the elderly and we have forgotten the youth. If we continue to do this, we will forget ourselves. We know that we can change our environment and this will change us. What do we wish that we were? What do we wish that we can become? How can we all work together to get there?

We have to be much more proactive in explaining the positive impact of arts training. The role the media and television has to play in mental health is very important—familiarity breeds affection and this raises awareness.

Mr. Trevor Matthews is an actor, producer and writer and co-Founder of Brookstreet Pictures, an independent film production company based in Ottawa. "The people you gravitate to are those who take responsibility, they are the true leaders who embrace the harder things in life," said Mr. Matthews. "I hope, as an emerging filmmaker, I hope that in the future people are fighting to create good content. There is a trend in documentary filmmaking—people like to learn—it's a question of speaking loud and the voices will be heard."

Dr. Stéphane Bouchard: "Art is a neglected child. So is mental health a neglected child. One good way to reach children is through art. Intrinsically, they love it. If there is a challenge to a game, they will love it. Creating violent games is easy and lazy. We need to find ways to interest them—ask children to create games that are challenging and decent from a mental health point of view, then you are going to have art and mental health working together."

Ms. Gail Asper: "Regarding sports funding, we have been able to see the results of cutting funding in the obesity rates that have gone up, which is one reason I think that it is being restored. But you don't see the ramifications of cutting arts funding, and that's why we have to be much more proactive in explaining the positive impact of arts training. The role the media and television has to play in mental health is very important—familiarity breeds affection and this raises awareness."

Ms. Catherine Pringle: "Thank you for organizing this today because it is very meaningful to have people from the industries talk about this. It is not talked about enough. It is so important that people talk about it more and more."

Mr. Don Newman, moderator, closed the Roundtable discussion by thanking participants and summing up some of the basic threads discussed during the morning. "I think there's a whole funding issue, which is a profile issue, then there's the medical issue, prevention is

harder to get people interested in than illness, but dentists have been particularly good at creating a practice for themselves, surely others can think of a way to do that as well,” he said. “As Catherine and others were saying, we must not be afraid to talk about this. Tell our friends and colleagues what we were doing here today and why it was important. We should share that.”

Conclusion

The National Arts Centre Roundtable on *Media, Communications and Technology: Healthy Mental Development for Children and Youth* was the fourth in a series on the intersection between health and the arts.

The message that emerged from the roundtable was clear. The impact of our environment on our mental health is enormous. The influence of technology—new media—is extremely important in healthy mental development for children and youth and it can be both pro-social and extremely anti-social. There is huge opportunity here for the arts to have a positive impact on media, communications and technology and how this can encourage health mental development in children and youth. The difficulty lies in creating more widespread access to “good” communications, media and technology, rather than the more pervasive, but generally less positive content that is widely available commercially. The need for more dialogue in the public domain on the issue of children and youth mental health, to de-stigmatize the subject, also came to the forefront of the discussions.

We were encouraged to hear from some of the country’s top researchers, scientists, doctors and generous philanthropists that they feel strongly that the art communities across the country have an important role to play in the mental health field. There was a strong feeling of hope at this roundtable, with the realization that were there is a will, there will be a way to harness the growing power of media, communications and technology to create a better world for youth and children. This was endorsed by the emotional testimony of two young women, one who voiced the need for openness in bringing mental illness out of the shadows and another, who gave testament to the power of the arts to improve the life of sufferers of mental illness.

Recommendations

1. Encourage arts groups to think about ways they can use technology to raise the profile of mental health issues and help deflate negative stereotypes.
2. Encourage partnerships between arts organizations and health care/mental health care organizations to treat and prevent mental illness.
3. Encourage stakeholders to become spokespeople in order to help fight the stigma of mental illness.
4. Impress upon the federal government the need for a national action plan on mental health that includes the fight against stigma, as well as significant resources to support research, treatment, prevention and education.
5. Broaden knowledge among physicians, teachers, administrators and artists about the role of the media, technology and communications, as well as the arts, in the treatment of mental health in order to help educate them on the importance of the arts in the treatment and prevention of mental illness, and the promotion of mental health.
6. Support efforts to encourage the medical profession to give patients a voice in the treatment of their own mental health issues.
7. Advocate for strong arts programs in schools as a means to promote the mental well being of children and youth.

Canada's National Arts Centre

The National Arts Centre raised its curtains for the first time in 1969. Created by the Government of Canada as a Centennial project during the 1960s, the National Arts Centre has become Canada's foremost showcase for the performing arts. Today, it is a vibrant national centre for performance, creation and learning that makes a difference in the lives of artists, students, educators and audiences across the country and around the world.

The National Arts Centre is strongly committed to being a leader and innovator in each of the performing arts fields in which it works: classical music, English theatre, French theatre, dance, variety, and community programming. It is at the forefront of youth and educational activities, supporting programs for young and emerging artists and for young audiences, and producing resources and study materials for teachers. It is the only multidisciplinary, bilingual performing arts centre in North America, and one of the largest in the world.

National Arts Centre Foundation

The National Arts Centre Foundation was established in July 2000, with the mandate to raise significant financial support for artistic and educational programming by the National Arts Centre. The Foundation's mission is to inspire individuals, corporations and foundations to invest in the National Arts Centre's vision of artistic innovation, development of young talent, and creation of new works, to benefit all Canadians.

The National Arts Centre Foundation provides a full service development program for Canadians from coast to coast who wish to support the National Arts Centre, including opportunities for annual giving, major and planned gifts, special events and corporate sponsorship. A substantial portion of the Foundation's funds are raised through its National Youth and Education Trust, which is dedicated to investing in young Canadians through the performing arts.

Sponsors

Sun Life Financial

At Sun Life Financial, we believe that ensuring the healthy mental development of our children and young people is vital. We focus our philanthropic support on health promotion, illness prevention, and medical and scientific research to help make life brighter in the communities where we live and work.

Raising the awareness of, and understanding, mental illness is an important issue for all Canadians, and we support this important field of medicine through the Sun Life Financial Chair in Adolescent Mental Health, in addition to other programs that we fund.

Our sponsorship of the National Arts Centre Foundation Roundtable on Healing and the Arts is another example of our support—one that combines our corporate commitment to health-related causes with our long-standing support of the arts. We commend the National Arts Centre for its work in advancing the goal of healthier lives.

University of Ottawa

The University of Ottawa is a proud sponsor of the National Arts Centre's Roundtable on Mental Health and the Arts, a unique opportunity to explore the role of the arts in therapeutic approaches.

More than in any other area of life, Canadians depend on university research to improve the effectiveness of our health care system. In September 2007, the University's Institute of Mental Health Research, the third-largest mental health research centre in Canada, hosted its first scientific symposium. And Dr. Simon Davidson, chair of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the Faculty of Medicine, was named chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada's Advisory Committee on Children and Youth.

The University of Ottawa has made health one of its strategic areas of development in research. In developing knowledge needed for the effective planning and delivery of the whole spectrum of mental health services, our institution is working to make a difference in the lives of Canadians.

Since 1848, the University of Ottawa has aspired to be, among universities, the essential reference on what Canada represents: a university that is an integral part of its community, open to the world and distinguished by its excellence in research.

Rx&D

Rx&D is an association of leading research-based pharmaceutical companies dedicated to improving the health of all Canadians through the discovery and development of new medicines and vaccines. Our community represents over 20,000 men and women working for more than 50 member companies and is responsible for generating 100,000 jobs across Canada. Guided by our Code of Ethical Practices, our membership is committed to working with governments, healthcare professionals and stakeholders in a highly ethical manner.

Rx&D believes that it is important to raise awareness of health issues facing Canadians and applauds the NAC Foundation's work bringing together the arts and mental health for this round table discussion. Art is about self-expression and shares a direct link with brain development and mental health.

Rx&D strives to foster opportunities for information sharing and innovative thinking. Partnerships such as this are an important step towards developing creative and innovative solutions to healthcare challenges facing Canadians today.