

RELATIONAL WELLNESS

Prioritizing Connections that Matter for
Sustaining Rural, Island, and Northern
Communities



FONDATION
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REVITALISATION RURALE
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GRENFELL
CAMPUS



4 June 2026

Relational Wellness: Prioritizing Connections that Matter for Sustaining Rural, Island, and Northern Communities

Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador
16-18 June 2026

Detailed Conference Program

June 16 (Tuesday)

Times	Activities
9.00 am - 5.00 pm	Rural Business Productivity Workshop <i>Room: AS 2026</i> • Lessons in rural SME productivity from around the North Atlantic Rim: policy and practice - David Freshwater • International Policy and Practice: panel discussion - David Freshwater, April Conroy, Christopher Hebling • Role of Post-Secondary, panel and Q&A - Janelle Skeard, Heather Hall, Paul Brett, Fayyaz Ahmed • Industry Response - David Haire, Sean McCarthy, Steve Ryan • Round Table Discussions • Closing Panel: Key Lessons and Next Steps
3.00 - 5.00 pm	Partnerships and Early Career Researcher Forum <i>Room: AS 2011</i> • Rethinking transformation for climate action and relational community sustainability: Learning from Msit No'kmaq - Brenan Lowery, Erica (Samms) Hurley, Arlene Blanchard-White, Evan Andrews, Kelly Vodden, Ratana Chuenpagdee
2.00 - 6.00 pm	Registration Desk Open <i>Room: AS Airport lounge</i>
6:00 pm	Opening Reception <i>Room: AS Atrium</i> • Conference Introductions • Traditional land acknowledgement • Messages of Welcome ◦ Local Hosts ◦ Grenfell Campus, Memorial University ◦ Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation ◦ North Atlantic Forum ◦ Shore to Shore

4 June 2026

7.00 pm	Opening Keynote <i>Room: AS Atrium</i> • Dr. Erica (Samms) Hurley on relational wellness
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June 17 (Wednesday)

Times	Activities
8.00 am	Registration Desk Opens <i>Room: AS Airport lounge</i>
8.00 - 9.00 am	Breakfast <i>Room: AS Atrium</i>
8.30 - 9.00 am	Conference Opening Remarks <i>Room: AS Atrium</i> Samantha Mark, Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation
9.00 - 10.00 am	Navigating the New Rural Realities - Prospects for Policy and Practice in Turbulent Futures <i>Room: AS Atrium</i> David Douglas, Elders Calvin White, Patrick Michelle, Ailsa Craig

10.00 - 10.30 am	Break and Poster Viewing <i>Room: AS Atrium</i> • Bridging the Knowledge Gap: Comparing AI and Human-Generated Research Summaries in Rural Development - Varinder Nandhra, Ryan Gibson • Catch 'Em All... In Real Life: turning smartphones into biodiversity tools - Joe Bowden • Circular economy supporting local food systems and resilience - Erika Rolston • From Research to Action: Making Rural Research Work for Rural People - Damilola Oyewale, Camilo Jimenez, Heather Douglas, Ryan Gibson • Handlines and Boats: The Game - Emma Osmond • Home Away from Home: International Agricultural Workers Housing Policy, Lessons from Ontario - Damilola Oyewale, Ryan Gibson • Regional and Community Vitality Index (RVI/CVI) of Canada (Map) - Brian Eddy • Relational Wellness in Nunavut: Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre staff reflections on the importance of the Inuit Holistic Service Delivery Model for health and wellness - Lauren Allen, Rosemary Gauthier, Andrea Monahan, Amelia Spedaliere, Deatra Walsh • Rooted in Place? Designing Community-Centered Responses to Mega-Manufacturing in Rural Ontario - Shahrear Towhid, Ryan Gibson • Small but Mighty! How small-scale composting can tackle the climate and food insecurity crisis - Ángela Viviana Ramírez Luna • The Carbonear Institute for Rural Reach and Innovation by the Sea - Christina Young, Christopher Patey, Paul Norman • The Living Room of Rural Communities - Lucas Berek • “This research is not just about documenting knowledge, it’s about healing relationships with the Land”: Reflections from the co-creation of knowledge with Indigenous researchers at the Arramat Regional Gathering - Kyle Cook • Where the Sidewalk Begins: Reflections on Municipal Built Environments and Wellness - Walter Yetman, Deatra Walsh • Who governs soil? An analysis of the coding of soil, land, human, health and rural in 101 legislative instruments - Brooke Hayes
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10.30 am - 12.00 pm	Concurrent Session 1 1A: Resilient Rural Futures: Rethinking Rural Economies and Livelihoods in an Era of Change <i>Room: AS 2011</i> • How Changing Relationships to the Environment Are Shaping Livelihoods in Nova Scotia – Evan Curley • Anchor Industries, Reshaping Economies, and Environmental Stewardship: Lessons from the Nuclear Energy Cluster in Bruce County, Ontario - Natasha D'Souza, Ryan Gibson • Resilient Tourism in a Changing Climate: Stakeholder Responses to Seasonal Instability on Prince Edward Island - Niayun Liang • Understanding the Impacts of the Urban Exodus in Rural Ontario - Natasha Gaudio Harrison, Sara Epp 1B: Philanthropy in Place: Community, Care, and Rural Resilience in Atlantic Canada <i>Room: AS 325</i> • Facilitator: Josh Barrett • Panelists: Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede, Amy Hudson, Richard Garretts, Katie Temple, Edmund Yirenkyi 1C: Community-Led Responses to Health, Land, and Climate Challenges <i>Room: AS 2026</i> • Who governs soil? An analysis of the coding of soil, land, human, health and rural in 101 legislative instruments - Brooke Hayes • Addressing Gaps in Rural Healthcare: The Case for a Co-operative Clinic in Lac La Biche - Merlyn Foo, Lori Friesen • Getting to the Heart of the Planetary Health Movement: Nursing Research Through Collaborative Critical Autoethnography - De-Ann Sheppard • Small but Mighty! How small-scale composting can tackle the climate and food insecurity crisis - Viviana Ramírez-Luna 1D: Arts, Culture, and Place-Attachment <i>Room: AS 328</i> • “There are so many things changing”: An exploration of social space and sustainability in Labrador West, Newfoundland and Labrador - Leanna Butters • Living on the Edge: Mobilising Cultural Heritage against Depopulation in Shetland - Andrew Jennings 🌐 • Project Well-Being: How an Islandness perspective and a Photovoice lens can encourage Belonging, Inclusivity, and Community Vitality - Phil Davison, Laurie Brinklow • Revitalizing Culture in the Mealy Mountains: Community Voices and the Path Forward - Marie Lopez Cruz, Kelly Vodden, William Newell, Amy Hudson, Bryn Wood 1E: Municipal RED resources <i>Room: LC 301</i>
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	Facilitator: Rob Nolan (Municipalities of Newfoundland and Labrador)
12.00 - 1.30 pm	Lunch and Keynote Speaker <i>Room: AS Atrium</i> Elizabeth Russell: Intergenerational relationships and rural aging in place
1.30 - 3.00 pm	Concurrent Session 2 2A: Futures Studies and the North Atlantic: Coastal Community Applications and Insights <i>Room: AS 2026</i> - Moderator: <i>Ajith Raj</i> 2B: Indigenous Research Partnerships <i>Room: AS 328</i> - Self-Determination Through Data Governance: A Case Study in Partnership with Benoit's Cove Indian Band - Sabrina Lamanna - Xwe'etay/Lasqueti Archaeology Project: Protecting and honouring Indigenous Heritage through Archaeology, Policy, and Planning - Sean Markey - Bridging Indigenous Practices and Modern Urban Design: Collaborative Knowledge Sharing and Spatial Memory Mapping with the Kongtu Khyang Community - Rakibul Haque Rony 🌐 - Co-Designing Technology Futures in Northern Saskatchewan: Early Lessons from a Community-Led Indigenous Research Partnership - Jolena Leader, Charlee Mitschke 2C: Aging, Health, and Well-being in Rural Places <i>Room: AS 2026</i> - Improving Rural Health and Wellbeing at the Carbonear Institute for Rural Reach and Innovation by the Sea - Christina Young, Christopher Patey, Paul Norman - Exploring Women's Healthcare Needs in Rural Alberta - Serena Isley, Sydney Shirreff - Rural Community Wellbeing Dashboard: assessing and understanding the availability of services in rural areas - Emeline Nicolich, Rheann Quenneville - Normalizing a Crisis: The Increasing Regularity of Emergency Department Closures in Ontario - Sage Milne, Leith Deacon 2D: Major Project Impact Assessment Workshop <i>Room: LC 301</i> - Moderator: Rob Greenwood - Improving Impact Assessments and Benefits Agreements: Processes, Engagement and Data - Steve Bonnell - Panelists: - Steve Bonnell, Marilyn Butland, and Pat Curran

3.00 - 3.30 pm	Break and Poster Viewing <i>Room: AS Atrium</i>
3.30 - 5.00 pm	Concurrent Session 3 3A: Innovative Rural Economies 1: Entrepreneurial Thinking Through a Community Lens: From Ideas to Advancing Circular Economy <i>Room: AS 2011</i> • Entrepreneurial Thinking Through a Community Lens: From Ideas to Advancing Circular Economy - Natalie Penney-Toba, Julie Mallett, and Frankie Young • The Example of Pollen Nation - Amanda Oake • Adaptive Reuse in Rural Canada - Clark Banack, Sydney Shirreff, Serena Isley • Developing a Social Circular Economy Framework for the Prince Edward Island Fibre Festival - Cheryl Ann Wartman, Laurie Brinklow, L.L.H. Stalker 3B: Research Partnerships and Policy <i>Room: AS 325</i> • Developing and implementing rural programs and policy - Danika Hammond • What are we doing with these results? Applied research for practice and positive impact - Sarah Breen, Robyn Peel • How the Federal Government is Advancing Rural Priorities - Sarah Minnes • Rural Community–College Partnerships and Sustainable Community Development - Leeza Perehudoff 3C: Connecting Communities through Place, Art, and Science: Interdisciplinary and Community-based Approaches to Cultural-Ecosystem Services <i>Room: AS 325</i> • Facilitators: Rachel Jekanowski, Camille Ouellet Dallaire, Mikala Hope-Franklyn, Simone Cominelli 3D: Imagining Thriving Futures: Coastal Communities and Inclusive Belonging <i>Room: AS 328</i> • Supporting Mental Health in Aging Populations in Rural Southern Alberta - Bhawana Pradhan • Who Belongs in Rural Futures? A Systematic Review of Belonging Economies, Migration, and Equity - Daniel Layden • Storytelling, Listening and Relational Wellness in Aging and Care - Ebere Petra Onyia 3E: Major Project Impact Assessment Workshop <i>Room: LC 301</i> • Moderator: Rob Greenwood • Data and Data Management / Analysis - Jamie Ward, Colin Taylor • Round table discussions

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6.00 pm	Banquet <i>Room: AS Atrium</i> • Reception, Announcements and Awards at 6.00 • Dinner at 6:30 • Entertainment ◦ Paul Pike
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June 18 (Thursday)

Times	Activities
8.00 am	Registration Desk Opens <i>Room: AS Airport lounge</i>
8.00 - 9.00 am	Breakfast <i>Room: AS Atrium</i>
8.30 - 9.00 am	Conference Opening Remarks <i>Room: AS Atrium</i> • Laurie Brinklow, North Atlantic Forum
9.00 - 10.00 am	Conference Plenary <i>Room: AS Atrium</i> • Etuaptmumk: Healing relationships with the lands and waters • Elder Albert Marshall, Aaron Prosper, Mary Beth Doucette
10.00 - 10.30 am	Break and Poster Viewing <i>Room: AS Atrium</i>

10.30 am - 11.30 am	Concurrent Session 4 4A: Rural Food Security <i>Room: AS 2011</i> - Addressing Veterinary Service Scarcity in Northern Ontario: A Resource Management Perspective - Ferdous Farhana Huq  - Community-based Research Stories of Water, Energy, and Food Security on the Port au Port Peninsula - Nicholas Mercer - Collaborative Agricultural Innovation for Rural Food Security and Resilience: Exploring the Role of the Newfoundland and Labrador Living Lab Initiative - Seyedeh Anahita Mireslami, Morteza Haghiri 4B: Interactive Session on Participatory and Development Support Communications in the Participatory Community Media PopUp Room <i>Room: AS 325</i> - Moderator: Frederick Campbell 4C: Panel Discussion - Age-friendly community planning in rural and remote Indigenous communities in Newfoundland and Labrador <i>Room: AS 328</i> - Facilitators: Christie Stilwell, Kelly Vodden, Priscilla Clark, Aimee Battcock, Brooke Chaisson-Young, Nina Tourett-Retieffe 4D: North Where the Sled Dogs Howl: Exploring Storytelling, Environmental Connection, and Rural Tourism through Dog Mushing (Interactive Workshop) <i>Room: LC 301</i> - Moderator: Shari Berner 4E: Innovative Rural Economies, Technology, and Innovation <i>Room: AS 2011</i> - Rural Governance in the Iron Cage: Exploring Pressures on the Economic Identity and Autonomy of Ontario's Rural Municipalities – Jayden Cote 'Just blue innovation': Bridging social justice and ocean innovation for relational coastal livelihoods - Brennan Lowery - Innovation That Stays Put - More 
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11.30 am - 12.30 pm	Concurrent Session 5 5A: Imagining Thriving Futures: Coastal Communities and Inclusive Belonging <i>Room: AS 2011</i> • Leveraging Partnerships in Rural Communities to Address Sustainability Concerns - Clark Banack, King, Robertson • Held Together by Care: Women's Invisible Labour in Rural and Remote Communities - Kate Pendakis • Icelandic coastal communities: Current conversations about energy transitions, ocean literacy, climate change adaptation, and equitable fisheries - Catherine Chambers 5B: Indigenous Research Partnerships: Reflections from the Marine Biomass Innovation Project <i>Room: AS 2026</i> • Facilitators: Heather Hall, Prashansa Kooshna, Kelly Vodden, Erica Samms Hurley, Frankie Young 5C: Culture, Arts and Place Attachment <i>Room: AS 2026</i> • Healing the Land, Healing the People: Ecological Wellness and Cultural Narrative in Bangladeshi and Canadian Folklore - Sanjida Amin Srabonti • Pkwimanue'katik (pronounced UhP-GWEE-MAhN-OO-Eh-GAh-DEE) The Place Where the Blueberries are Plenty - Kaitlin Rizarri • Social Capital: Looking at Rural "Third Places" - Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel 5D: "What I Wore Through It" A participatory storytelling session on clothing, care, and wellbeing <i>Room: AS 328</i> • Facilitator: Blessing Adedokun-Awojodu 5E: Innovative Rural Economies <i>Room: AS 2016</i> • Developing a Knowledge Based AI Prompt Engineering Collaborative Approach for Indigenous Research Partnerships for Canada's NWT Beaufort Delta Region - Fayyaz Ahmed • Considering Ontario Small-Scale and Family Farms in PA Technology Innovation and Adoption - McKenzie Huneke • Building Resilience Through Community Champions: The Role of Local Leaders for Rural Economic Development Capacity and Diversification – Lucas Berek, Josh Barrett
12.30 - 12.45 pm	Closing Remarks <i>Room: AS Atrium</i>

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12.45 - 4.30 pm	Relationship Wellness in Action Field Trips <i>Field trips will start from the AS Atrium (lunch is included for the field trips). Conference delegates are eligible to attend one of the conference field trips as part of their registration. (note: space is limited and advance sign-up necessary)</i> Lunch will be provided on campus for those not attending a field trip.
4.30 pm	Start of the Shore to Shore Conference