



The Mamingwey Burn Society held a successful in-person conference on October 20 and 21, 2023 at the Canad Inns Polo Park Hotel in Winnipeg, MB. The day and a half long conference was attended by approximately 75 people, and we had many first-time attendees. Our theme for this conference was “Small Steps, BIG IMPACT”.



Our conference was kicked off by keynote speaker Lea Elder. Burned in a house fire at the age of 13, Lea talked about “The Butterfly Effect... How Conversations Can Alter a Life”, and how an important conversation she had with a burn survivor helped her know that she did not need to be held back by her injury. Today, she has a successful career as a nurse on a burn unit as well as in an emergency room in San Jose, California. We also had a session on Grief, led by Shelley Wray, who received training in grief counseling at the Grief Recovery Institute. Grace O’Farrell, an Associate Professor in the department of Business and Administration at the University of Winnipeg, led a very powerful session on how to recognize and respond to Microaggressions.

Day 2 of the conference continued with Lea talking about Opportunities for Growth. We also heard from Dr Natalie Mota on the effects of trauma and ways to recover from the impact of trauma. Lisa Forbes, an occupational therapist, gave us a talk on how to deal with being stared at or confronted as a burn survivor. Her talk outlined very helpful tools to assist people to feel comfortable and confident when out in public.

A panel, made up of 2 burn survivors, the wife of a survivor, and a health care professional, was perhaps a highlight of the conference as each person shared their healing journeys. Each panelist had a unique perspective about what small steps led to big impacts in their lives.

There were also sharing circles for survivors, family members and friends, and health care professionals, as well as displays from past conferences and a silent auction. One attendee said after the conference *"I enjoyed getting to experience the community. I really enjoyed hearing from the speakers, and I will definitely be implementing some of the things they talked about. Great job and thanks for letting me be a part of it!"*

We are very thankful to everyone who helped organize the conference and to all who gathered. We are so pumped for next year when we will meet again! If you would like to learn more about our conference or about the Mamingwey Burn Society, please contact Barbara-Anne Hodge at barb@mamingwey.ca or visit <http://mamingwey.ca>

