



The Mamingwey Burn Society was able to hold an in-person conference on Sept 9 and 10, 2022 at the Canad Inns Polo Park Hotel in Winnipeg, MB. The day and a half long conference was attended by approximately 60 people, and it was very good to be back in person after a long period of gathering online due to the pandemic. Our theme for this conference was “Resilience and Reinvention”.



Our conference was kicked off by keynote speaker John Westhaver. An experienced presenter, John shared his healing journey and how he finds meaning and joy in his life in the many years since his burn injury. His passion to help others find meaning in their lives was deeply inspirational. Another burn survivor, Athanasia Houvarda, shared how she became involved in making art, which assisted her to awake her creativity and bridge the journey from survivor to thriver. Marian Goldstone, who works with the Mood

Disorders Association of Manitoba, shared some ways to cope with the isolation so many felt during the pandemic.

Day 2 of the conference continued with John Westhaver once again inspiring our audience. He encouraged us to be more than our labels, and gave a moving talk to how to ‘unlabel’ oneself from the burn survivor role. We also heard from Carolyn Klassen, a therapist who talked about connections with others and how resilience can be found in our relationships. Pat Dixon, a retired advanced care paramedic, gave personal testimony and many tips in dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder, and encouraged everyone to find healing for themselves so that they can return to caring for others.

A panel of local survivors also shared their healing journeys, again, a testament to the resiliency of the human mind and body. Our audience was both moved and inspired by hearing of the varied paths to strength and recovery.

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 can’t tell you what an awesome event this has been!! Oh my, I’m speechless — just so many wonderful people with so many stories of survival and so willing to share and teach others. The power of community! Thank you!!”*

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>

