



The Mamingwey Burn Society Inc. held a successful in-person conference on Oct 24-26, 2024 at the CanadInns Polo Park Hotel in Winnipeg, MB. A reception night on Thursday was held at the Manitoba Museum, with guest appearance from our very own pirate! The full two-day long conference was attended by over 65 people, with many familiar faces and some first-time attendees. Our theme for the conference this year was “We All Belong”.



Our conference kicked off with keynote speaker Dr. Lise Deguire and her talk on “Psychological Resilience”. Severely burned at the age of 4, she spent many years in hospital undergoing multiple reconstructive surgeries. This while navigating through life with outrageously flawed, gifted, and iconoclastic parents. She details her story of survival and triumph in her multiple award-winning memoir “Flashback Girl: Lessons on Resilience from a burn Survivor”.

Nancy Coutris, a clinical dietician, spoke on “Nutrition after a Burn Injury” from her years of experience working in the burn program at the Health Sciences Centre. Megan Sodomsky did a special presentation on behalf of our sponsor Molnlycke on advances in medical wound care and dressings. Bronwyn Fontaine wrapped up our first day with her talk on how to navigate feelings of guilt and shame on our road to healing. Bronwyn is an Occupational Therapist and co-owner of Middle Path Therapy, where she specializes in supporting families and young people to acquire essential skills and insights to build a meaningful and fulfilling life.



Day 2 of the conference welcomed back Dr. Deguire to speak on disfigurement and how people with visible differences are harmfully portrayed on screen. She works tirelessly with the American Burn Association to advocate for accurate representation in the media. Sandi Mitchell, with her 40+ years of clinical nursing and leadership experience, spoke on caregiver burnout and how important it is for us to make time to care for ourselves. Our final speaker of the conference was Danielle Harling, an occupational therapist at the Children's Hospital, and her talk on chronic pain. Danielle helped differentiate types of pain and provided practical tools and strategies on how to manage it.

There were panels held on both days and truly were a highlight of the conference. The panels were made up of burn survivors, a mother of a pediatric burn survivor, a child of a survivor, and a mother of a burn victim that did not survive his injuries. All shared their unique experiences and journey through healing and finding community.



Sharing circles were held for survivors, family members and friends, and health care professionals. Highlights from past conferences and 2024's Burn Camp Phoenix for youth were on display, as well as a silent auction for attendees to partake in. One attendee provided the following feedback after the conference: *"I was impacted by the openness and honesty of all participants. The vulnerability was eye opening. I am juiced up and ready to tackle my challenges because of what I got from this experience."*

This conference could not have happened without the help of our tireless volunteers and to all those who gathered. We are excited for the next year when we can come together for more sharing and healing. If you would like to learn more about our conference or about the Mamingwey Burn Society, please contact Hon Ha O'Donovan at [honha@mamingwey.ca](mailto:honha@mamingwey.ca) or visit <http://mamingwey.ca>.