



Clear Mental Health
to educate & advocate

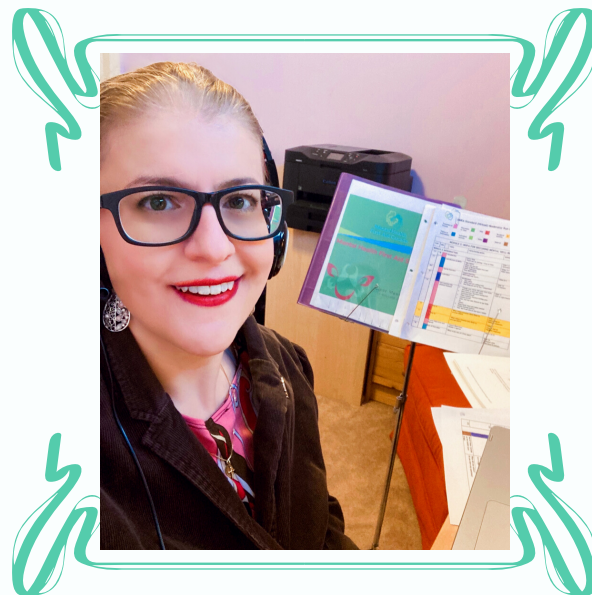
My Education

Hello, my name is Elaine Benacchio with Clear Mental Health. I am pleased to offer my expertise as a mental health advocate and educator.

I completed my Bachelor of Arts in Psychology (minors in Sociology and Religious Studies) with Great Distinction at the University of Lethbridge. I focused my studies on human sexual behaviour and the aging mind. I completed three independent research studies.

Afterwards, I finished my Masters of Education in Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies from the University of Calgary. My final research project studied techniques to promote spiritual well-being in people living with intellectual disabilities. My studies sparked a passion for social change and advocacy that still burns in me! I dedicate my life to helping people find their voices, stand up with their heads high, and share their stories.

During my graduate studies, I completed the Instructional Skills Workshop and Universal Teaching Certificate. I can teach adults in a post-secondary setting. Earlier this year, I received my certificate in Instructional Design and Models of ID. I love sharing what I know and asking my participants to consider different ways of looking at other people.



See all I offer at www.ClearMentalHealth.org/services



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My Career

I supported adults with disabilities for 18 years. I provided clinical therapies to people experiencing traumatic brain injuries and strokes. I witnessed medical treatments advancing over time, and I saw how well people healed with innovative care.

For fourteen years, I supported adults experiencing intellectual impairments. I provided front-line supports as a Team Leader in a community program for seniors with intellectual disabilities; many of my clients were institutionalized during their childhood and young adulthood. Their struggles were humbling to watch. I also worked as Supportive Roommate, caring for a young lady with an extensive trauma history as she transitioned into the adult system. She lived in my home with me and my family. I supported her in various systems, including court settings, Child and Family Services, and with other support agencies. Lastly, I worked as a Case Manager for eleven years, developing large teams tailored to the needs of each individual. Many of the people on my caseload experienced co-morbid disorders with complex support needs.

During my time as Case Manager, I had the opportunity, through the Government of Alberta, to become a Mental Health First Aid Instructor. The province trained service providers from every PDD-funded region; a dozen of us completed the program. My training includes specific case studies and scenarios to support people with disabilities in the community. My teaching and public speaking skills are strong; I was granted full Instructor status. Only five of us are still Instructors and two of us teach online.



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My Training

I have current training in Abuse Response and Reporting; Non Violent Crisis Intervention; Medication Administration; and First Aid Level C with CPR. I have participated in dozens of workshops about concurrent disorders, trauma across the lifespan, addictions, harm reduction, Native Awareness, and goal-setting. I am also a SMART Recovery Facilitator.

For three years, I taught Mental Health First Aid to front-line supports, human resources, and senior management at my agency. Last year, MHFA was paused and I lost my job. Teaching Mental Health First Aid is my favourite thing to do! I started Clear Mental Health in August and received my Entrepreneurship certificate from Mount Royal University in the autumn. I teach in-person classes as COVID restrictions permit.

I am one of the earliest Mental Health First Aid Instructors to complete the upskill training with the Mental Health Commission of Canada to teach the course virtually. Since then, I have more than made up for lost time! I have taught many online Mental Health First Aid classes with Clear Mental Health. I have co-facilitated MHFA classes with new MHFA Instructors. I have also moderated classes for other Facilitators. The virtual material gives me the opportunity to collaborate with Instructors across Canada, which I appreciate!



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My Teaching

There is nothing taught in Mental Health First Aid that I have not experienced in my career. I have hundreds of real-life examples of people learning how to manage their daily health. On a personal note, I live with a disability that causes me chronic pain every day and night, impacting my mobility. In my early adulthood, I overcame an alcohol use disorder. I also live with a mood disorder and was recently diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. My spouse lives with two disabilities and a history of trauma. We are parenting our young child, who was diagnosed this school year with moderate to severe complex ADHD. I do this work to build a healthier future for my kid, where people feel free to discuss their mental health struggles without shame. We already have these conversations in this house!

I am keen to learn more about you and your training expectations. I am open and collaborative; my years meeting the needs of others makes me adaptable and curious. Please do not hesitate to ask questions at any time!



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