

Workshops

Tuesday, 16 September 2025

13.10-14.10



13.10-13.40 (30 mins.)

Theme:

From Institution to home: Professional Pedagogy in Denmark and the Evolution of Sødisebakke

Presenter(s):

Emil B. Olesen
Leader of Department for Autism Spectrum Disorders - Sødisebakke
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Over the past decades, Danish pedagogical understanding has shifted from an institution-based approach to a more relational and person-centered practice.

This presentation explores the development of professional pedagogy in Denmark and how this evolution is reflected in the transformation of Sødisebakke - from a former asylum for the “mentally deficient” to one of the leading facilities for people with developmental disabilities.

Drawing on stories from Sødisebakke’s museum, this presentation explores the experiences of past residents, the challenges they faced, and the progress made over time. These narratives provide insight into how historical practices have shaped modern approaches, highlighting the ongoing journey toward more ethical and person-centred care.



13.40-14.10 (30 mins.)

Theme:

Different voices- One Shared Message

Presenter(s):

Aleksia Rosengren Bertelsen
Head of Department for Complex Developmental Disorders – Sødisebakke
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An invitation to reflect on care, vulnerability and ethical responsibility.

Though coming from different times and contexts and rooted in different traditions, Dr. John J McGee with Gentle Teaching, and the Danish philosophers Søren Kierkegaard and K.E. Løgstrup, all point toward the same essential truth: To be human is to be in relation.

Each, in their own language, reminds us that care is not about fixing or managing, but about being present, meeting the other with dignity, courage and compassion. In the field of developmental disabilities, where vulnerability is part of everyday life, this becomes a profound ethical and moral responsibility. We are not just supporting – we are co-creating meaning, trust and safety in the lives of others. This session offers a philosophical lens on what it truly means to care – and to be humans, together.



13.10-14.10 (60 mins.)

Theme:

Mino-pimatisiwin and Healing: How Nehiyaw Land-Knowledge and Tradition Fosters a Culture of Gentleness

Presenter(s):

Dr. Margaret Kress
Adjunct Professor – Mi’kmaq-Wolastoqey Center
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Indigenous knowledge keepers, including Nehiyaw and Michif, have long emphasized that Land is our Teacher—a source of wisdom, healing, and connection. The Land welcomes all without judgment, fostering belonging, interdependence, and well-being. Access to Land, Water, Ceremony, and kinship networks is crucial for Indigenous peoples and their allies, as it supports mental, physical, and spiritual health.

By embracing the practice of being on and with the Land, people develop a deeper understanding of humility, balance, and harmony with the Earth (Aki) and all living beings. This presentation explores how Land-based knowledge, gentle teaching, and cultural traditions help individuals—especially those with disabilities—find healing and meaning through these teachings. By recognizing Land as both Teacher and Healer, we strengthen relationships and gain valuable insights into interconnectedness, belonging, and overall well-being.



13.10-14.10 (60 mins.)

Theme:

Double Dutch: GT Pathways in the Netherlands

Presenter(s):

Floris van de Kamer – Master Mentor in GT
Simone Schipper - EMDR Europe Practitioner, Prinsenstichting
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Double Dutch a playful nod to two ideas: in English, “double Dutch” can mean language that sounds confusing, while in playground culture it refers to jumping two ropes moving in opposite directions. We use the phrase to capture both the complexity practitioners sometimes feel when discussing Gentle Teaching and the lively, inter-woven rhythm of Dutch initiatives that keep the practice moving forward.

Floris and Simone will show how they weave Gentle Teaching into the day-to-day work of Prinsenstichting, a Dutch organization that supports people with intellectual disabilities. They will focus on four threads: current research on GT, the GT Mentor Program, GT Video Coaching, and embedding GT within therapeutic relationships.

Using video clips, artwork and real-life stories to draw participants in, Floris and Simone will invite the audience to try out short, interactive reflections on the four pillars of Gentle Teaching—and on the practical tools that make those pillars come alive.

Goals (What will participants gain)

- Learn more about Dutch GT practice
- Take home new methods
- Join in quick reflections