

Names of Presenters and Affiliation:

Dr. Shoshana Pollack, Professor, Coordinator of the Walls to Bridges Program, Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University, 120 Duke Street West, Kitchener, ON, Canada, N2H 6P6, spollack@wlu.ca

Jane Garant, M.S.W., W2B Program Assistant, Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University jgarant@wlu.ca

Lorraine Rhoden, W2B alumni

Tiina Eldridge, MSW student and W2B alumni, Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University

Monica Freitas, W2B alumni

Victoria Poe, MSW, W2B alumni

Conference Theme: Prospects, methodology, research and innovatory practice in social work education

Abstract Title: Social Work Education in a Women's Prison: An Innovative Experiential Workshop on the Walls to Bridges Pedagogy in Canada

This is a 90 minute English language workshop provided by the Walls to Bridges Collective from the Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University in Kitchener, Ontario Canada. Walls to Bridges (W2B) is a university program that offers semester long classes in correctional facilities. The classes are comprised of equal numbers of university based and incarcerated students. Classes are experiential and dialogue based, using pedagogical methods drawn from Indigenous learning circles and Parker Palmer's (2004) circles of trust. W2B classes break down barriers, help to reduce stigma and dispel stereotypes and foster connections and social change activities across prison walls (Pollack, 2015).

This workshop will engage participants in the Walls to Bridges pedagogy to explore innovative ways of learning about imprisonment, punishment, race and gender oppression and how we cultivate a powerful community of learning within carceral spaces. Led by students of W2B courses, some of whom have lived experience of imprisonment, and the coordinator of the Canadian Walls to Bridges program, this workshop will introduce W2B pedagogical strategies and discuss the transformational impacts classes have on both social work and incarcerated students. Conference participants will be required to participate fully in activities and dialogue.

Logistical Support: As our pedagogical approach is based on circle work, we will need a room in which the chairs are movable and we can make both large and small circles for discussion and activities.

