

ADRIO 2026

41st Annual Professional Development Conference

Presented in Collaboration with BFL Canada

Dispute Resolution at The Speed of Change

*Charting the Future through
New Perspectives + Service Growth + Skills Evolution*

The job outlook for dispute resolution facilitators and conflict management leaders in Canada is projected to soar in the next few years. How will you get up to speed to meet the growing and changing demands?

If there's one ADR Conference you choose to attend this year, let it be this value-packed one! Putting you in connection with successful industry leaders who have been doing the work to drive the ADR profession forward, this conference program will mine the implications of culture change, innovation, and service growth in the dispute resolution profession across a vibrant and dynamic array of sectors.

Featuring:

Cinnie Noble, Gary Furlong, Richard Moore, Latoya Ming, Barbara Benoliel, Clare Fowler, Kabir Ravindra, Claude Freeman, Doug Macdonald, Morgan Bello, Blaine Donais, Jerry Mings, Betty Pries, Stephanie Noël, Tova Bar-Dayam, Mike MacConnell, Kwame Addo (Ombudsman Toronto)

Registration <i>(Tip: sign up as soon as possible; fees will increase after May 14)</i>	The Full Conference Value Pack (June 3 in-person and June 4-5 online)	June 3 Only (in-person program)	June 4-5 Only (online program)
ADRIO Member	\$215	\$120	\$120
ADRIC Affiliate	\$245	\$140	\$140
Regular/Non-Member	\$295	\$170	\$170

Register: www.adr-ontario.ca/ADRIO2026

**3 Days. 17 Industry Experts.
Building Re/solutions that Matter.**

June 3, 2026, 9:00am – 5:00pm
Live, In-Person, Real-World Connections
at the MaRS Discovery District, 101 College Street, Downtown Toronto

June 4 & June 5, 2026
Live, Immersive, Online Programming
via Webinars and Video Conferencing

CEE Qualification:
2 points for every hour of participation

An Immersive Program Tackling Today's Most Critical Dispute Resolution Topics:

- AI and ethical technology for dispute resolution
- Business development and practice opportunities
- Large group conflict transformation
- Remodeling strategies for mediating relational disputes
- The impact of ombudsman work in challenging times
- Leadership, conflict management and culture change
- Transforming polarization and fostering the return to constructive dialogue
- Effective restorative processes for healing conflict
- Navigating post-investigation conflict
- The indispensability of ADR

And much more! See the full program abstract on the next pages.

Program Abstract

41st Annual Professional Development Conference
ADRIO 2026: *Dispute Resolution at the Speed of Change*

June 3, **Live and In-Person** at the MaRS Discovery District, 101 College Street, Downtown Toronto, ON.

9:00am Registration, Networking, Light Breakfast Refreshments

9:30am Welcome and Opening Remarks

10:00am

Headlining Workshop: Let's Think Outside the Box Together About Mediating Interpersonal Disputes

Speaker: [Cinnie Noble](#)

The phrase “thinking outside of the box” is, of course, a familiar term to mediators some of whom use these very words when urging parties to creatively consider their possible settlement options. Over 25 years ago, Cinnie Noble thought outside of the box about something she found missing in our field and after extensive research created the process known as conflict management coaching. Intrigued by what she learned during her research, Cinnie started to revamp various methods she routinely used when mediating interpersonal conflicts. She found the changes improved the process, the results and the parties’ experience. In this interactive session, Cinnie will share her findings and invite participants to think outside of the box – to rethink, reimagine, and possibly remodel some different approaches for mediating relational disputes.

12:00pm Networking, Lunch Refreshments

1:00pm

Transforming the Us/Them Polarization: The Practical Potential of Restorative Processes

Speaker: [Barbara Benolie](#)

Polarization can fracture work teams, communities, and relationship, turning collaboration into conflict. This interactive session explores the role of dispute resolvers and facilitators, showcasing practical tools to bridge divides and foster return to constructive dialogue. Through hands-on exercises, real-world examples, and scenarios, participants will identify restorative practices to help transform entrenched positions into opportunities for understanding and growth. Join us to discover how to move beyond “us versus them” and create spaces where every voice matters.

2:00pm

Neutrality in Motion: Practicing ADR When Change Is the Only Constant

Speaker: [Kabir Ravindra](#)

The world of conflict resolution is unfolding in environments shaped by rapid social and organizational change. Expectations around fairness, neutrality, and process integrity are evolving faster than formal rules and conflict management systems. Drawing on experience as an adjudicator, mediator, and workplace investigator in the human rights context, this session explores how ADR practitioners navigate these shifting demands in practice. Through reflection and real-world examples, participants will be invited to consider where their dedication to neutrality meets trauma-informed practice, how professional judgment is exercised in motion, and what it means to stay grounded and free of internal conflict while working in systems where change is the only constant.

3:00pm Break, Light Refreshments

3:30pm

Closing Keynote: The Opportunity of Change – ADR at the Center of the World

Speaker: [Gary Furlong](#)

Leaving aside the polar vortices we had this past winter, we are all still navigating the major vortex of change that was kicked off by the COVID pandemic. Many changes affect us at all levels – personally, interpersonally, in the workplace, and in society. Yet, as the famous French saying goes: *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. Within this vortex of constant change, we are, or can be, the constant that helps at every level and in virtually every situation we're involved in. This talk will help all ADR practitioners chart a course into the heart of our profession, and how it's critical and indispensable to society, now more than ever.

4:30pm End of conference day June 3.

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There's More! See next the pages for details about the online conference June 4-5.

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41st Annual Professional Development Conference
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June 4, *Live Online Programming, via Webinars and Video Conferencing*

9:30am – 10:30am

Remaining Impactful: Ombudsman Work in Challenging Times

Speaker: [Kwame Addo, Ombudsman Toronto](#)

This session introduces the work of Ombudsman Toronto, an independent accountability office that works to ensure the City of Toronto treats people fairly when it makes decisions and delivers services. It will explore why this work matters in the current context of rising inequality, housing pressures, and economic uncertainty. The session will also examine the challenges the office faces, including limited resources, increasingly complex files, and growing expectations. It will highlight how the office remains impactful through thoughtful adaptation, responsive practices, and a people-centred approach. Participants will gain a clearer understanding of Ombudsman Toronto's role, the challenges it navigates, and how accountability work continues to remain effective and relevant in Toronto.

11:00am – 12:30pm

Beyond the Findings: Understanding Post-Investigation Conflict and the ADR Practitioner's Role

Speakers: [Stephanie Noë](#) and [Tova Bar-Dayan](#)

Post-investigation conflict is a complex and under-supported stage of organizational life. Even when findings are clear, employees grapple with fairness, voice, psychological safety, communication expectations, and competing narratives. This program explores where conflict truly resides in the lifecycle of an investigation or assessment and offers ADR practitioners a practical lens for understanding what organizations need after findings are delivered. Drawing on anonymized 2024–2025 case patterns, the session highlights role clarity, boundaries, and practitioner judgment. Through scenario-based discussions, participants will examine dynamics, compare approaches, and build language to support clients navigating post-finding uncertainty.

1:00pm – 2:00pm

AI in Mediation: Practical Implications & Ethical Considerations

Speaker: [Dr. Clare Fowler](#)

As everyone is discussing AI, mediators are looking at how these tools can enhance — or complicate — their practice. We will look at the process of examining and adding AI tools, assessing security concerns, ethics, timing, and disclosure for incorporating AI tools. We will be looking at suggested AI tools for intake, scheduling, mediator proposals, and marketing. The goal is to gain a grounded understanding of both the opportunities and the risks.

2:30pm – 3:30pm

Leading at the Speed of Change: Building Cultures That Adapt, Evolve, and Thrive

Speaker: [Latoya Ming](#)

Organizations are evolving faster than ever, and leaders who understand how to guide people through change are the ones shaping the future. This session explores the core drivers of transformational culture change and the human dynamics that determine whether change succeeds or stalls. Participants will learn practical tools for building adaptive cultures, strengthening psychological safety, and applying intercultural competence to support diverse groups through disruption. Through real-world case studies and interactive discussions, attendees will gain insights they can apply immediately to help organizations become more resilient, future-ready, and responsive in a rapidly changing landscape.

4:00pm – 5:00pm

Less Admin, More Mediation: Ethical Technology for a Sustainable Practice

Speaker: [Mike MacConnell](#)

Modern technology can be a gift—or a risk—depending on how it's used. This engaging conversation is designed specifically for family mediators and peacemakers who want to work smarter and more ethically, while enhancing confidentiality and client trust. I will summarize the ethical use of 12 practical, modern technologies that can streamline your small business, reduce administrative drag, and benefit clients. The goal is to free you from time-consuming tasks so you can focus on what matters most: helping people navigate conflict with care. Less stress for you, less cost for clients, and more space for meaningful work.

[There's more on the next page!](#)

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June 5, *Live Online Programming, via Webinars and Video Conferencing*

9:30am – 11:00am

Large Group Conflict Transformation - An Overview

Speaker: [Richard Moore](#)

This presentation will provide participants with an overview of the various stages of a large group intervention (defined as from 10 to 110 people), a consideration of how to design them and engage organizational leadership in buying into them, the important sets of knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA's) required to successfully conduct them, and a discussion about various tools that can be used to facilitate the large group meetings that are part of the overall process.

11:30am – 12:30pm

How AI Is Reshaping Mediation, Labour Relations, and Conflict Management Practice

Speaker: [Morgan Bello](#)

The field of dispute resolution is evolving faster than at any point in its history. Labour shortages, rising union activity, workplace polarization, public-sector pressures, and rapid technological change are reshaping how conflict emerges — and how it must be addressed. At the same time, practitioners are being asked to do more: move faster, work across sectors, manage higher-risk disputes, and deliver outcomes with fewer resources. This presentation explores how Artificial Intelligence is becoming a practical, ethical, and powerful tool for dispute resolution professionals, drawing on real-world application through Y-LERN (YMCA Labour & Employment Relations Network) — an AI-enabled platform developed within one of Canada's most complex unionized environments. Rather than focusing on theory, this session is grounded in practice. It demonstrates how AI can support mediators, arbitrators, facilitators, and HR/LR professionals by: Accelerating dispute diagnostics; Improving preparation for mediation and arbitration; Identifying systemic conflict patterns before they escalate; Supporting evidence-based, neutral decision-making; Reducing reliance on reactive, adversarial interventions. Using case-based examples from the non-profit, public service, and unionized workplace context, participants will see how AI-supported tools are already being used to manage grievances, workplace investigations, collective bargaining disputes, and organizational conflict — without replacing professional judgment.

1:00pm – 2:00pm

Energizing the Future of ADR by Looking at Past Experiences

Speakers: [Claude Freeman](#) and [Doug Macdonald](#)

Energizing the future and outcomes of ADR requires looking at past experiences. Join us for an interactive discussion with Claude Freeman, LL.M., C.Med., C.Arb., and Douglas Macdonald, BA, Q.Med., WFA, who will reflect on their past ADR experiences and brainstorm avenues of potential opportunity for ADR.

2:30pm – 3:30pm

Legacy Leaders (20+ years) Panel Discussion: Wisdom From those Who've Done the Work Well

Speakers: [Blaine Donais](#), [Betty Pries](#), and [Jerry Mings](#)

We're wrapping up our conference program with voices from some of our longest-standing members, leaders who have successfully built and transformed their practices through every chapter of change in the ADR field. We will be illuminating their inspirational real-world stories, as well as wisdom and practical tips for navigating the incoming wave of exciting changes for the profession.

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Our community is our greatest strength.

This program exists because of our generous sponsors, who believe in this work, and in all of us.

