

**Prof. Michael Ungar**

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**Bio**

Michael Ungar, Ph.D., is a Family Therapist and Professor of Social Work at *Dalhousie University* where he holds a prestigious national Research Chair in Child, Family and Community Resilience. His research on resilience around the world and across cultures has made him the number one ranked scholar in his field, with numerous businesses, educational institutions, government agencies, and not-for-profits, relying on his research and clinical work to guide their approaches to nurturing individual, organizational and community resilience. He is the author of 18 books for parents, educators, mental health professionals, and employers, including his most recent works *Change Your World: The Science of Resilience and the True Path to Success*, a book for adults experiencing challenges at work and at home, *Working with Children and Youth with Complex Needs: 20 Skills to Build Resilience* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition), a book for mental health professionals, and *I Still Love You: Nine Things Troubled Kids Need from their Parents*, an accessible guide for parents seeking to build their children's resilience. Dr. Ungar has received numerous awards for his scholarship and contributions to his community, including the Canadian Association of Social Workers National Distinguished Service Award, and has been named a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. Dr. Ungar routinely appears in all forms of media and maintains a blog titled Nurturing Resilience on *Psychology Today's* website.

**Keynote address on:**

**Diagnosing, Nurturing and Maintaining Resilience:  
Tools for Positive Development in Stressed Environments**

**Abstract**

With growing interest in resilience among mental health care providers, there is a need for an effective way to think about the complex interactions that predict which children, youth and adults will do well despite the seriousness of the challenges they face. A focus on resilience helps us to understand individual adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies, as well as the nature of the social and physical ecologies that facilitate processes associated with resilience. Using case examples of young people and adults who have been exposed to high levels of adversity such as family violence, mental illness, natural disasters, forced migration, poverty, racism and other types of social marginalization, Dr. Ungar will show how we can ‘diagnose’ resilience and use that assessment to guide practice. He will demonstrate how thinking about resilience places clinicians in a better position to design practical interventions that are sensitive to the individual, family, and community factors that influence wellbeing. Twelve factors common to successful coping under adversity and avoiding problems like depression, PTSD, and delinquency will be discussed. This presentation will also present tools that can be used in clinical practice to change people’s social and physical environments in ways that make resilience much more likely to occur.