



virtual

# inclusive leadership *forum*

Sep 23 + 24 + 25, 2025  
Program Guide

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Together, let's redefine leadership.



# tuesday, september 23, 2025

10am - 1pm

## Day 1: The Evolution of DEI

Kick off the Forum by digging into where DEI is headed—and why it still matters. This day explores how to lead with courage, reimagine strategy, and commit to long-term, systemic change, even when it's hard.

10:00 AM	Opening Remarks
10:15 AM	Panel discussion: Authentic Inclusion - Charting the Future of DEI
11:00 AM	Lessons from Leadership
11:30 AM	Break
11:45 AM	Leading through Dialogue and Conflict
12:45 PM	Closing Remarks
1:00 PM	End

## HOST OF THE INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP FORUM

### Tina Strehlke, CEO, Minerva BC



Tina Strehlke is the CEO of Minerva, a Vancouver based charity dedicated to advancing economic and leadership opportunities for women and girls. She is a skilled senior leader with 20 years of experience in the social impact sector. She has knowledge and expertise in gender equality, inclusive leadership, career development, and creating equitable workplaces. Tina has a BA in International Relations from UBC and an MA in Communications from Royal Roads University. Tina recently completed the Certified Leadership Coach program at Essential Impact. Tina has lived and worked in Germany, Costa Rica, Guyana, and Taiwan. She currently volunteers as a mentor with Young Women in Business UBC and the Rosie Initiative. She is a member of the Prosperity Project's Rosie Initiative Advisory Group and the Essential Impact Advisory Group.

# Tuesday, September 23, 2025

10am - 1pm

## 10:15 - 11:00am Authentic Inclusion - Charting the Future of DEI

In today's rapidly evolving DEI landscape, authenticity matters more than ever. This session explores how organizations are moving beyond performative gestures to foster cultures of true belonging through intersectional practices, psychological safety, and ethical use of data and AI. Learn from leaders who are designing systems that support real people, and building workplaces where diverse teams feel seen, safe, and valued.

### Wyle Baoween, CEO, Inclusivity



Wyle Baoween is the CEO and co-founder of Inclusivity, a Vancouver-based consulting firm that helps organizations build inclusive, high-performing cultures and develop adaptive, values-driven leadership. With a background in engineering and a strong commitment to systems thinking, Wyle brings a unique lens to organizational change—treating equity and inclusion not as ideals, but as strategic and operational priorities. In recognition of his contributions to advancing equity and social impact, Wyle was awarded the Canadian Medal of Honour—a national distinction celebrating his leadership and vision for a more inclusive Canada. Wyle is a sought-after speaker, known for challenging assumptions, offering practical tools, and inspiring leaders to become conscious, courageous, and forward-thinking change-makers.

### Rohene Bouajram, Founder, Speaker, and Leadership Coach, Unspeakable Leadership



Rohene Bouajram is an award-winning educator, leadership coach, and internationally acclaimed speaker. Passionate about breaking generational cycles and cultural biases, Rohene aims to redefine leadership by motivating future leaders to create meaningful change and inspiring women of colour to turn challenges into opportunities while embracing the power of inner transformation. Bridging her Zimbabwean-Canadian identity, Rohene champions dignity, respect, and trust, encouraging individuals to defy societal odds and rewrite narratives in systems not built for all.

# Tuesday, September 23, 2025

10am - 1pm

**Kelly Chhor, Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Reconciliation, Vancity**



Kelly Chhor is the Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Reconciliation at Vancity, where she leads initiatives in anti-racism, accessibility, Reconciliation, and 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion for the organization's 2,700 employees. Now part of the Office of the CEO, her accountability includes improving how equity is experienced not only by employees, but also by members and the communities Vancity serves. A Certified HR Professional (CPHR) and course moderator for UBC's Anti-Racism program, Kelly brings an equity-centered and trauma-informed lens to organizational systems, coaching leaders, embedding inclusive practices, and strengthening employee voice to foster cultures of belonging.

**Carrie Lamb, Founder and Decolonization Consultant, Sacred Workplaces**



Carrie is a Sayisi Dene First Nation member with Métis and British roots. As a Decolonization Coach, she guides individuals and organizations in unlearning colonial frameworks and embracing Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and leading. She is Sacred Workplaces' founder and lead HR decolonial practitioner. She is an experienced HR leader with a profound dedication to transforming workplaces through an Indigenous lens. Her work focuses on culturally safe HR practices, Indigenous-led leadership, and fostering environments that empower individuals and teams. She has led decolonizing and reconciliation projects for First Nations communities and healthcare, energy, housing, and government sectors. She currently teaches an Indigenous HR programs for an Indigenous financial association and a health director's association, focusing on decolonizing Human Resource systems approaches.

## 11:00 - 11:30am Lessons from Leadership

At Minerva, we've spent years exploring what leadership really looks like when you bring equity, courage, and connection to the center. Through our programs and research, we've uncovered a set of core competencies that matter most—and we've also learned a lot about what doesn't work, and what needs to shift. In this session, we'll share some of the big lessons we've learned along the way: the skills that have stood the test of time, the blind spots we had to address, and how a feminist lens has reshaped our approach to developing leaders.



# tuesday, september 23, 2025

10am - 1pm

## **Maria Abrams, Director of Programs, Minerva BC**



Maria Abrams is the Director of Programs (Interim) at Minerva BC, where she provides strategic leadership and oversight for women's leadership initiatives. With more than 20 years of experience spanning adult education, healthcare, and the non-profit sector, she brings expertise in people leadership, program design, facilitation, and organizational development. She holds an MA in Leadership and Training and an ACC coaching designation. As a thought leader and certified leadership coach, Maria helps individuals and organizations cultivate values-driven, equity-focused leadership practices. Her leadership style is grounded in connection, purpose, and curiosity, values she embodies in her work and in her approach to building strong, collaborative relationships.

## **11:45am - 12:45pm Leading Through Dialogue and Conflict**

Engaging in meaningful conversations across differences is both challenging and essential. This presentation explores how art and creative expression can serve as powerful tools for facilitating dialogue on difficult topics. You'll learn strategies for fostering understanding, navigating emotional triggers, and creating spaces for productive discussions. By embracing these techniques, individuals and organizations can turn conflict into an opportunity for connection and change.

## **Aftab Erfan, Executive Director, SFU Centre for Dialogue and Associate Member at SFU School of Public Policy**



Dr. Aftab Erfan (she|her) is Executive Director of SFU Centre for Dialogue and Associate Member at SFU School of Public Policy. Previously, she served as the City of Vancouver's inaugural Chief Equity Officer, and Director of Dialogue and Conflict Engagement at UBC. She holds a PhD in planning from UBC, a Masters in planning from McGill University, and a BSc in environmental sciences from UBC. Aftab has extensive experience as a process designer and facilitator, specializing in hosting dialogues on contentious issues with warmth and creativity. Her experience spans 15 years and five continents. She holds numerous honours, including BC500 most influential business leaders in BC (Business in Vancouver), Research for a Better Life: The Storytellers Challenge, and Best Published Paper Award Shortlist.

# wednesday, september 24, 2025

10am - 1pm

## Day 2: The Inner Work of Leadership

Day two explores the mindset of inclusive leaders. Dive into practical strategies that leverage humility, cultural awareness, and intentional team-building to create strong, inclusive environments where people—and performance—can thrive.

10:00 AM	Opening Remarks
10:15 AM	Humble Power: Why the Future of Inclusive Leadership Depends on Humility
11:00 AM	2-Minute Talks - Humble Brags and Honest Fails
11:30 AM	Break
11:45 AM	Leading high-performing, engage teams: Unlocking the AAA Framework
12:45 PM	Closing Remarks
1:00 PM	End

### 10:15 - 11:00am Humble Power: Why the Future of Inclusive Leadership Depends on Humility

We've been taught that great leaders are commanding, charismatic, and always certain, but research tells a different story. In this provocative, evidence-backed session, Dr. Michael Daniels reveals why humility may be leadership's most overlooked superpower. Far from weakness, humility is what enables leaders to build trust, elevate others, and foster inclusive cultures where people thrive. But here's the catch: humility isn't always rewarded equally, especially for women and those from underrepresented groups. This session unpacks what real leader humility looks like, how it drives inclusion, and how to navigate the double standards that often surround it. Participants will leave with a sharper understanding of humility's value, practical tools to signal it with confidence, and a challenge to rethink how we recognize and reward leadership in others.

Introduced by: Jennifer Kim, VP, Human Resources at Global Container Terminals

# wednesday, september 24, 2025

10am - 1pm

**Dr. Michael Daniels, Associate Professor, UBC Sauder School of Business**



Dr. Michael Daniels is an Associate Professor at UBC Sauder School of Business and the Montalbano Centre for Responsible Leadership. His research focuses on how people can overcome egoism and lead with humility to foster healthier and more productive workplaces. Through his research, he aims to provide insights into what it means to be a responsible leader in contemporary organizations and how to develop that capacity. His research has been published in several top-tier outlets such as the Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Management, Personnel Psychology, and Leadership Quarterly. In addition to research, he is a passionate teacher who believes that all students can develop the capacity for leadership. Dr. Daniels is also a thought leader for The Montalbano Centre for Responsible Leadership Development; building on the school's vision to create a more just, sustainable and prosperous world and promote responsible leadership as a core value, a skillset, and as an emerging field of discipline.

## **11:00 - 11:30am 2-Minute Talks: Humble Brags and Honest Fails**

In this fast-paced and candid session, speakers share short stories of either a "humble brag" — a moment where humility led to unexpected leadership success — or an "honest fail" — a time they stumbled, learned, and grew. Each speaker has 120 seconds and one slide to reflect on how humility shaped their leadership journey and what others can take away. Expect vulnerability, insight, and inspiration as we explore how humility fuels inclusive decision-making and authentic leadership.

Moderated by: Ashley Milbury, Youth Programs Manager, Minerva BC

**Marie-Noëlle Savoie, Chief Compliance Officer and Vice President, Safer Play & Enterprise Integrity, British Columbia Lottery Corporation**



Marie-Noëlle joined BCLC in June 2020. She is an experienced lawyer and chief compliance officer. Prior to joining BCLC and the world of gambling, she worked in law firms, as well as in senior roles in the financial services industry. With a strategic and relationship-focused leadership style, she oversees all facets of player health, legal services, policy, anti-money laundering, investigations, data and information governance, security, compliance, and privacy at BCLC. She has a proven track record in leading large projects, change management and implementing efficient processes and systems across several areas of business. Marie-Noëlle is a passionate advocate for people-first leadership, empowering employees to make sound business decisions and providing them with opportunities to make a positive social impact.

# wednesday, september 24, 2025

10am - 1pm

**Jennica Palecek, Associate Vice President, Colliers**



Jennica started her career in Brazil and NYC, where she advised SMEs on go-to-market strategy and capital raising. In New York, she led a weekly program on Wall Street that supported over 300 women and minorities in scaling their businesses and spearheaded a female-founded CPG startup into Trader Joe's and Whole Foods. She fell in love with working with ambitious leaders and inspiring women. She then moved back to Vancouver and now supports startups to global companies on their office strategies. Jennica has been awarded CRE Connect's Next Gen Award, Women in Commercial Real Estate Rising Star Award, and Colliers' Rising Star Award, which recognizes rising leaders in the industry. When she's not negotiating deals, she's advising and investing in early-stage companies to support female founders and serving on various non-profit boards such as Big Brothers Big Sisters to support youth.

**John Montalbano, Principal, Tower Beach Capital Ltd.**



John Montalbano is the retired CEO of RBC Global Asset Management, which managed \$370 billion in assets. He serves as Director of the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, Aritzia Inc., AbCellera Inc., Eupraxia Pharmaceuticals, and Chairs White Crane Capital, a Vancouver-based hedge fund. He also served as Chair of the UBC Board of Governors, Killam Trusts Trustee, Co-founder of Take a Hike Youth at Risk Foundation, and Chair of the Vancouver Public Library Capital Campaign. John is a director for The Gairdner Foundation, The Rideau Hall Foundation of Canada, The BC Achievement Foundation, Windmill Microlending, and is the current Chair of St. Paul's Hospital Foundation and recent Chair of The Vancouver Police Foundation. He holds a Chartered Financial Analyst designation and a Bachelor of Commerce, with Honours, from the University of British Columbia (UBC), and holds an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from Emily Carr University.



# wednesday, september 24, 2025

10am – 1pm

## **Tamara Connell, CEO, Academy for Sustainable Innovation**



Tamara Connell is the CEO of the Academy for Sustainable Innovation, a national charity that helps people and organizations lead on climate action through education and engagement. Tamara is a creative and entrepreneurial leader with extensive experience across the sustainability and social innovation spheres. She has 20+ years of adult education experience and has designed and delivered courses, programs, and other custom engagements all around the world. Tamara's previous roles include Program Director in the Master's of Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability program at BTH in Sweden, Director of Sustainability Learning Programs at The Natural Step Canada, and Associate Director of Education & Training at RADIUS SFU. She has also run her own successful consulting company for the past 10+ years, focused on facilitation, stakeholder engagement, and strategic planning. Tamara holds a BSc in Environmental Planning, and a Masters in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability. She is also a certified Associate Coach with Integral Coaching Canada, and a certified LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methods facilitator.

## **Tej Singh Hazra, Founder, Penny Drop Advisory**



Tej is a dedicated champion for inclusion, grounded in principles of empathy, trust, and fairness. Before entering the realm of professional services, Tej served as the Head of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at organizations like IBM Canada and HSBC Bank Canada. At IBM, he directed the Global Emerging Issues Response Team, responsible for addressing real-time global and regional DE&I matters, accommodating cultural, regulatory, and faith-based considerations across both established and developing markets. At HSBC, he successfully crafted, executed, and enhanced a DEI&B program that was acknowledged for its dedication to advancing the federally regulated Employment Equity Act. In the past five years, Tej has worked in professional services, where he has built and led trustworthy, effective regional partnerships with clients from various sectors, each at different stages of DEI&B development. In 2024, Tej founded [Penny Drop Advisory](#) to leverage nearly two decades of experience and personal insights in guiding leaders and organizations striving to improve themselves and their operations. His mission is personal: as the parent of a young adult with disabilities, Tej is motivated to foster environments where individuals and communities can achieve their fullest potential.

# wednesday, september 24, 2025

10am - 1pm

## **11:45am - 12:45pm Leading High-Performing Engaged Teams: Unlocking the AAA Framework**

In today's fast-changing workplace, leading a high-performing and engaged team has never been more challenging—or more essential. Dr. Shahana Alibhai, bestselling author of *Feel Better*, shares her AAA Framework—Anchor, Awareness, and Acknowledgement—to help leaders filter distractions, build resilience, and drive team success. This science-backed workshop will provide practical strategies to enhance team performance, prevent burnout, and cultivate trust and connection.

- Introduced by: Deena Magtoto, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Odlum Brown

### **Dr. Shahana Alibhai, MD and Best-selling Author of *Feel Better***



Dr. Shahana Alibhai is a professional speaker, family physician and mental health expert. She has worked with a multitude of organizations, including the University of British Columbia, Scotiabank and Remax to help the audience gain more clarity into their mental health. As a lead physician at one of British Columbia's largest youth health centres, much of Dr. Shahana's career is focused on those struggling with their mental health. Her insights are highly sought after and she's been featured in multiple major media, including CTV and Global. She is best known for her "Emotional Literacy for Better Mental Health" TEDx talk and her book, "Feel Better".

# Thursday, September 25, 2025

10am - 1pm

## Day 3: Beyond the Taboo

From the realities of menopause to the need for transparent pay practices, the final day focuses on workplace shifts that truly matter to women—and the allies who support them. Discover how organizations can lead with empathy, create policies rooted in equity, and foster bold conversations that build shared understanding and collaborative progress.

10:00 AM	Opening Remarks + BCLC Power of Connection
10:15 AM	Closing the Gap: Jane App's Journey to Pay Equity
11:00 AM	Menopause, Work & Women's Leadership
11:30 AM	Break
11:45 AM	Spotlight on Feminist Research and Action
12:45 PM	Closing Remarks
1:00 PM	End

### 10:00 - 10:15am BCLC Power of Connection

**Lara Gerrits, Director of Social Purpose, Partnerships and Engagement, British Columbia Lottery Corporation**



Lara Gerrits is BCLC's Director of Social Purpose, Partnerships and Engagement. She leads strategies for how BCLC delivers on its social purpose to generate win-wins for the greater good, by promoting human connection and working to address social isolation.

She also leads the corporation's sustainability, Indigenous relations, community impact, engagement, and partnership programs.

# Thursday, September 25, 2025

10am - 1pm

## 10:15 - 11:00am Closing the Gap: Jane App's Journey to Pay Equity

In this fireside chat, we'll sit down with Keiran Cooper from Jane App to hear the real story behind their journey toward pay equity. From uncovering tough truths in their data to making bold changes in how compensation is structured, Keiran will share the challenges, lessons, and breakthroughs along the way. You'll learn how Jane App connected their values to action, what it took to bring employees along on the journey, and why tackling pay equity has had a lasting impact on culture, retention, and leadership.

### Keiran Cooper, Talent Acquisition Manager, Jane App



I'm Keiran, originally from Manchester, UK, and I've been living in Canada for the past six years (soon to be Canadian too!). Growing up as an only child with a single mother, I saw firsthand the challenges she faced in the workplace. Those early experiences shaped how I think about work, leadership, and creating space for others. I've been in recruitment for almost 10 years. I started in an agency and for the past five years, I've been at Jane App, where I've supported our growth from around 100 employees to more than 700. Today, I lead a team of 10+ and I'm part of Jane's new DEIB council. Authenticity and honesty are values I bring into my work every day. I don't see myself as an expert in anything. I see myself as a lifelong learner, and I'm really happy to be here to share, listen, and connect with you all.

## 11:00 - 11:30am Menopause, Work & Women's Leadership

Menopause is a natural life stage that impacts millions of working women—yet it remains a workplace taboo. This candid and informative panel will explore how menopause intersects with career progression, leadership opportunities, and organizational culture. Experts from HR, healthcare, and benefits will share strategies for creating supportive, inclusive environments that help women thrive during midlife and beyond. Learn how your organization can address this critical issue to better retain and empower talent.

### Sara Aghvami, Director of Inclusion & Belonging, Best Buy Canada



Sara Aghvami is the Director of Inclusion and Belonging at Best Buy Canada. She brings over 25 years of business leadership across tech, health, and customer experience. With a strong foundation in strategy and innovation, she now channels her expertise into fostering human connection and creating inclusive spaces where everyone feels seen, valued, and a true sense of belonging.



# Thursday, September 25, 2025

10am - 1pm

**Dr. Kathleen Mahannah, Naturopathic Physician, Restoration Health Clinic**



Dr. Kathleen Mahannah is a licensed Naturopathic Doctor and a Menopause Society Certified Practitioner based in North Vancouver. She holds a Physical Education and Health degree from the University of Toronto and a Diploma in Exercise Science from Capilano College. With ten years of clinical experience treating women, she now focuses on perimenopause and menopause care, blending modern hormone therapy with evidence-based nutrition, herbal medicine, and other natural treatments to support women's health.

## 11:45am - 12:45pm Spotlight on Feminist Research and Action

This dynamic session brings together three national feminist organizations who will share the work they are doing to shape the future of inclusive leadership in Canada. From youth economic empowerment to gender equity scorecards, and career development research, these insights offer a powerful lens on systemic change. Hear from Fora, Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology (CCWESTT), and Accelerate Her Future as they present key findings and actionable strategies. Join us to explore how data-driven advocacy is driving equity across workplaces and communities.

**Bonnie Douglas, Executive Director, Canadian Coalition of Women in Science, Engineering, Trades and Technology (CCWESTT)**



Bonnie is the Executive Director of the Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology. Her 20-year experience as an engineer and leader in food manufacturing developed her passion for solving problems, transforming the workplace, and advocating for women in the sector. She is proud to be using her skills to support the work of accelerating change for gender equity in science, engineering, trades, and technology at CCWESTT. Bonnie is a Project Management Professional (PMP), has a B.Sc. in Biological/Food Engineering and knows a lot about making ice cream!

# Thursday, September 25, 2025

10am - 1pm

## Deborah Eliezer, Marketing & Programs Associate, Accelerate Her Future



Deborah Eliezer (she/her) is the Marketing and Programs Associate at Accelerate Her Future (AHF), where she also serves as a research assistant on two projects: AHF's Career Development & Experiences of Indigenous, Black, and Racialized Women in the Canadian Workplace, and the Allyship at Work: Advancing Gender Equity research initiative, organized by UN Global Compact Network Canada in partnership with Accelerate Her Future. Deborah brings over five years of applied research experience, including survey design, literature reviews, qualitative and quantitative analysis, and impact reporting. Deborah holds a Bachelor of Commerce, specializing in Marketing from MacEwan University. In her free time Deborah enjoys going on long walks, creative graphic design projects, meditating, reading and watching movies and tv shows.

## Tehreem, Advocacy Manager, Fora Network For Change



Currently serving as the Advocacy Manager for Fora: Network for Change, Tehreem is keenly interested in civic innovation and audacious change-making. With a specialized degree in Political Science and a decade of experience in the sector, she often finds herself at the intersection of politics and philosophy as a researcher, advocate, and strategist. At Fora, the advocacy team investigates unique opportunities for the economic empowerment of gender marginalized youth in Canada, developing original research papers and curating inclusive frameworks for young, feminist economics and governance.

# and that's a wrap!

