



First Year Report **2023**

January 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024



The Dahdaleh Institute has a bold vision for achieving global health for all. In 2023, a new lab was created – WIL: the Wellness Impact Lab – led by Dr. Harvey Skinner, PhD (Senior Fellow) and Susan Harris, MSW (Community Fellow). The aim is to promote integrated health and wellness practices for personal growth and collective action. A key focus is strengthening our personal capacities for skillfully turning toward climate distress as a basis for action.

Our vision is: **‘healing ourselves, healing others, healing our world’**.

American writer and ordained Zen priest Angel Kyodo Williams captures the essence of the WIL lab: **“Without inner change there can be no outer change. Without collective change, no change matters.”**

1. Beginnings

a) Lab Initiated January 1, 2023, by Co-Leads

- Susan Harris MSW (Community Fellow)
- Dr. Harvey Skinner PhD (Senior Faculty Fellow)

b) Building our WIL Team starting May 1, 2023

- **RAY Undergraduate Global Health Intern**
 - Shamim Samadi
 - Sher Khan
 - Laura Rosa
 - Amy Agur (May 2024)
 - Shreya Pandrala (May 2024)
- **Adjunct Faculty**
 - Dr. Christy Costanian PhD
 - Dr. Cameron Norman PhD
- **Community Fellows**
 - Sara Ferwati
 - Jennifer Corriero
 - Shatabdy Zahid
- **Graduate Student Scholars**
 - Katherine (Kaidy) Newman
 - Anna De Jong (May 2024)
- **Began Weekly 1.5 Hour Team Meetings on Wednesdays**

c) Articulating our Vision, Mission, Focus, Values and Actions

- **Vision:** *‘healing ourselves, healing others, healing our world’*.
- **Mission:** Reduce barriers to wellness and foster Interbeing physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

- **Primary Focus:** moving from Climate Distress to Individual and Collective Action for addressing climate change and related challenges.
- **Core Values:** DEDI (decolonizing, equity, diversity, inclusion), holism, collaboration, empowerment, community capacity building.
- **Actions:**
 - a) **Knowledge Synthesis:** systematic and scoping reviews
 - b) **Knowledge Mobilization:** DI seminar presentations, Climate Cafes, program evaluations, publications
 - c) **Capacity Building:** Interbeing Wellness online sessions, academic and community collaborations and partnerships.

2. Accomplishments January 2023/April 2024

a) Knowledge Synthesis

- **DAST (Drug Abuse Screening Test) literature review of studies from 2005 – 2023. Team Lead: Shamim Samadi. Almost Completed.**
 - “The Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST): First 40 Years and Future Developments“. Manuscript under revision for publication in the Canadian Journal of Addiction, 2024.
- ***Weathering the Storm Together: Eco-Anxiety, Ecological Grief, and the Mental Health Impacts of Climate Disasters in Canada Through Pihkala’s Lens.* Team Lead: Kaidy Newman. Underway.**
- ***Intersecting Tides: Climate Change, Cultural Identity, and the Shaping of Mental Health Resilience from Nunavut to Syria.* Team Lead: Sara Ferwati. Underway.**

b) Knowledge Mobilization

- **Communications: Created Three WIL Websites:**
 - Dahdaleh Institute Site: <https://www.yorku.ca/dighr/project/global-health-wellness-impact-lab/>
 - WIL Project: Site: <https://wellnessimpactlab.dighr.org/>
 - Interbeing Wellness Qi Gong and Mindfulness Meditation Programs: <https://interbeingwellness.info.yorku.ca/>
- **Seminars and Presentations**
 - i. **Wellness and Self Care. Dahdaleh Institute Three-Part Series**
 1. **Qi Gong Practices.** February 15, 2023. Led by Harvey Skinner
 2. **Mindfulness Meditation.** March 1, 2023. Led by Susan Harris
 3. **Developing your Stress Busting Action Plan.** March 15, 2023. Led by Harvey Skinner.

- ii. **Climate Distress and Healing Through Earth-Based Practices.** Dahdaleh Institute 'Earth Day' Seminar April 18, 2023 led by Susan Harris and Harvey Skinner.
 - iii. **'Climate Distress': Helping Ourselves - Healing our Planet.** Seminar for YURA (York University Retires Association). November 14, 2023. Led by Susan Harris and Harvey Skinner.
 - iv. **'Climate Distress': Helping Ourselves - Healing our Planet.** Seminar for GASP (Grand(m)others Act To Save The Planet). November 28, 2023. Led by Susan Harris and Harvey Skinner.
 - v. **Climate Change and Mental Health: Listening to the Canadian North". Dahdaleh Institute Three-Part Seminar Series.**
 1. **"Voices from the Land: Inuit Perspectives on Tradition, Change, and the Future"** ". February 7, 2024 featured Indigenous Elder Michael Kusugak and Knowledge Keepers Bernice Kootoo Clarke and Becky, moderated by Jennifer Corriero, Sara Ferwati, and Harvey Skinner.
 2. **"Bridging Worlds: Insights from Nunavut to Personal Reflections on Identity and Culture"**. February 7, 2024 led by Sara Ferwati,
 3. **"Bridging Gaps: Technology Supports for Learning and Wellbeing in Northern Communities"** led by Jennifer Corriero along with Indigenous colleagues associated with Connected North.
 - vi. **Looking Into the Fire? From Climate Distress to Action.** Earth Day *Presentation* April 24, 2024 by Susan Harris and Harvey Skinner.
- **Global Mental Health Online, Open Access, Modularized 90 Minute Mini-Course.** This interactive 5 module course discusses how mental health and mental illness are understood and acted upon through three different worldviews: Eastern, Indigenous and Western. Led Harvey Skinner.
 - **Engagement**
 - **Climate Café:** '*What concerns do you have about climate change? Sharing thoughts, feelings and what helps*'. August 24th for York undergraduate students held at the Dahdaleh Institute.
 - **Climate Cafés:** developed an Evaluation Framework and interactive Tool for assessing the process and impacts/outcomes with participants.

c) Capacity Building

- **Interbeing Wellness: Mindfulness Meditation and Qi Gong 30 – minute Video-based guided practices.** **Leads: Susan Harris and Harvey Skinner.**
Planning, Promotion and Delivery of Spring 2023 8-week Series, Fall 2023 10-week Series, Winter 2024 8-week Series
<https://interbeingwellness.info.yorku.ca/>
- Established relationships with a) Carbon Conversations Toronto, b) Climate Psychology Alliance – North America, c) SCAN (Seniors for Climate Action Now), d) GASP (Grand(m)others Act To Save The Planet), e) TIG (TakingItGlobal) and Connected North Program.

3. Future Plans 2024/2025

a) Knowledge Synthesis

Complete Current Projects

- ***Weathering the Storm Together: Eco-Anxiety, Ecological Grief, and the Mental Health Impacts of Climate Disasters in Canada Through Pihkala's Lens.*** **Lead: Kaidy Neuman**
- ***Intersecting Tides: Climate Change, Cultural Identity, and the Shaping of Mental Health Resilience from Nunavut to Syria.*** **Lead: Sara Ferwati**

New Projects

- **Climate Cafes:** review the published and grey literature documenting their history, Canadian and international applications, evidence supporting their value for engagement around climate change and personal growth (resilience), critiques of this concept and applications, research gaps and future directions. **Lead: Andy De Jong**
- **Qi Gong and Mindfulness Meditation wellness practices - review of supporting evidence:** **Leads: Amy Agur and Shreya Pandrala**
- **Arts-based Programs for Exploring and Managing Climate Emotions.** **Lead: Shatabdy Zahid**

b) Knowledge Mobilization

- **Communications**
 - **Create Short Articles (e.g. The Conversation), Op Eds and Blogs for public education and engagement**
 - **Build a Social Media Platform for WIL promotion and communications.**
 - **Update WIL Websites**
- **Seminars and Presentations**
 - **'Eastern Approaches for Wellness Supported by Western Science'. Dahdaleh Institute Three-Part series.**
 - 1) **Acupuncture: Dr Poney Chiang**

- 2) **Mindfulness Meditation: Susan Harris**
 - 3) **Qi Gong (Tai Chi): Dr. Harvey Skinner**
 - **'Kids Talking Climate': Building Resilience for Our Changing World.** Presentation at the Growing Strong Minds Conference 50th Anniversary of the Psychology Foundation November 14, 2024. **Harvey Skinner.**
 - **Others being considered ...**
 - **Engagement**
 - **Conduct Climate Cafés** both on campus for students as well as in the community (e.g. with SCAN group of seniors on May 21)
 - **Refine the Evaluation Framework and Tool.** Offer research and evaluation services.
 - **Partner with Organizations** such as: Carbon Conversations Toronto, Project Neutral and the Climate Psychology Alliance – North America.
- c) **Capacity Building**
- **Interbeing Wellness: Mindfulness Meditation and Qi Gong 30 – minute Video-based guided practices. Leads: Susan Harris and Harvey Skinner.**
Promotion and Research Evaluation of Spring 2024 8-week Series, Fall 2024 10-week Series, and Winter 2025 10-week Series.
 - **Network Building:** Continue to establish relationships with academic and community organizations.
- d) **WIL Lab Planning Retreat: half-day in May at 105 Invermay Ave**
- Review the successes and challenges during the first year of the Wellness Impact Lab (WIL), and a 'brainstorming' SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis about priorities and actions.

WIL Team

Dr. Harvey Skinner, Senior Fellow and WIL Co-Lead

Susan Harris, Community Fellow and WIL Co-Lead

Dr. Christy Costanian, Adjunct Faculty Fellow

Dr. Cameron Norman, Adjunct Faculty Fellow

Sara Ferwati, Community Fellow

Shatabdy Zahid, Community Fellow

Jennifer Corriero, Community Fellow

Katherine Newman, Graduate Student Scholar

Anna De Gong, Graduate Student Scholar

Amy Agur, Research Assistant

Shreya Pandrala, Research Assistant

Shamim Samadi, Volunteer Research Assistant

Laura Rosa Pereira, Volunteer Research Assistant