

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

International Mutual Help Meeting: Networking and Collaboration

Held under the auspices of the Minister of Health of the Czech Republic



SUPPORTED BY



9-10 November 2026

OREA Hotel Pyramida · Prague, Czech Republic

www.safewardsconference.com

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

What About: 'Safewards Past, Present and Future'

ABSTRACT

There is no doubt that Safewards has been a huge success. It has been widely used in many countries all around the world. The research I led and published showed that using Safewards would lead to significant falls in conflict behaviours and containment use. There is every reason to hope that this has been achieved in the places where Safewards has been implemented in practice. Perhaps now is a good moment to take stock and think about the future.

Can we do things any better, and are there any common mistakes being made by people using Safewards? Is it too popular, implemented too widely or too superficially? Did our use of social media in order to support Safewards actually have drawbacks as well as benefits, and how should that continue? The Safewards team made the decision to make it freely available to everyone, without any costs, constraints or accreditation.

While that has certainly helped to get more people to use it, did that have costs we did not foresee? How do people who choose not to use Safewards see it, and are any of their criticisms right? During this presentation I will try to answer some of these questions, and will look forward to discussing them with you individually during the conference.



KEYNOTE 1

Monday, 9 November 2026 | 09:45

Professor Len Bowers

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



KEYNOTE 2

Monday, 9 November 2026 | 11:00

Hamilton Kennedy

Beyond Containment: Deepening Safewards Through Relationship

ABSTRACT

This keynote begins with insider knowledges. Knowledge and experience of being restrained and harmed, of witnessing harm, and of working within systems that are trying to balance care and control. From these reflections, it asks what becomes possible when we take seriously the meanings people give to their distress, and how this can extend the work of the Safewards Model.

This keynote presentation brings together this insider knowledge, research, and clinical practice to explore the challenges and opportunities of implementing Safewards in psychiatric settings. Drawing on reflections of being subjected to, and witnessing, restraint, coercion, and harm within psychiatric services, the presentation considers how Safewards can be extended and deepened in practice.

Safewards represents a shift in how conflict and containment can be understood and addressed. With its focus on relationships, mutual understanding, and the dynamics of inpatient environments, it demonstrates that restrictive interventions are not inevitable. However, this presentation argues that the impact of Safewards can be strengthened by attending more closely to the meanings people give to their experiences, particularly in moments of heightened distress.

Integrating findings from doctoral research on experiences labelled as delusional, the presentation introduces ways of engaging with unusual beliefs and experiences as meaningful, rather than as problems to be corrected or managed. When these meanings are overlooked, interactions can become strained and escalate towards conflict. When they are engaged with respectfully, opportunities for connection and shared safety emerge.

The presentation will also provide practical guidance for implementing Safewards in moments of high distress. This includes preventative strategies, as well as ways of responding to emerging conflict while maintaining relational engagement under pressure. It suggests that reducing restrictive practices involves not only the application of specific interventions, but also the cultivation of practices and understandings that make connection more possible, and conflict and containment less likely.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



KEYNOTE 3

Tuesday, 10 November 2026 | 14:15

Assoc. Prof. Anna Björkdahl

What Really Makes Safewards Work? Identifying the Active Ingredients for Fidelity, Learning and Impact

ABSTRACT

Safewards has become one of the most widely adopted interventions to prevent conflict and containment in psychiatric care, yet we still cannot confidently answer two fundamental questions: what exactly needs to happen for Safewards to work as intended, and how is Safewards actually implemented in practice?

This gap exists partly because we have lacked a robust tool to assess implementation fidelity, making it challenging to understand outcome variation, facilitate cross-site learning, or ensure Safewards is delivered as intended. At the core of this challenge has been an insufficiently articulated understanding of the active ingredients necessary for the ten Safewards interventions to achieve their intended effects.

Without this knowledge, replication, refinement, and effective implementation are compromised, jeopardising both clinical quality assurance and scientific rigour.

This keynote presents the on-going development process of the Safewards Implementation Fidelity Tool (SIFT), and the identified active ingredients of Safewards. Through an international Delphi process, expert consensus identified the active ingredients for each intervention as well as measurement levels, informed by contemporary fidelity theory. As a next step, the SIFT was pilot-tested with frontline psychiatric staff and refined to ensure clinical relevance and feasibility.

The tool comprises 48 active ingredients with established measurements across all ten interventions. The number of ingredients, ranging from three to seven per intervention, captures the sophistication of Safewards and of high-quality mental health nursing practice. The SIFT is currently undergoing international psychometric validation.

Beyond measurement, the active ingredients may serve as a practical compass for implementation, helping clinicians, managers, and researchers understand, communicate, and sustain the core purpose of Safewards, particularly relevant at a time when growing popularity brings both opportunities and risks of drift. This work establishes a foundation for the next generation of Safewards implementation, one grounded in clarity, shared understanding, and the capacity to learn from what truly works.

ABOUT THE ORGANISER



Pavel Říčan
DIRECTOR

Centre for Mental Health Care Development

Why the Centre for Mental Health Care Development?

Dear colleagues and friends,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to Prague for the first International Safewards Conference.

Since 1995, the Centre for Mental Health Care Development has worked to improve mental health care in Czechia and beyond. We support the development of community-based, professional and accessible services, promote respect for people experiencing mental health difficulties, and recognise lived experience as an essential source of expertise.

Safewards belongs naturally within this mission. It offers a practical, evidence-informed way to prevent conflict, reduce coercion and strengthen relationships on psychiatric wards. Through our Safety in Psychiatry programme, we connect international knowledge with everyday practice, combining training, implementation support and the authentic perspectives of people who have experienced mental health services.

That is why the Centre chose to bring this international community together: to share what works, speak honestly about challenges and build relationships for the future.

Thank you for joining us. I hope these two days bring new ideas, practical inspiration and renewed energy to create safer, kinder and more respectful mental health care.

Pavel Říčan
Director

COMMUNITY & RECOVERY

LIVED EXPERIENCE

EVIDENCE INTO PRACTICE

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

ORGANISING COMMITTEE



Tomáš Petr

Czech Republic



Geoff Brennan

United Kingdom



Michael Löhr

Germany



Lenka Březinová

Czech Republic



Susanna Flansburg

Germany



SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE



A/Prof Bridget Hamilton

Australia

CHAIR OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE



Dr. Justine Fletcher

Australia



Geoff Brennan

United Kingdom



Prof. Hülya Bilgin

Turkey



Prof. Alan Simpson

United Kingdom



Prof. Dr. Michael Schulz

Germany



Assoc. Prof. Anna Björkdahl

Sweden



Prof. Lene Lauge Berring

Denmark



Prof. Dr. André Nienaber

Switzerland



Raf Hamaizia

United Kingdom

MONDAY, 9 November 2026

07:30 Registration at Hotel Pyramida, Prague

09:00 Opening Ceremony

09:45 Keynote 1
Chair: Geoff Brennan
What About: 'Safewards Past, Present and Future'
Prof. Len Bowers

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 Keynote 2
Chair: Alan Simpson
Beyond Containment: Deepening Safewards Through Relationship
Hamilton Kennedy

11:45 Lunch Break

12:30 - 13:00 Poster Discussion

MONDAY, 9 November 2026

	Auditorium 1	Auditorium 2	Meeting Room Jupiter	Meeting Room Uranus
	Chair: Michael Schulz	Chair: Geoff Brennan	Chair: Justine Fletcher	Chair: Lene Lauge Berring
	Concurrent Session Safewards Experience	Concurrent Session Safewards Introduction	Concurrent Session Safewards Implementation	Workshop 1
13:00	01 Through the Patient’s Eyes: Experiences of Safewards in Inpatient Psychiatric Care Malin Lindgren (Sweden)	04 What is Safewards? Geoff Brennan (UK)	07 Safe Wards and Safe Teams Lina Haberman (Germany)	Creative and Reflective Approaches to Safewards Interventions: An Implementation Science Perspective Lene Lauge Berring (Denmark)
13:20	02 Choosing what matters: Nurse Leadership, SafeWards and Reducing Restrictive Interventions Fiona Whitecross (Australia)	05 Safewards as Organizational Change: A Management Perspective on Implementation in a Psychiatric Pilot Ward Dusan Stojadinovic (Germany)	08 Humanising Mental Health Care: Implementation of the Safewards Model in Fundación Hospitalarias Spain Centres Blas Blánquez Gómez (Spain)	
13:40	03 Safewards implementation the Second Time around: Lessons Learnt from the Past Patsy Jane Tarrant (New Zealand)	06 Safewards and interventions that are not (yet) so well known - why it is worth looking into them André Nienaber (Switzerland)	09 Safewards from Introduction to Cultural Change (from Project to Program) Nicole Boch (Germany)	
14:00	change rooms/stretch legs/get coffee			



MONDAY, 9 November 2026

	Auditorium 1	Auditorium 2	Meeting Room Jupiter	Meeting Room Uranus
	Chair: Marek Procházka	Chair: Susanna Flansburg	Chair: Hülya Bilgin	Chair: Bridget Hamilton
	Concurrent Session Safewards Implementation	Concurrent Session Safewards Evolving	Concurrent Session Safewards Experience	Workshop 2
14:30	10 What a Safewards Trainer Needs: Results of an International Delphi Study Johannes Edel (Germany)	13 Implementing Safewards with a Cultural Lens at Mabu Liyan in Broome, Western Australia Lisa Shields (Australia)	16 Thematic Analysis of Frontline Workers' Perspectives on our 'Safewards for Safe Homes' Model within a Community Residential Setting Adrianne Amri (UK)	Worldwide Safewards Training and Education: Collaborate to Learn and Grow! Emma Barker (Australia)
14:50	11 Development of Safewards Secure Tess Maguire (Australia)	14 Cultural Adaptation of the Model for the New Zealand Context Rachel Gates (New Zealand)	17 'Safewards for Safe Homes': An Adaptation of Safewards for Community-Based Residential Care Dominique Hooper (UK)	
15:10	12 Implementation of Safewards in Vanha Vaasa Forensic Psychiatric Hospital Mirva Sundqvist-Kekäläinen (Finland)	15 Adapting Safewards in a Multicultural Inpatient Ward: Practical Experiences with Language, Culture and Religion Caroline Erviksæter (Norway)	18 An Adaptation of Safewards Interventions for Eating Disorder Services David Kingsley (UK)	
15:30	Coffee Break			



MONDAY, 9 November 2026

	Auditorium 1	Auditorium 2	Meeting Room Jupiter	Meeting Room Uranus
	<i>Chair: André Nienaber</i>	<i>Chair: Michael Löhr</i>	<i>Chair: Anna Björkdahl</i>	<i>Chair: Tomáš Petr</i>
	Concurrent Session Growing Safewards Research	Concurrent Session Safewards Implementation	Concurrent Session Safewards Implementation	Concurrent Session Safewards Implementation
16:00	19 Safewards in Forensic Psychiatry: Insights into Patient and Staff Experiences, Ward Climate, and Implementation Sebastian Mittelstädt (Germany)	22 Safewards in Corporate Strategy – Sustainable Implementation Using the Example of Safewards Visits Thomas Auerbach (Germany)	25 Strengthening Supervision, Sustaining Safewards: A Practical Approach through GRiP-S Jennifer Hamilton (Australia)	28 Evolving Safewards: A Creative Approach to Workforce Change Through Visible Clinical Leadership Kelly Thomas (Australia)
16:20	20 Impact of Safewards Model in Coercive Measures and Climate in Adult Psychiatric Wards Pauliina Ruonala (Finland)	23 Sustainable Implementation of Safewards: Success Factors and Strategies from Implementation Science Gitte Herwig (Germany)	26 What Works for Patients Works for Staff: Mutual Help Meetings as a Tool for Staff Support and Professional Development Heike Jansen (Germany)	29 Implementation of the Safewards Model at University Psychiatric Clinic in Ljubljana Aljoša Lapanja (Slovenia)
16:40	21 Impact of the Safewards Model on the Reduction of Mechanical Restraints Blas Blánquez Gómez (Spain)	24 SAFEWARDS: a Nationwide Implementation within the Faroe Islands – What Did We Learn? Kerstin Laksáfoss (Faroe Islands)	27 Talk Down Methods as a Useful Tool in Staff training Anne Mette Nørregaard (Denmark)	30 Rehearsing De-escalation with AI: A Safe Space to Practice Difficult Conversations Jan Hrdlička (Czech Republic)
17:00	End of day 1			
19:00	Social Event			



TUESDAY, 10 November 2026

	Auditorium 1	Auditorium 2	Meeting Room Jupiter	Meeting Room Uranus
	<i>Chair: Justine Fletcher</i>	<i>Chair: Alan Simpson</i>	<i>Chair: Bridget Hamilton</i>	<i>Chair: Susanna Flansburg</i>
	Concurrent Session Safewards with New Communities	Concurrent Session Safewards Research	Concurrent Session Safewards Implementation	Concurrent Session Safewards with New Communities
09:00	31 Safewards Implementation at Instituto Raul Soares, Brazil: An Early-Stage Research Project Edson André Pereira Hilário (Brazil)	34 Sustainable Approaches to Embedding Safewards Interventions in Inpatient Mental Health Settings: A Qualitative Descriptive Study Using Nominal Group Technique Emma Barker (Australia)	37 Implementing Safewards in High-Security Forensic Mental Health: Interprofessional Roll-Out Across Three Secure Units Lara Indlekofer (Switzerland)	40 Innovating care with psychiatric wards for patients with intellectual disabilities, HUS, Finland Meri Kalpio (Finland)
09:20	32 Evaluation of the outcomes of Safewards Acute in Australian Emergency Departments Kristol Ward (Australia)	35 Get it started – keep it running: The challenging transformation of the Bavarian pilot project “Safewards in FMH” into a long-term tool Sophie Krause (Germany)	38 Safewards was our cornerstone – but the building needs more bricks: Safewards as part of a multidimensional initiative for aggression and de-escalation management in FMH Johannes Edel (Germany)	41 Nursing and Allied Health Implementation of Safewards Calm Down Principles in an Open-door Mental Health Rehabilitation Unit for Adults with Intellectual Disability Victoria Millward (Australia)
09:40	33 Safewards in Your Pocket: Co-creating a Digital Intervention for Self-Harm Support Lene Lauge Berring (Denmark)	36 Implementing Safewards in Psychiatric Inpatient Care: A Realist-informed Qualitative Study of Context, Mechanisms and Outcomes Mårten Tyrberg (Sweden)	39 Context-Specific Further Development of Safewards in Forensic Psychiatry Franz Xaver Regel (Germany)	42 Integration of the Safewards Model into Pediatric Occupational Therapy Early Intervention Wei-Chien Chang (Taiwan)
10:00	Coffee Break			



TUESDAY, 10 November 2026

	Auditorium 1	Auditorium 2	Meeting Room Jupiter	Meeting Room Uranus
	<i>Chair: Michael Löhr</i>	<i>Chair: Marek Procházka</i>	<i>Chair: Hülya Bilgin</i>	<i>Chair: Anna Björkdahl</i>
	Concurrent Session Safewards Research	Concurrent Session Safewards Implementation	Concurrent Session Safewards Implementation	Concurrent Session Safewards with New Communities
10:30	43 Gender Sensitive and Gender Responsive Safewards Approach in a Female Mental Health Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit Veronika Peocz (UK)	46 Police Interactions with People with Mental Illness: A Criminological and Police Science Analysis from the Perspective of Psychiatric Nurses in Germany Dagmar Haase (Germany)	49 Implementing the Comfort Box: Lessons Learned, Barriers Identified, and Early Outcomes from a Safewards-Informed Intervention Andrew Pearson (USA)	52 Reconceptualising Safewards for HDR Supervision Jennifer Hamilton (Australia)
10:50	44 More Than an Intervention: The Joy of Bringing Safewards to Life in a CAMHS Inpatient Unit Kathryn Thurston (UK)	47 Safewards Secure-Custodial Mental Health-A version for Bed-Based Prison Mental Health Units Tess Maguire (Australia)	50 Implementing the Safewards "Getting to Know Each Other" Intervention in an Acute Psychiatry Ward: A Quality Improvement Project Mireia Pose Rovira (Spain)	53 The Implementation of the Safewards Model within the Context of School Development at the KBO School of Nursing Stefanie Hanneder (Germany)
11:10	45 Adapting Safewards for Perinatal/Parent-Infant Inpatient Units/Mother and Baby Units: Clinical Reflections and the Infant as a Seventh Domain Abie Jazi (Australia)	48 Implementation Strategies and Participant Responsiveness in Forensic Psychiatric Care: A Multi-Perspective Study of Safewards Veikko Pelto-Piri (Sweden)	51 Music, Acoustic Atmosphere and Sound Design as De-escalating Safewards Strategies in Psychogeriatrics and Addiction Care Viviane Simone Plechinger (Germany)	54 Adapting Safewards Principles to an Occupational Therapy Activity Program for Youths in an Acute Inpatient Psychiatric Ward: A Quality Improvement Project Ching-Wen Weng (Taiwan)
11:30	change rooms/stretch legs/get coffee			



TUESDAY, 10 November 2026

	Auditorium 1	Auditorium 2	Meeting Room Jupiter	Meeting Room Uranus
	<i>Chair: Lene Lauge Berring</i>	<i>Chair: André Nienaber</i>	<i>Chair: Michael Schulz</i>	<i>Chair: Marek Procházka</i>
	Concurrent Session Safewards Research	Concurrent Session Safewards Research	Concurrent Session Safewards Implementation	Concurrent Session Safewards Implementation
12:00	55 Ward Managers' Implementation Leadership in Safewards: A Qualitative Study Using the O-MILE Framework Daniel Arnerlöv (Sweden)	58 Safewards and Recovery: A Critical Discourse Analysis Alexandra Kiikeri (Sweden)	61 A Regional Implementation of Safewards across Adult Mental Health Inpatient Wards in Northern Ireland Shauneen O'Connor (Northern Ireland)	64 Evaluation of the Feasibility of Safewards Model Interventions by Students Taking Mental Health and Psychiatric Nursing Course Hülya Bilgin (Turkey)
12:20	56 Balancing Structure and Autonomy: Patient Perspectives on Ward Atmosphere and the Role of Safewards Perihan Güner (Turkey)	59 Safewards in Forensic Care for Women Adrian Smolik (Germany)	62 Safewards on a Ward for Young Adults – Implementation of the Safewards Model on a Ward for Young Adults Using the Theoretical Domains Framework Mirco Krümpelbeck (Germany)	65 Implementing Safewards in Acute Mental Health Units at Scarborough Health Network (SHN): A Quality Improvement Initiative Doha Elsayed (Canada)
12:40	57 Staff Perceptions of the Impact of Safewards Acute in Australian Acute Medical Wards Kristel Ward (Australia)	60 Safewards and Beyond – Safety in Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing André Nienaber (Switzerland)	63 Implementing Safewards in Psychiatric Inpatient Care: Nursing Staff Experiences Interpreted Through the Neuman Systems Model Jenny Karlsson (Sweden)	66
13:00	Lunch Break			



TUESDAY, 10 November 2026

13:45 –
14:15

Poster Discussion

14:15

Keynote 3
Chair: Geoff Brennan

What Really Makes Safewards Work? Identifying the Active Ingredients for Fidelity, Learning and Impact
Assoc. Prof. Anna Björkdahl

15:00

Closing Ceremony

15:30

End of Day 2



POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Poster Discussion: 12:30 – 13:00 on Monday (9 November 2026) / 13:45-14:15 on Tuesday (10 November 2026)

Poster	Contribution
P1	Long-term Impact of a Mnemonic-Driven De-escalation Protocol and Protective Equipment on Reducing Ward Violence and Staff Injuries Yu-Fen Chen (Taiwan)
P2	Implementing the Safewards Model in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Nadia Basarir (Germany)
P3	Safewards Talk Down & Mutual Expectation Interventions Introduction into an Acute Psychiatric Unit Theresa Donegan (Ireland)
P4	Safewards and Nursing Leadership Tracey Harmer (Australia)
P5	Safewards - Mutual Help Meetings Maree Yalousi (Australia)
P6	Four-Year Follow-up of Safewards Implementation in an Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit in Andalusia, Spain Josefa Guerra Arévalo (Spain)

OTHERS

SILENT AUCTION

CALM DOWN METHODS GALLERY

AI-SUPPORTED VERBAL DE-ESCALATION TRAINING

SEE YOU IN PRAGUE

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THE 1ST INTERNATIONAL SAFEWARDS CONFERENCE

We look forward to two inspiring days of sharing knowledge, experience and ideas, building new connections and exploring how we can make mental health services safer, more respectful and more compassionate.

Together, we can make psychiatric care safer.

9-10 NOVEMBER 2026 | PRAGUE



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