

**Long bio:**

Mélanie (her, she, elle), MSW, RSW is a strategist, trainer, social worker and organizer. She comes from a family of helpers and doers, growing up on unceded Algonquin territories, in urban (Vanier), rural (Embrun, Limoges, Vars) and suburban (Orléans) communities.

Mélanie brings over two decades of experience in the health and social services sectors. Grounded in the ethos of liberation and social justice, she has worked in sexual and reproductive health, community development, harm-reduction and popular education. Mélanie acknowledges the privilege of learning from those we serve and the responsibility it entails.

She is dedicated to having difficult conversations that are transformative, authentic and kind. For over twenty years, Ms. Stafford has worked as a consultant in trauma-informed leadership and organizational health, supporting a meaningful experience of anti-oppressive social service provision. These experiences shaped her favourite ways to learn and teach: through stories, art and things that make people laugh.

Mélanie has served as Board President for la Maison d'amitié, Ontario's largest francophone women's shelter, and co-founded Overdose Prevention Ottawa. Currently serving as the vice-president of her community association, she spearheads initiatives focused on gardening and reclaiming public spaces.

Ms. Stafford studied at Ottawa University (history & intervention sociale), Dalhousie University (social work) and the University of Victoria, where she obtained her master's degree in Social Work (with an Indigenous Methodologies focus).