

## **Stéphane Grenier – Biographies and Speaker Introduction**

June 2017

### Long Biography 572 words

Stéphane Grenier is nationally known mental health innovator, advocate, speaker and entrepreneur. He retired from the Canadian military as a Lieutenant Colonel after 29 years of service. He participated in several overseas missions, most notably nine months in Rwanda in 1994/95, and six months in Kandahar, Afghanistan in 2007. Numerous shorter deployments include Cambodia, Kuwait, the Arabian Gulf, Lebanon, and Haiti, to name a few.

Faced with his own undiagnosed Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) upon return from Rwanda, he took a personal interest in the way the Canadian Forces was dealing with mental health issues. In 2001, he coined the term Operational Stress Injury (OSI) to reframe perceptions around mental health. In this time, he conceived, developed, implemented and managed a national Peer Support program for the Canadian military. This program now has 57 offices and almost 70 staff members.

He then created a department-wide workplace mental health education program in 2007. This work led to the launch of a second highly successful, non-clinical mental health program that has now evolved to a program named Road to Mental readiness or R2MRdelivers “peer-based” mental health education to over 20,000 military personnel every year.

In 2009, he conceived a corporate mental health awareness campaign that was recognized by the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). It was endorsed as an example of corporate leadership in reducing mental health stigmatization in the workplace.

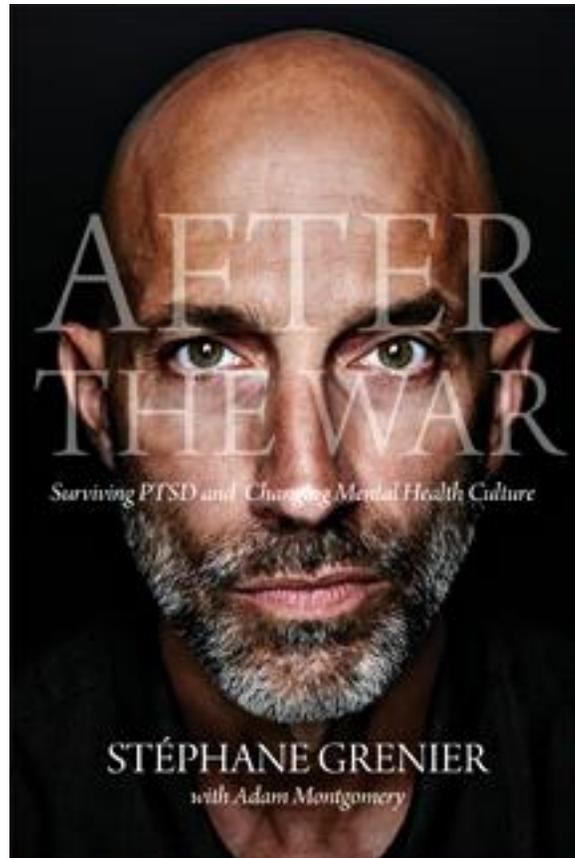
In April 2010, Stéphane was seconded to the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) for two years to lead the Peer Project and develop National Standards of Practice for peer support. Two years later, when the MHCC reorganised its priorities and made the decision to cancel the Peer Project, he along with two individuals who supported growth of peer support in Canada took it upon themselves to create a new Charitable organisation and finish the work of the Mental Health Commission despite their lack of support. He also served as a member of the Workforce Advisory Committee of the MHCC from 2008 to 2012 when this body was closed-out.

Stéphane retired from the military in the spring of 2012 and created Mental Health Innovations (MHI), a social enterprise dedicated to developing non-clinical mental health interventions as a complement to traditional clinical care. MHI has implemented workplace peer support for private and public-sector clients and has developed a wide array of workplace MH approaches that focus on changing the culture of the workplace. In 2016, Stéphane launched a second company to implement and deliver peer support services within inpatient MH units at the provincial health care system level.

Stéphane received a military commendation for his efforts and leadership during the post-war humanitarian disaster caused by the Rwandan Genocide. He was awarded a Meritorious Service Cross by the Governor General of Canada for taking the concept of peer support and

driving it from the grass-roots up into a formal federal government program. In 2009, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health recognized him as a Champion of Mental Health and in 2015 he was awarded an (honorary) Doctor of Laws by the University of Guelph and Humber College for his contributions in the field of mental health.

Stéphane is an in-demand keynote speaker and his auto-biographical book (co-authored with Dr. Adam Montgomery) is due for release in Spring 2018. It is published by University of Regina Press.



## Short Biography 138 words

Stéphane Grenier is a nationally known mental health innovator, advocate, speaker and entrepreneur. He retired from the Canadian military as a Lieutenant Colonel after serving 29 years. He participated in several overseas missions, most notably nine months in Rwanda in 1994/95, and six months in Kandahar, Afghanistan in 2007.

Faced with his own undiagnosed Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) upon return from Rwanda, he took a personal interest in the way the Canadian Forces was dealing with mental health issues. In 2001, he coined the term Operational Stress Injury (OSI) and conceived, developed, implemented and managed a government-based national Peer Support program for the Canadian military.

In the spring of 2012, he retired from the military and created Mental Health Innovations (MHI) a social enterprise dedicated to developing non-clinical mental health interventions as a complement to traditional clinical care. More recently, in 2016 he launched a second company that is now charged with implementing and delivering peer support services within in patient MH units at the provincial health care system level.

Speaker Introduction Script: 334 words, 100-seconds.

(Note: Pronunciation Guide - *Steh-fan Grehn-yay*)

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It is my pleasure to introduce our next speaker.

Stephane Grenier, is the founder of Mental Health Innovations, a social enterprise dedicated to rehumanizing workplaces in Canada.

Stephane is an outspoken advocate for the use of social support to overcome, ill mental health.

His conviction comes from his incredible experience, changing the mental healthcare system of the Canadian military.

Stephane is a veteran of the ill-fated United Nations' mission to Rwanda in the mid nineteen-nineties. Conducted in the wake of a horrible genocide, peacekeepers were unprepared to handle the effects, and consequences of their experiences.

When he returned home, he began feeling unwell and took a personal interest in his symptoms and how the military treated the mental health of its service members.

He first challenged the very language being used, by reframing the understanding, that the brain can be injured. He then took on a culture and healthcare system, deeply entrenched with stigmatization. By developing a national peer support program, he broke down the barriers for soldiers to get help.

Stephane retired from the military in 2012, and created Mental Health Innovations, now extending his focus to the Canadian workforce. With clients in the public and private sector, he and his team continue to develop non-clinical mental health interventions to complement traditional clinical care. In 2016, he launched a second company which is now charged with implementing and delivering peer support services within in-patient mental health units at the provincial healthcare system level.

Throughout his career, Stephane has been recognized for his transformational leadership style, and has been commended for his contributions to the mental health field.

Honours include receiving a military commendation for his efforts and leadership during the post-war humanitarian disaster caused by the Rwandan Genocide.

Being awarded the Meritorious Service Cross by the Governor General of Canada, being named a Champion of Mental Health in 2009, and then being bestowed an honorary Doctor of Laws degree by the University of Guelph in 2015.

Please join me in welcoming, Stephane Grenier.

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