

Healing Arts for Newcomer Family Wellbeing Event

Event Itinerary

Arrival & Activities 5:00 - 5:45 PM

- Collective Painting Gallery Tour
- Event Activities (see back page)
- Refreshments & Networking



Ceremony & Panel Discussion 5:45 - 7:00 PM

- Land Acknowledgement & Opening Remarks
- Panel Discussion: Healing Arts to Address Family Wellbeing and Violence
- Closing Remarks & Gratitude

Closing 7:00 - 7:15 pm

- Collect Event Giveaway

Speakers & Panelists



Izumi Sakamoto
Associate Professor at the Factor Inwentash Faculty of Social Work at University of Toronto



Andrea Charise
Associate Vice-Principal Research and Innovation Associate Professor at the Department of Health & Society UTSC



Maggie To
Coordinator – Community Education Gender-Based Violence Project



Roxanna Vahed
Expressive Arts Therapist



Cliff Ledwos
Director, Primary Health Care and Initiatives



Akm Alamgir
Director of Organizational Knowledge and Learning, HEAL Research Lead



Christen Kong
HEAL Project Coordinator, Health Promoter - Newcomer Mental Health



Have a question for the panelists? Scan to submit a question or comment.

Hubs of Expressive Arts for Life

Supporting Mental Health & Preventing Family Violence in Newcomer Communities

What is Expressive Arts for Healing? Expressive arts therapy uses movement, music, visual arts, writing, performance, and play to improve mental health and wellness of newcomer women survivors of gender-based domestic violence. The Hubs of Expressive Arts for Life (HEAL) Program is a creative, trauma- and violence-informed intervention that uses expressive arts therapy to prevent and address family violence.

HEAL Program Overview

The HEAL Program was offered to six newcomer groups: Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, and Tigrinya-speaking communities, as well as LGBTQ+ participants and newcomer women who have lived in shelters. The program followed five main phases, each designed to support healing, learning, and empowerment. The program team included an expressive arts facilitator, a co-facilitator, student, volunteers, interpreters, and childminders, along with other support staff.

Welcome & Orientation

Part I: Safety and Stabilization

Part II: Identity, Culture, & Community

Guest Speaking Subject Matter Experts

Part III: Towards, Resilience, Hope, & Future

Ending & Culminating Event

Session 1: Introduction of the HEAL program, completion of consent forms, and relationship-building activities with participants and facilitators.

Part I (Session 2-4): Continued trust building and psychoeducation using art based techniques for self- and co-regulation.

Part II (Session 5-7): Participants connected and explored their identity, culture, and community using storytelling, tactile, and visual art modalities.

Guest Speaking: Guest speakers on empowerment, healthy relationships, and human rights.

Part III (Session 8-10): Participants created two collective paintings of their journey through the program.

Session 11-12: Participants reflected on “endings” and planning a meaningful culminating event while receiving information on future gatherings, and completed a program evaluation.



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Collective Painting Exhibit Each HEAL Program subgroup created two collaborative paintings representing their journey and lived experiences. Notice, observe, and feel what these paintings mean to you.



Design a Button Learn about the themes from the project findings by designing a button showcasing qualitative findings at our “Button Making” station.



Share and Receive A New Resource Learn about the research themes from the project by sharing and receiving new knowledge at our “Share & Receive” activity station.

What's Next? Sustainability Impact

INDIVIDUAL & INTERPERSONAL: Creating supportive environments & developing personal skills

The program increased participants' knowledge of gender-based violence, human rights, and healthy relationships.

Participants reported increased community connections, improved stress management, and a greater sense of autonomy to make decisions about their mental health and wellness.

Participants were engaged as cultural consultants to tailor programs that reflected their needs and experiences.

ORGANIZATIONAL & COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING: Community action and reorienting healthcare services

Enhance equity-informed planning and evaluation for programs and services.

Implement capacity building initiatives to increase service provider and organizational capacity to use arts as a effective approach to improving mental health.

Foster interdisciplinary, team-based care that connects the healthcare, settlement, and the arts sectors.

SYSTEMS & POLICY: Building Healthy Public Policy

Increase peer-reviewed research and evidence on expressive arts interventions for newcomers.

Contribute to Canada's Gender-Based Violence Strategy and upcoming innovations by being part of a larger Community of Practice.

Conduct a policy scan on domestic violence policies locally and globally for greater insight on newcomer perspectives and lived experiences.

The Healing Arts Event is a Launchpad for Arts Integration in Newcomer Settlement and Healthcare, Come Along With Us!

Connect: research@accessalliance.ca

Event Passport

Supporting Mental Health & Preventing Family Violence in Newcomer Communities

Engage in the different event activities and complete three in a row to receive a special collection of HEAL Project Postcards! Engage, Enjoy, & Create!



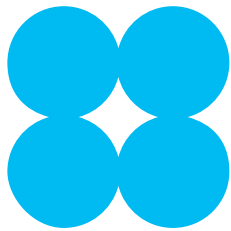
Introduce yourself to someone new!



Observe the collective paintings using the gallery booklet.



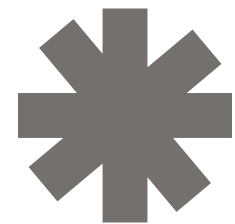
“Share and Receive” activity to learn about a new resource.



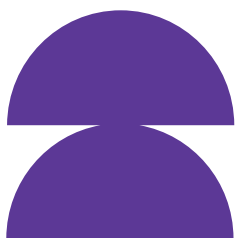
Listen to the panel discussion & ask a question.



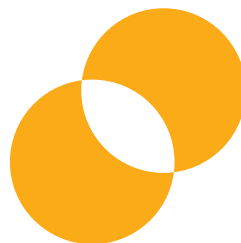
Give feedback on the event experience!



Expand your network & talk to someone from a different agency.



Design a button and learn about the research findings.



Taste a warm chai or snack or some refreshments.



Check out discussion prompts at the tall tables.