

# Project indicators for improved mental health and well-being

The HEAL Project—Hubs of Expressive Arts for Life, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), is an innovative initiative implemented from April 2022 to March 2026. This project is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of an expressive arts intervention in enhancing the knowledge, skills, wellbeing, and overall resilience of individuals affected by or at risk of family violence. Guided by outcome- and process-oriented research objectives, the evaluation focuses on changes in participant attitudes, behaviours, and skills, as well as the effectiveness of community engagement and partnership-building strategies.

Indicator Questions	Short & Medium Term Indicators	Measurement tools and approaches	Participant Findings
<p><b>Has the intervention led to better mental health outcomes for the participants? If so, how?</b></p>	<p><b>Short term:</b> Participants report feeling less stressed, less lonely, and more connected to a supportive community, along with increased positivity and reduced feelings of helplessness after the sessions.</p> <p><b>Medium term:</b> Participants report learning how to cope with the stress associated with abusive relationships and purposefully incorporating coping techniques into their everyday lives, resulting in progress in their mental wellbeing.</p>	<p>The project used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to measure the indicators, changes in participants' knowledge, wellbeing, and behaviors.</p> <p><b>Quantitative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sociodemographic information documented to contextualize program subgroups.</li> <li>• Pre and post-surveys measured participants' mental wellbeing, stress coping techniques, and social connections.</li> <li>• pre- and post-surveys assessed knowledge about services supporting victims of family violence.</li> <li>• Attendance records documented for all sessions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualitative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screening intake process assessed participants readiness for program and provided safety and mental health context.</li> <li>• Exit one-on-one interviews if a participant left the group prematurely.</li> <li>• 3 month follow-up call (virtual, phone or in person).</li> <li>• 6 month focus group discussion (in person).</li> <li>• Facilitators' debrief notes recorded following each program session and at end of program.</li> <li>• Art therapists' and project coordinator's logs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Short term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% reported higher levels of positivity and a reduced sense of helplessness.</li> <li>• 98% reported enhanced social support and a stronger sense of community belonging.</li> <li>• 85% reported reduced stress levels.</li> <li>• 81% reported increased understanding of healthy relationships.</li> <li>• 91% reported a better understanding of their rights in Canada.</li> <li>• 79% reported greater awareness of available support services.</li> <li>• 77% reported improved willingness to access and utilize support services.</li> <li>• 100% shared experiences of violence through arts-based activities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 98% reported improved knowledge and skills in using tools and techniques to enhance mental health.</li> <li>• 100% stated they would recommend this project to friends from similar backgrounds.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Has the intervention reduced the risk and/or impact of family violence perpetration and/or victimization for the participants?</b></p>	<p><b>Short term:</b> Participants report a stronger understanding of healthy relationships and their rights in Canada, increased knowledge of available support services, greater willingness to access or consider support services, and engagement in sharing experiences of violence through arts and project-organized social activities.</p> <p><b>Medium term:</b> Participants report accessing support services for victims of family violence.</p>		
<p><b>What would be the unique considerations when working with different vulnerable populations?</b></p>	<p><b>Short term:</b> Participants report high satisfaction with the cultural sensitivity of the project, and find the activities appropriate to their age, gender, linguistic, and/or ethnic identities.</p> <p><b>Medium term:</b> Participants report that they would recommend this project to friends from similar backgrounds.</p>		