

HEAL Cycle: Program & Evaluation

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. Its primary objective is to evaluate the efficacy of an expressive arts intervention aimed at improving the mental health and wellness of newcomer women survivors of domestic violence. The Theory of Change outlines a clear and structured pathway through which the expressive arts intervention can lead to positive and lasting impacts. It emphasizes the importance of capacity building, community engagement, and ongoing evaluation as critical factors for success.

Long-Term Partnerships (Approximately 18 months)

Pre-Program

In-Program

Post-Program

Months 1 – 4: Onboarding Partner Organizations and Facilitation team

- Onboard and train facilitation team, volunteers, and students to HEAL Program.
 - Art based and safety protocol training
 - Domestic Violence course
 - TCPS 2: Research Ethics
 - PHIPA & data security training
- Outreach and recruit 2 - 3 months prior to program start. Screening conducted with interested participants.
- Site visit to ensure program space is suitable for an expressive arts program.

Months 5 – 8 : HEAL Program Implementation among Newcomer Community

- Facilitation team implemented the 12 -session HEAL Program (12 or 6 weeks).
- Guest speakers invited or 3 sessions on different topics.
- Facilitator debrief sessions conducted following each program session.
- Follow-up referrals conducted with participants needing support beyond program.
- Facilitation team conducts an exit interview to document learnings and growth areas.

Months 9–10: Arts & Culture

- Arts and Culture Socials are arranged for participants, their friends and family.
- Arts and Culture sites include: Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), Textile Museum of Canada, community art events and other sites that suit population of focus.
- 3 month follow-up call is scheduled with participants during the site visit.
- Ongoing and follow-up referrals are made for participants needing additional support.

Month 11: Follow-Up Call

- Follow-Ups are conducted by per researchers via phone, virtual or in-person.
- Aim is to assess the impact of the program after 3 months end of program. Measures adoption of program learnings and vulnerability of participants.
- Participants are provided information about upcoming Arts and Culture Socials and other agency community programs and resources.
- Participants invited to share if they want to stay connected with agencies involved.

Month 14: Focus Group Discussion

- Focus groups are conducted in person with the program group at the same location as programs.
- Aim is to assess impact of the program after 6 months end of program. Measures adoption of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour changes.
- These sessions are art based and act as a reunion for many participants, a reconnection.
- Participants invited to share if they want to stay connected with agencies involved.

Month 15 Onwards: Referrals and Arts for Mental Wellbeing Community Programs

- Participants are invited to engage in continued art based mental health and wellness programs at Access Alliance or externally.
- Volunteer opportunities for interested participants are offered to strengthen belonging in the community.
- Participants invited to share if they want to stay connected with agencies involved.
- Facilitation team continues to be a resource of support.

