

#16Days of Activism: Sample Posts

Healing Through Arts



For this year's [#16Days](#) Of Activism, we're highlighting healing arts for newcomer family wellbeing. Creative expression is a powerful tool for trauma recovery, resilience, and healing, especially for newcomer families impacted by gender-based violence (GBV) and resettlement.

In talking about how art frees us to rethink perspectives and possibilities, Izumi Sakamoto shares:

- **Arts-based approaches help survivors and newcomer families challenge harmful stereotypes**, and the silencing effects of GBV. By creating space for storytelling and expression, these approaches also raise awareness about the systemic barriers many continue to face.
- **Creative practices allow us to rethink what safety, healing, and justice** can look like for those affected by GBV. The arts invite us to step beyond our assumptions to see the experiences of survivors and newcomers through a more compassionate, trauma-informed lens.
- **Engaging in the arts frees us from rigid ways of understanding violence** and community support. It opens pathways to more expansive, survivor-centered, and justice-oriented approaches that help newcomer families rebuild their lives.

Follow us for the next 16 days to learn more about harnessing the power of art for newcomer family wellbeing. [#AccessAlliance](#) [#16DaysOfActivism](#) [#ForAllWomenAndGirls](#) [#ArtsInHealth](#)

Access Alliance
New Beginnings for Newcomers. #16Days

“ For survivors of gender-based violence, art allows trauma to be expressed and processed in the body, offering healing without the need to verbalize or justify experiences that are often misunderstood.

Maggie To
Coordinator - Community Education
Gender-Based Violence Project

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

As we mark [#16DaysofActivism](#), we reminded of how powerful expressive arts can be in supporting newcomers and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV).

Maggie To shares the following about art's healing properties:

- **Trauma lives in the body, not just the mind.** For many survivors of gender-based violence, especially newcomers navigating resettlement stress, language barriers, and cultural stigma, speaking about their experiences can feel overwhelming. Healing arts offer another pathway: movement, visual creation, rhythm, and sound. A safe space to feel, release, and process at one's own pace.
- **Everyone is creative.** Creativity brings joy, self-expression, imagination, and community connection, all essential elements of healing after experiences of violence and displacement. For newcomer families, creative engagement can restore a sense of belonging and rebuild trust in themselves and in others.
- In arts-based spaces, **participants aren't "patients" or "clients"** they become creators, storytellers, and meaning-makers of their own journeys. For survivors of GBV, this shift matters: art doesn't just heal — it empowers. It reconnects. It humanizes. It helps individuals reclaim voice, agency, and possibility.

Follow us for more on the power of art in supporting survivors of GBV.

[#accessalliance](#) [#ArtsInHealth](#) [#16Days](#)

“ Art becomes sustainable when it is supported and recognized. When a community is nourished, people gain the strength to connect, grow, and support one another, creating deeper roots that make everyone healthier. ”

Roxanna Vahed

Expressive Arts Therapist



16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

As we honour [#16DaysOfActivism](#), we're reminded of how sustainable art programs benefit individuals and communities impacted by gender-based violence (GBV).

In sharing insights into what's needed to grow and maintain expressive arts programs, Roxanna Vahed points out that:

- **Creative spaces spark healing.** When personal experiences are held in safe, supported, creative environments, they can become catalysts for healing. For survivors of GBV, creative expression can transform pain into insight and voice.
- **Being seen matters.** The arts can help survivors of GBV share parts of themselves that are often ignored or misunderstood. Being witnessed in this way restores dignity, agency, and self-worth. This is a vital steps towards healing after violence.
- **Support ripples outward.** When we offer art-focused support for trauma healing, people go home with fuller hearts and communities grow stronger. For those impacted by GBV, these shifts are life-changing. Creative support strengthens entire family systems and helps build safer, more connected communities.

Follow us this week for more on how we're taking action with art to support newcomer survivors of gender-based violence. [#16Days](#) [#ArtsInHealth](#) [#AccessAlliance](#)

“ Sustainable change . . . comes from valuing and supporting artists, ensuring their work is recognized, compensated, and preserved to leave a lasting legacy.”

Andrea Charise

Associate Vice-Principal Research & Innovation, & Associate Professor at the Department of Health & Society, University of Toronto Scarborough



16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

As we honour [#16DaysOfActivism](#), we're reminded of how expressive arts can spark transformation from the individual level all the way to policy and systems change.

Andrea Charise shares her thoughts on the need to build and maintain sustainable arts practices:

- **Sustainability builds legacy.** Sustainability in arts-based healing isn't only about program continuation, it's about legacy. It means ensuring that expressive arts, storytelling, and community-led creative practices remain visible, accessible, and valued throughout the year.
- **Digital tools extend impact.** Sustainability also includes exploring opportunities for digital archiving, so the work can be preserved, shared, and learned from across communities and generations.
- **Artists are essential.** As expressive arts continue to integrate into health care and community support systems, one principle must be upheld: artists are vital members of these teams, contributing expertise, creativity, and healing to survivor-centered practices.

Follow us for more expert ideas on how and why expressive arts programming can support better health care for newcomer survivors of gender-based violence.

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“
**Art is so powerful.
It transcends boundaries
and serves as a bridge for
human connection, beyond
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silos that divide us.**

Arshia Ali
Board Chair, Access Alliance

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

As we observe [#16DaysOfActivism](#), we're reminded of how art transcends boundaries and connects us all.

Arshia Ali encourages us to consider the power of art to bring us closer, sharing:

- Art connects us. Art is so powerful. It transcends boundaries and serves as a bridge for human connection, beyond language and the silos that divide us. For newcomer families impacted by gender-based violence, creative expression opens pathways to understanding, empathy, and shared healing.
- **Expression builds bridges.** Through movement, visual art, music, and storytelling, survivors and communities can communicate experiences that words alone cannot capture. These shared moments foster trust, belonging, and connection across cultural and generational divides.
- **Creativity transforms communities.** When we support arts-based initiatives, we strengthen not just individuals, but entire families and communities. Creative practices help rebuild resilience, restore dignity, and create spaces where everyone can be seen, heard, and valued.

Follow us for more on how arts-based actions can help newcomer survivors of gender-based violence connect, rebuild, and heal. [#AccessAlliance](#) [#16Days](#) [#ArtsInHealth](#)



The journey continues.

We've reached the end of this year's [#16DaysOfActivism](#), but healing through the arts is just beginning! Over the past two weeks, we've explored how creative expression helps newcomer families heal from trauma, build resilience, and foster meaningful connections.

Introducing the Arts Hub:

We're excited to share what's next: Access Alliance Arts for Family Health, a brand-new online resource featuring art-based activities, workshops, and tools to support healing and wellbeing in newcomer communities.

Why it matters:

This hub will be a space for newcomer families, community leaders, and service providers to connect, learn, and integrate the arts into their settlement and healing journeys.

Keep following us into the new year for more info on this great new initiative!
[#16Days](#) [#ArtsInHealth](#) [#AccessAlliance](#) [#AccessAllianceArts](#)