

Arts-Based Approaches to Advancing Youth Mental Health & Wellbeing

Part 2: Promising Practices in Action

#ArtsBasedMentalHealth

#YouthMentalHealth

#YouthWellbeing

#YouthREX



YOUTHREX
Research &
Evaluation eXchange



Welcome



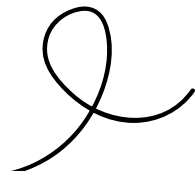

RECOGNIZING THE LAND & THE PEOPLE

Source: native-land.ca



RECOGNIZING THE LAND & THE PEOPLE

YouthREX's provincial office is located at York University. Both YouthREX and York University recognize that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. We acknowledge our presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.



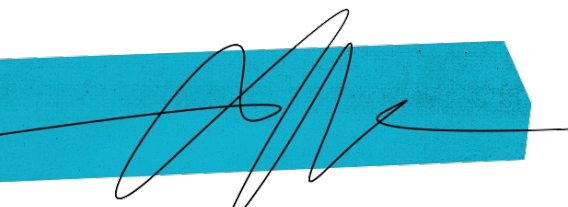
ABOUT YOUTHREX

OUR VISION

An Ontario where shared knowledge is transformed into positive impact for all youth.

OUR MISSION

To make research evidence and evaluation accessible and relevant to Ontario's youth sector through knowledge exchange, capacity building, and evaluation leadership.

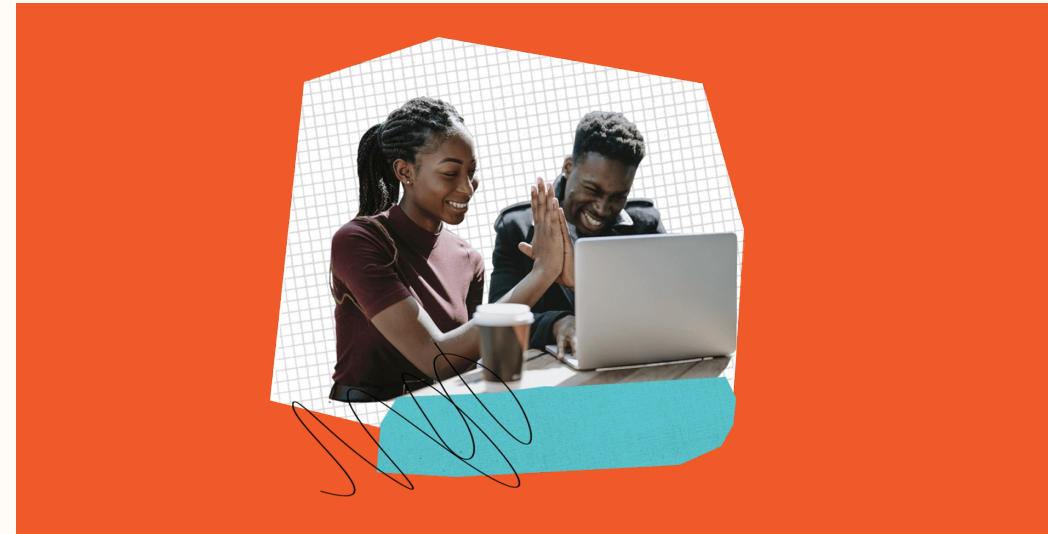


PROGRAM OBJECTIVES



Knowledge Exchange

We create and curate evidence-based resources to support youth work practice, and to amplify the voices and experiences of young people in Ontario.



Learn by YouthREX

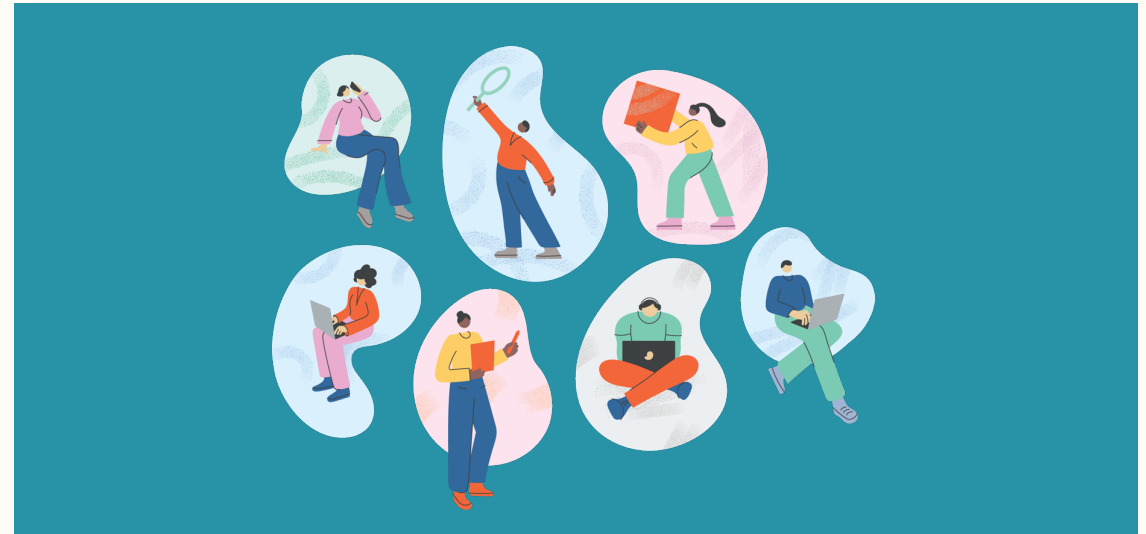
We offer professional development opportunities for youth workers to learn, connect, and share – both online and offline.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES



Youth Program Supports

We work with youth programs to support the design, development, and evaluation of their work with young people.



Community-Engaged Research

We conduct Community-Engaged Research about youth and youth workers in Ontario. Our first project – the Ontario Youth Sector Compass – was completed in November 2021.

ARTS FOR THE PROMOTION OF
YOUTH WELLBEING

EVIDENCE BRIEF OVERVIEW

Promising Practices to Deliver Arts-Based
Youth Programming to Support Mental Health
& Wellbeing



Photo credit : © Olivier Bousquet

Rocio Macabena Perez

*Doctoral candidate in psychoeducation
Coordinator and instigator of the Art In Mind program
School of Psychoeducation, University of Montreal*

Rocio Macabena Perez

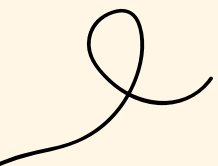
Coordinator and instigator of the Art In Mind program

Doctoral candidate in psychoeducation at the School of
Psychoeducation, University of Montreal

Art educator at *MU*, non-profit organization

Clinical staff in the *Transition Space* programs

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EVIDENCE BRIEF

Promising Practices to Deliver Arts-Based Youth Programming to Support Mental Health & Wellbeing

This Evidence Brief outlines key concepts and messages, and summarizes promising practices to deliver arts-based youth programming to support mental health and wellbeing. Developed by Rocio Macabena Perez for YouthREX, in partnership with Kim Archambault and Véronique Dupéré, Université de Montréal.

REFERENCES

For the complete Evidence Brief: [Knowledge Hub > Evidence Briefs](#)



WHAT IS ARTS IN/ FOR HEALTH?

The variety of arts-based interventions intended to improve health and wellbeing can be understood as existing along a continuum: *Creative Arts Therapies* to *Arts in/for Health and Wellbeing practices*

Arts in/for health: any artistic activity aimed at improving health and wellness in a clinical or community setting.

Premise: doing art is therapeutic in itself!

Four Key Messages

Photo credit: © Rocio Perez



01. Evidence supporting arts-based approaches is still developing, but promising.

Scientific evidence supporting arts programs and initiatives is **scarce** and relies mostly on studies with some **methodological issues**.

However, art and health initiatives and programs are **appreciated by the community** – as reflected by the **growth of the field**, and the diversity of the clientele and environments in which they are implemented.



02. There are benefits to arts-based interventions for youth.

Benefits are broad and tend to be clientele-specific. Social bonding and a sense of belonging are common benefits.

Mental health (e.g., decreased anxiety and depressive symptoms)

Physical health

Skills and self-perception

Critical action (i.e., getting involved in activities that challenge injustice)

Psychoeducation (e.g., learning about health issues)

School engagement



03. Arts-based approaches are accessible to diverse youth.

Diverse art forms (e.g., performing arts; visual arts; literature; digital).

Attractive for youth with mental health/challenging situations because they tend to be more playful, relaxing, and less stigmatizing than other approaches.



04. Art can be used to mitigate social inequalities and inequities.

Links between arts in/for health initiatives and its benefits are not always obvious or direct.

Can have a positive effect on the social determinants of health: for example, engaging youth experiencing marginalization can tackle social challenges, such as inclusion and discrimination.



11 Promising Practices for Delivering Arts-Based Youth Programming

Photo credit: © Rocio Perez



TO DELIVER EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

- 1 Foster youth's strengths:** programs can be designed so that they target the development of the 5 Cs, which are competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring.
- 2 Create and promote a safe and caring environment:** art is a great way to express oneself; youth, especially those with challenges, should be supported to feel safe.
- 3 Promote positive and egalitarian relationships between staff and participants:** staff that are willing to connect, listen, and offer leadership opportunities with youth with challenging and complex needs.

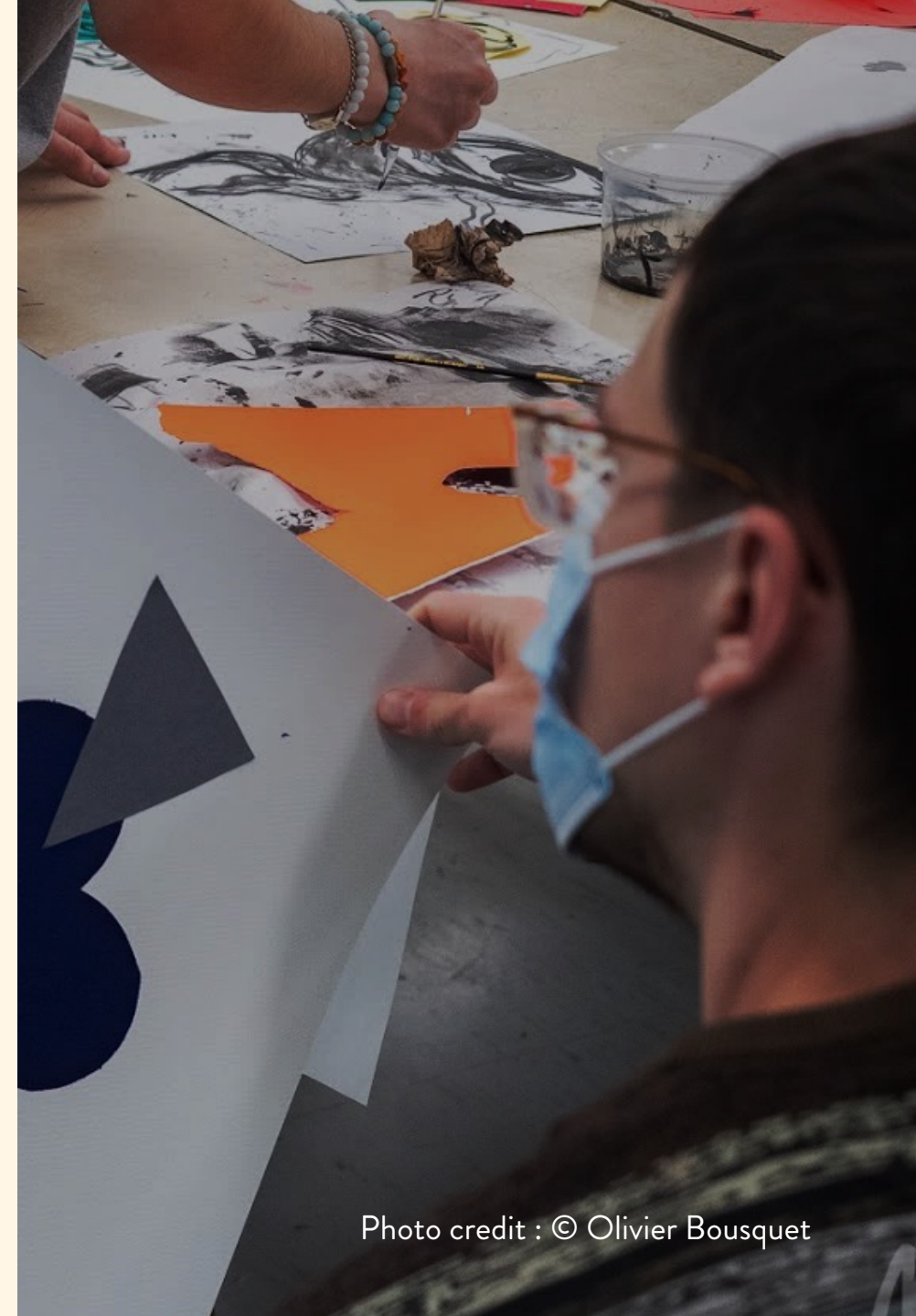


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TO DELIVER EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

- 4 **Involve professional artists:** they have a critical understanding of the creative process. Once again, as a significant figure in the program, an artist who is well chosen is important when working with youth with challenging and complex needs.
- 5 **Make your program challenging and engaging:** provide ongoing opportunities and experiences that keep youth involved (e.g. explore different art materials, leadership opportunities to create).
- 6 **Exhibit the youth's work:** it is a special moment in which youth receive feedback from an audience and a sense of recognition.

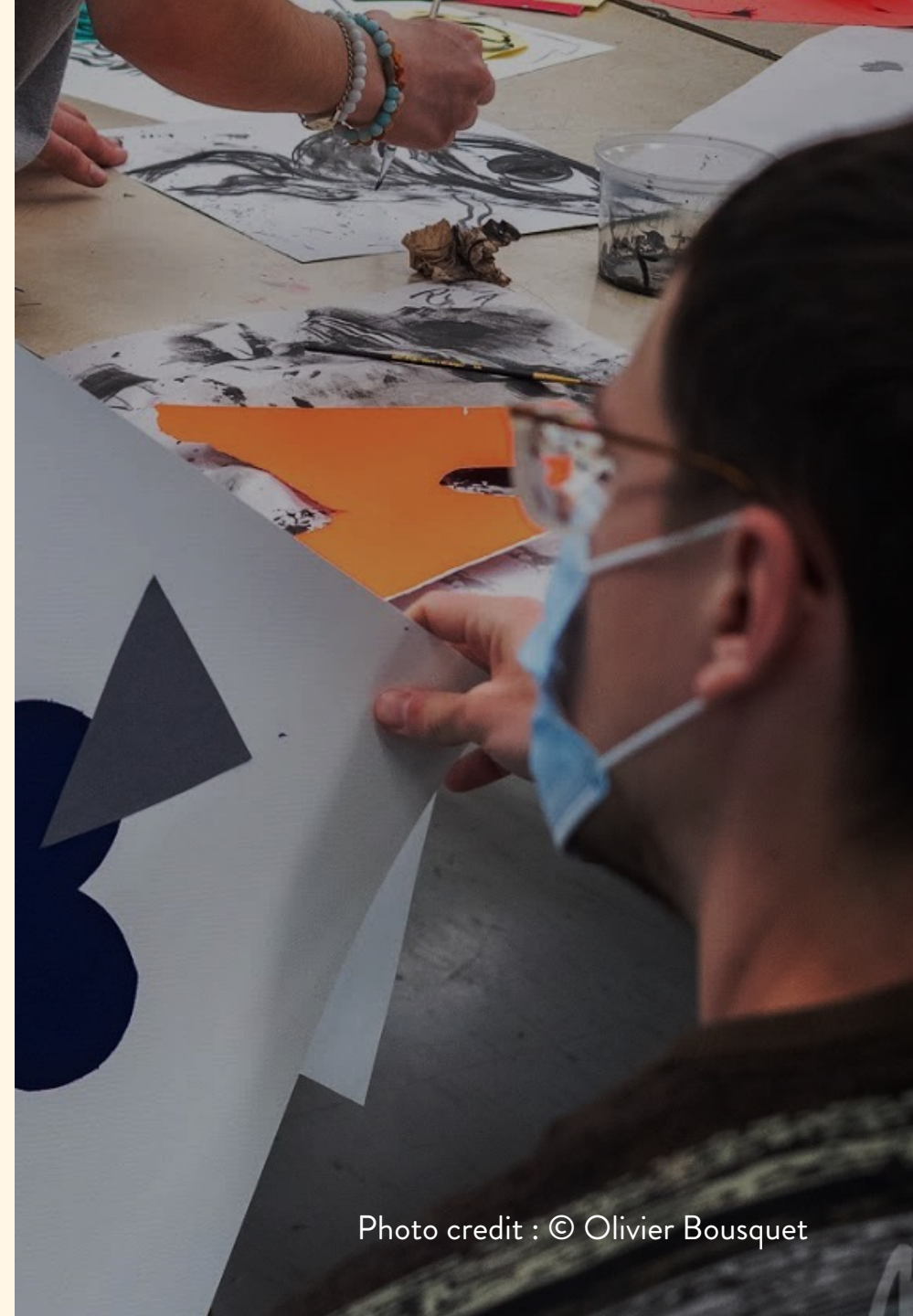


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TO EVALUATE PROGRAMS



Learn about similar projects/programs that target the same or similar youth populations, and that may inform you on the best practices or challenges in the field.



Partner with other organizations to support youth in the best ways possible (e.g., community partners, arts practitioners, and social workers) to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all.



Consider mixed-methods approaches to gathering evidence, such as questionnaires, but also interviews and images.



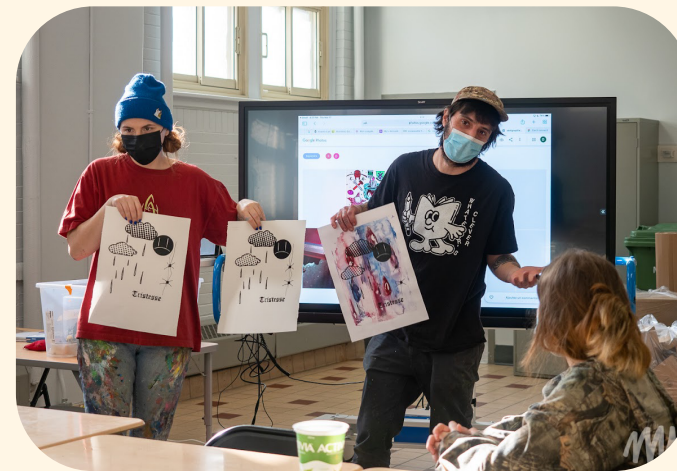
Be specific when defining your program's outcomes and how you will evaluate them. This will help you to assess the resources for your evaluation and provide strong conclusions.



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ART IN MIND

Extracurricular arts program to support the psychosocial and academic adjustment of high school students with socio-emotional difficulties.





MU: non-profit organization
founded in 2007

Large-scale murals and projects in
schools and communities.

Leave Your Mark Program

Over 15 years in Montreal schools

Project carried out in a Montreal High School



**Transition Space project:
founded in 2009**

**Delivery of activity-
based, recovery-focused
art programs for youth**

© Perez 2022





COLLABORATIVE, PARTNERSHIP-BASED & CROSS-SECTORAL



COMMUNITY

Maintaining the field-tested format



HOSPITAL

Inclusion of means to promote youth involvement and perseverance: psychosocial support and mixed group format



ACADEMIA

Evaluation by a team of researchers from the University of Montreal



SCHOOL

Implemented in Montreal schools

WHO IS THE PSYCHOSOCIAL SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF?



Who: a school team member (e.g., special educator, teacher, guidance counsellor, etc.)

In other words: the program ambassador



Roles: recruitment, make up the groups, safety net, perseverance and engagement support



Means: constant and benevolent presence at the workshops, modulate interventions according to the needs, liaison with families and/or relevant teams



Training/supervision: offered by the program coordinator and the Sainte-Justine UHC Transition Space Laboratory



Photo credit : © Olivier Bousquet

DOCUMENT AND SHARE YOUR FINDINGS!

In this way, we can contribute
to the recognition of arts-
based practices and pinpoint
the benefits for youth!





FOR MORE INFORMATION

Rocio Macabena Perez

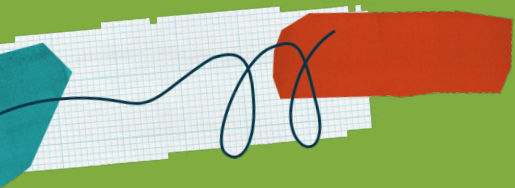
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<https://mumtl.org/>

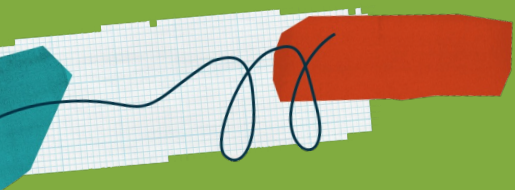
<https://www.etpsy.ca/>

CONVERSATION: PROMISING PRACTICES IN ACTION!



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Q&A



Thank you!

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