

**The Royal Conservatory's
Living Through the Arts Program
ARTS-REHAB PROJECT**

ARTS-REHAB UPDATE
April 2015



Hospital staff clinicians from Bridgepoint Active Healthcare participating in an ARTS-REHAB demo session led by Artist-Facilitator Jennifer Polo.

Background

With the generous support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, The Royal Conservatory's Living Through the Arts Program has initiated the ARTS-REHAB Project: a multi-year initiative that examines how meaningful engagement in a creative arts program can assist rehab patients to re-enter their communities sooner and more positively than under standard treatment regimes. The ARTS-REHAB Project takes a whole person approach to recovery by engaging specially-trained Artist-Facilitators to work with slow-stream rehabilitation patients in exploring themes such as: new personal stories & identities; sense of purpose; and positive images of the future. These Artist-Facilitators work in partnership with staff at eight Ontario hospitals for a period of 3-4 months each, delivering weekly sessions for a group of patients over the course of two years. By the end of the project cycle, the ARTS-REHAB Project hopes to have positively impacted the lives of hundreds of patients as well as demonstrated a new approach to whole person recovery treatment that can be adopted by hospitals across the province, throughout Canada and even around the world.

Research Study

Central to the ARTS-REHAB Project is a major research study that seeks to answer the question:

How can meaningful engagement in a creative arts program impact the personal and social wellness of patients in rehabilitation?

The ARTS-REHAB Project aims to describe and interpret the expectations and experiences of patients' evolving sense of self in recovery as informed by their participation in The Royal Conservatory's Living Through the Arts program. This creative arts program is designed to empower individuals and communities through artistic self-expression and creativity. Each art form in the program (i.e. visual arts, music, drama, creative movement, creative writing) is facilitated back-to-back over 3-4-month periods each year. For those patients receiving this arts intervention in addition to their rehabilitation activities, we expect to see a difference in the following primary measures: an increase in patients' sense of hope, optimism and future purpose; an increase in patients' engagement in their rehabilitation; and a decrease in their hospital length of stay.

We have been reflecting on the process of developing a program that fosters social wellness, as well as its related evaluative research study, and we have identified some key aims and aspects associated with the success of the ARTS-REHAB Project to date.

AIMS

- To work collaboratively in teams that include: RCM Project Leaders, Researchers, Artist-Facilitators & eight Ontario hospital partners
- To guide a creative process and follow a new curriculum that fosters the development of new stories & identities, a new sense of purpose, and positive images of the future
- To evaluate the impact of the Arts on patient engagement, optimism & length of recovery and hospital stay.

Key Aspects of Project Development

Critical to the project development process to date have been the following key activities:

1. Building Strong Partnerships:

- Hospitals acknowledge a need for rehab programs that focus on the wellbeing of the whole person, not just the physical.

2. Nurturing Open Communication:

- Processes are set up to build rapport between the arts world and the medical world.
- Project partners draw a link between arts programs, patient engagement & standard rehabilitation recovery regime.

3. Understanding Diverse Needs:

- Patients in slow-stream rehab have the greatest need for meaningful activity.
- The program model must be adaptable to hospitals' diverse processes, protocols, staffing, and available programming.

Hospital Partnerships

The ARTS-REHAB Project is set to partner with eight hospitals across Ontario.

	Confirmed Hospital Partners	Ethics status	Start Date
1	St. Joseph's Continuing Care Centre of Sudbury (Sudbury)	REB Approved	Mar 4, 2015
2	West Park Healthcare Centre (Toronto)	REB Approved	Mar 19, 2015
3	The Salvation Army Toronto Grace Health Centre (Toronto)	REB Approved	Apr 14, 2015
4	Bridgepoint Active Healthcare (Toronto)	REB Approved	Apr 16, 2015
5	St. Peter's Hospital (Hamilton)	REB Conditional Approval	May 2015
6	Hotel Dieu Grace Healthcare (Windsor)	REB to be submitted April/May 2015	June 2015

In Negotiation / Confirmation

- UHN – Toronto Rehabilitation Institute (Bickle Centre) (Toronto)
- St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG) (Thunder Bay)



Participants painted a large heart and background with paint of different vibrant colours thinking about what message they want to send to their heart.

Participant messages included:

- ❖ *My heart is ready to explore new things*
- ❖ *My heart is ready to support myself*
- ❖ *I believe in my heart*

Patient Recruitment

From July to October 2014, The Royal Conservatory's ARTS-REHAB Project Research Study conducted an 8-week pilot study at Bridgepoint Active Healthcare and West Park Healthcare Centre in Toronto. This pilot version of the study focused solely on the *feasibility* of operationalizing the creative arts program and data collection processes with the target slow-stream rehabilitation patient population. One of the key learnings that arose from this pilot study was the need to streamline the process of patient recruitment whereby a Royal Conservatory representative meets with prospective participants (who have been identified as eligible patients by hospital staff) to obtain their written consent as well as to guide them through the pre- (and post) study questionnaires

Now that we have begun our two-year study at our first four hospital sites, it has quickly become clear that this recruitment process will vary slightly depending upon hospital protocols and organizational structures. Some of the new learnings gained from the recruitment process to date centre around the importance of timing and communication:

- Balancing a sense of urgency to recruit consistently each week while respecting the patients' pace and energy-level;
- Building relationships with the hospital team (i.e. intake assessors and in-session clinicians), and establishing a consistent process for effective communication;
- Building personal rapport with the patient to facilitate deep and sensitive data collection. As part of our data sets, we are listening to very personal and individual journeys through health, illness, and recovery, and this requires a sense of safe and caring space to be created around the patient as they share their stories.



A participant at Bridgepoint Active Healthcare displaying her "Journey Book" created in an ARTS-REHAB session led by Artist-Facilitator Jennifer Polo.

Leadership Team

The ARTS-REHAB Project has a strong Leadership Team consisting of:

- Managing Director – Jason van Eyk
- Project Manager – Nicole Arends
- Research Manager – Dr. Lisa Meschino
- Hamilton Project Leader – Laurie Pye
- Sudbury Project Leader – Suzanne McCrae
- Thunder Bay Project Leader – Vicki Gigliotti
- Windsor Project Leader – Sherry Campeau

Several of these team members hold various responsibilities such as: hospital liaison, patient recruitment and tracking, Artist-Facilitator training and mentorship, session observation, transcriber, and some also do creative arts session delivery. This team meets on a monthly basis (via conference call) to share experiences from the different hospital sites and to share best practices for recruitment, program delivery and research success.

Artist-Facilitator Training

The ARTS-REHAB Project has conducted project-specific training for over 30 Artist-Facilitators from across Ontario. We have handpicked our most seasoned Artist-Facilitators for this training – those who have been working with The Royal Conservatory's Living Through the Arts program for close to 10 years; who have experience collaborating with vulnerable populations; and those who specialize in adapting to the needs of the diverse participants present in the room.

Artist-Facilitator training has focussed on:

- ARTS-REHAB Curriculum (6 Themes)
 - Health / Recovery
 - New Identities
 - Creating New Stories
 - Sense of Purpose
 - Positive Images of the Future
- The Role of Imagination and Metaphor
- Storytelling
- The Power of Affirmations
- Session Structure (*like a journey from beginning to end*)
- Interdisciplinary Sessions (*session facilitation using more than one arts discipline*)
- Effective approaches to working with slow-stream rehab patients
- Demo sessions for hospital staff
- Partnering with Clinicians
- Shared session ideas



ARTS-REHAB Artist-Facilitators
Angela Pepin (Sudbury) and Sara Dickinson (Hamilton)
participate in a sample "Imagination" movement warm-up
led by Artist-Facilitator Jennifer Hicks

Knowledge Transfer

Throughout this 4-year project, we plan to not only document our research and map our learning, but also to present our findings at conferences and in publications as a means to share knowledge and generate dialogue around the program and processes used in the ARTS-REHAB Project. As we solidify our program approach and as we collect positive research results, we will equally aim to create a program model that is transferable to any hospital setting.

As part of our Knowledge Transfer plans, we will present at the following conferences:

- **Canadian Network for Arts and Learning (CNAL)**
 - March 25, 2015 – The Royal Conservatory (Toronto)
- **Power of the Arts National Forum**
 - Nov 6-8, 2015 – Carleton University (Ottawa)
- **Canadian Gerontology Conference**
 - 2016



When Artist-Facilitator, Michelle Silagy, passed around a large blue balloon as part of a creative movement activity, one participant held it high over his head and stated "I'm holding the world in my hands!"

Long Term Vision

Our long-term vision for the ARTS-RHAB Project is to build knowledge translation resources that:

- Support a sustainable model of creative arts programming for social wellness
- Advocate for changes in health policy regarding the value of the Arts in recovery
- Embed ARTS-REHAB as a key program in every Ontario hospital

Quotes from participants in the ARTS-REHAB Pilot study

“A warm and enlightening experience.”

“These sessions gave me courage to carry on. I see hope in the future. New life. Sense of new life springing from my heart.”

“I feel very happy and excited. I know more friends. We exchange (share) artwork at the end of the session. Very interesting. I am very involved.”

“Made me realize that I can do things (all things) with guidance and support.”

“It opened up a wide range of personal abilities.”

“Through the sessions I noticed that I can do things - encouraged me to move forward.”

“I realize that I have talent in art. Exciting to realize that you can do many things that you never imagined before.”

“It told me that I was better than I thought!”

For more information about the ARTS-REHAB Project, please contact:

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St. Joseph's Continuing Care Centre Of Sudbury
Centre de soins continus St-Joseph de Sudbury