


TRAUMA-INFORMED DANCE INTERVENTION




Sole Expression

Presented By:

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SOLE EXPRESSION

UNITY dance demonstration at launch

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGUwxtTHHv0>



BOOST CHILD & YOUTH ADVOCACY CENTRE

- Co-located services that provide a coordinated multi-disciplinary team approach to the investigation, prosecution, treatment and prevention of child abuse
- Toronto's CYAC includes:
 - Police
 - Child protection
 - Medical services
 - Mental health clinicians
 - Advocacy Program
- A comfortable, private setting that is both physically and psychologically safe for diverse populations of children, youth and their families



<https://boostforkids.org/programs/cyac/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDpusKCYTXs>



BOOST CHILD & YOUTH ADVOCACY CENTRE

PREVENTION & PUBLIC EDUCATION

- Training and support in child abuse prevention, recognition and Intervention
- Helping children to develop the skills and knowledge that lessens their vulnerability to abusive situations and increases their understanding of healthy relationships (*I'm A Great Kid/ I'm A Great Little Kid* programs)

CHILD VICTIM WITNESS SUPPORT PROGRAM

- Individual/group preparation for child/youth victims and/or witnesses required to testify in court
- Support group for non-offending parents

COORDINATION & SUPPORT

- Training & support to systems that respond to child abuse (e.g., Police, Child Protection, Education, Crown Attorneys)
- Toronto's first Child & Youth Advocacy Centre



BOOST CHILD & YOUTH ADVOCACY CENTRE

INTERNET CHILD EXPLOITATION (ICE) PROVINCIAL COUNSELLING PROGRAM

- Provides referrals to short-term counselling for child, youth and their family members anywhere in Ontario

ASSESSMENT DIRECTED THERAPY PROGRAM

- Provides assessment and therapy for children/youth coping with the trauma of abuse/violence (verified by CAS and/or Police)
- Support group for non-offending caregivers
- Expressive art groups
- Trauma-informed yoga group
- Relationship Skills for Violence Prevention (RSVP) group



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PARTNERSHIPS



PARTNERSHIPS: UNITY



PARTNERSHIPS: UNITY



PARTNERSHIPS: UNITY

Unity – Video

BOOST
BUILDING OUTREACH AND SUPPORT THROUGH TEAMWORK

PARTNERSHIPS: RYERSON UNIVERSITY



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BUILDING OUTREACH AND SUPPORT THROUGH TEAMWORK

OVERVIEW OF GROUP

- 10 week trauma-informed dance group
- Hip Hop
- 2 hours/once a week
- 12 – 14 youth participants per group
- Transportation and dinner included



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BUILDING OUTREACH AND SUPPORT THROUGH TEAMWORK

OVERVIEW OF GROUP

Eligibility:

- 12 - 18 years old
- All genders
- Currently on a waitlist for trauma services within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)
- Experienced relational trauma
 - physical abuse/assault
 - sexual abuse/assault
 - exposure to family or community violence
 - neglect
 - traumatic grief



OVERVIEW OF GROUP

Staff:

- Two dance instructors (Unity) and two trauma therapists (Boost)
- All facilitators interviewed and selected to facilitate based on their:
 - experience;
 - knowledge;
 - interests; and
 - ability to work with a highly vulnerable population



RESEARCH

Hypothesis:

- Intervention will decrease trauma symptoms

Design:

- Mixed methods

Data Collection:

- Pre- and post-measures:
 - TSCC (Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children); and
 - MASC (Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children)
- Focus groups with youth and facilitators



RESEARCH

Process:

- Three group pilot
- Adapt intervention based on feedback from the youth and facilitators
- Train facilitators at Child Advocacy Centre of Simcoe Muskoka to run the intervention through their agency
- Disseminate intervention across Canada through program manual and facilitator training

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Bridging Our Ongoing Support Tools

TRAUMA RECOVERY

“Recovery is based upon the empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections.”

(Herman, 1992)

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Bridging Our Ongoing Support Tools

TRAUMA-INFORMED PRINCIPLES

1. Trauma Awareness
2. Emphasis on Safety and Trustworthiness
3. Opportunities for Choice, Collaboration and Connection
4. Strengths Based and Skill Building
5. Cultural Responsiveness

(BC Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use Planning Council, 2013)

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Bridging Our Ongoing Support Tools

SAFETY

- Participants are on the waitlist
 - less is known about them
 - may be at the beginning of their process
 - may be more destabilized
- Phase oriented approach
 - strong focus on safety and stabilization



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SAFETY

Before:

- Trauma training for all facilitators
 - Before and after survey completed by facilitators to assess effectiveness of the training
- Prescreening of potential participants
 - Helps to determine if it is safe for the youth to participate in the group at this time

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SAFETY

During:

- Curriculum Design – the purpose of the group is not to process trauma memories, but rather to focus on the first phase of trauma recovery (safety and stabilization)
- The second trauma therapist is on site at all times in case of an emergency

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SAFETY

After:

- Youth and facilitators are provided a list of supportive resources within the community that can be accessed if additional support is required in between sessions
- Youth can access one-on-one supportive counselling, if required, through their home agency while participating in the group
- Weekly supervision for trauma therapists

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BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES OUT OF STRAIGHT TALK

WHY DANCE?

- Trauma is held in the body
- Dance is used as a vehicle to address the core capacities directly impacted by relational trauma by accessing both the mind and body to help the youth develop skills for:
 - building healthy connections with others
 - empowerment
 - self-awareness, expression and regulation
 - healthy self-perspective



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BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES OUT OF STRAIGHT TALK

WHY DANCE?

Dance may promote:

- Movement as opposed to immobilization
- Emotional and physiological regulation through the patterned, rhythmic movement
- Feeling grounded in the present
- Body/physiological awareness

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BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES OUT OF STRAIGHT TALK

WHY DANCE?

Dance may promote (cont'd):

- The connection between mind and body
- An overall sense of connection to oneself as opposed to detachment
- Creating a positive connection to the body as opposed to negative
 - e.g., My body is “failing me”, is “used,” “dirty,” “powerless”
 - The aim is to experience the body as powerful, healthy, and your own – one you have control over

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WHY HIP HOP?



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WHY HIP HOP?

- Hip Hop culture and knowledge
- Identifying and bringing forth existing core strengths
- Story-telling and meaning-making
- Empowerment
- Community



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OVERALL BENEFIT OF GROUPS

- Provides a safe space
- Increased sense of not being alone – decrease isolation
- Create a support system and a safety-net
- Facilitate receiving and giving support



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OVERALL BENEFIT OF GROUPS

- Sounding board – offering hope, inspiration, encouragement and sometimes suggestions
- Help find one's voice
- Help relate to self and others in healthier ways
- Opportunities for building social skills



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CURRICULUM

Created in collaboration with:

- Senior trauma therapist (Boost)
- Senior dance facilitator (Unity)
- Support and consultation from both agencies and Ryerson University
- Feedback from Advisory Committee that includes previous Boost and Unity clients

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TRAUMA-INFORMED PRINCIPLES

1. Trauma Awareness
2. Emphasis on Safety and Trustworthiness
3. Opportunities for Choice, Collaboration and Connection
4. Strengths Based and Skill Building
5. Cultural Responsiveness

(BC Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use Planning Council, 2013)

BOOST
BRAIN ONSET OF SUBSTANCE TREATMENT

HOW IS IT TRAUMA-INFORMED?

1. Trauma Awareness

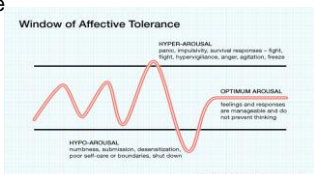
- All facilitators will complete trauma training
- One facilitator will be a trauma therapist

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BRAIN ONSET OF SUBSTANCE TREATMENT

HOW IS IT TRAUMA-INFORMED?

2. Emphasis on Safety and Trustworthiness

- Predictability (e.g., time, space, schedule)
- Co-created community guidelines
- Working within the individual's window of tolerance



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BRAIN ONSET OF SUBSTANCE TREATMENT

HOW IS IT TRAUMA-INFORMED?

2. Emphasis on Safety and Trustworthiness (cont'd)

- Curriculum carries the element of a coherent story (start-middle-end) and promotes organizing of individual's own experience
- Creating meaning-making through dance and story, trauma-related discussions stemming from dance experiences (e.g., emotions and most common ways of protection)

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BUILDING OUR OWN STRENGTHS THROUGH TRAUMA-INFORMED DANCE

HOW IS IT TRAUMA-INFORMED?

3. Opportunities for Choice, Collaboration, and Connection

- Youth will be strongly encouraged to adapt dance movements and activities to their comfort level
- Facilitators will regularly offer suggested adaptations
- All levels of participation are welcomed
- Curriculum focus flows from individual toward community

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BUILDING OUR OWN STRENGTHS THROUGH TRAUMA-INFORMED DANCE

HOW IS IT TRAUMA-INFORMED?

4. Strengths Based and Skill Building

- Makes use of the youth's interest in dance and Hip Hop
- Easily adaptable to meet youth's individual strengths and needs
- Rich skill building opportunities integrated throughout the curriculum

5. Cultural Responsiveness

- Recognition that trauma can be experienced differently by different people

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BUILDING OUR OWN STRENGTHS THROUGH TRAUMA-INFORMED DANCE

CURRICULUM

3 Phases of Group:

Weeks 1 – 3: Individual Process

Weeks 4 – 6: Group Work

Weeks 7 – 10: Self Within a Community

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CURRICULUM

Weeks 1 – 3: Individual Process

- Group structure, introduction to movement and safety
- Connect with the body:
 - Create a sense of trust in capacity to move and engage
 - Create a comfort zone directly connected to the body
- Explore internal states through dance, movement and experiential exercises
 - Promotes connectedness, self-identity and a sense of being "me"

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CURRICULUM

Weeks 1 – 3: Individual Process

- Storytelling through movement
- Emotional awareness and expression
- Little or no contact between the participants other than sharing the same space and exploring the same exercises and techniques
- Focus on creating safety and stability

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CURRICULUM

Weeks 1 – 3: Individual Process

- EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISE #1
 - Mindfulness and Grounding

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HOW IS IT TRAUMA-INFORMED?

Trauma-Informed Principles:

- BEGINNING WEEKS (1-3) ROOT THE JOURNEY:
 - The body-mind tells the stories of the complexity and layers of our lives. Creating a safe holding space for participants to meet weekly will promote the sense of on-going-ness, predictability and containment, crucial for exploration within one's window of tolerance.

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CURRICULUM

Weeks 4 – 6: Group Work

- Integration weeks: interactions with each other are gently encouraged
- Connecting, listening, and acknowledging each other facilitated through movement, educational and experiential pieces
- Introduction to the cypher and awareness of connection and community
- Building the cypher and energy projection

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CURRICULUM

Weeks 4 – 6: Group Work

- EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISE #2
 - Self-Calming and Regulation



HOW IS IT TRAUMA-INFORMED?

Trauma-Informed Principles:

- RESTORING THE CONNECTION (self, outside, others)
 - Traumatic experiences disrupt ongoing identity, brain chemistry and basic physiological functioning. Creating transitional/transformational space allows the core/soul to re-emerge, unfreeze and reclaim vitality and trust.



CURRICULUM

Weeks 7 – 10: Self Within a Community

- Building community relationships, exploring and establishing a sense of self within a community
- Concepts, creativity and graffiti workshop
- Partnering and team building: connect with each other, build together, share more openly, act as a support mechanism for each other through the sessions
- Battling, group performance, test of skills, celebration




CURRICULUM

Weeks 7 – 10: Self Within a Community

- EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISE #3
 - Journaling Exercises

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HOW IS IT TRAUMA-INFORMED?

Trauma-Informed Principles:

- THE SELF, THE OTHER, AND THE COLLECTIVE
 - Repair:
 - “From forces to feelings to words”
 - The Four Containers:
 - (broken)-sensuous-human-transpersonal

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Questions Asked:

- *When you think of Sole Expression, what is the first thing that comes to your mind?*
- *What should we be aware of, or careful about?*
- *What would make you want to participate and come back?*
- *What is the one thing that you think would make the group engaging?*

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Advisory Committee Identified:

- Acceptance of the whole person, rather than seeing them simply through the lens of trauma
- Connecting to a "positive space"
- Safe space
- Comfortable
- Community and connectedness – being understood through movement
- To be mindful about communication and boundaries
- Mutual understanding of why we are in this group



ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Advisory Committee Identified (cont'd):

- Co-creating of a journey (self and others)
- Vulnerability and courage
- Circles (power of group work)
- Working on one's edge, taking chances and within one's zone
- To explore the individual's body space, as well as the group space
- Hip Hop and trauma – connected journey
- Gratitude



CLOSING

- EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISE #4
 - Standing on a Bridge Visualization



REFERENCES

BC Provincial Mental Health and Substance Use Planning Council. (2013). *Trauma-informed practice guide*. Retrieved from http://bccewh.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/2013_TIP-Guide.pdf

Herman, J. (1992). *Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence – from domestic abuse to political terror*. New York: Basic Books.



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