



Queen West
Central Toronto
Community Health Centre

Anti-Stigma Art Project

Recovery Oriented Art Based Workshop Series

In Partnership with CAMH

Project Coordinator: Lorraine Barnaby

Community Artist: Anna Camilleri

About the Project

- ▶ Component of the larger CAMH Anti-Stigma Research Project
- ▶ **Objective:** to confront and reduce stigma among providers & build capacity in PHC toward an anti-stigma, pro-recovery approach
- ▶ **Goal:** create safe space to explore the issue of stigma & acceptance associated with substance use & mental health through facilitated discussions and art making
- ▶ Recruited clients from diverse backgrounds & CTCHC staff to participate in weekly workshops
- ▶ Workshops co-facilitated by Health Promoter & Community Artist

Stigma

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the frame, creating a modern, layered effect. The rest of the background is plain white.

HCP - Negative Attitudes About People Who Use Substances:

- ▶ Drug Seekers
- ▶ Liars
- ▶ Addicts
- ▶ Dirty / Soiled
- ▶ Used Up
- ▶ Trash
- ▶ Hopeless
- ▶ Less Than
- ▶ Manipulators
- ▶ Repulsive
- ▶ One Dimensional
- ▶ Objects
- ▶ Bottom of the Barrel
- ▶ Problems That Need to be Fixed

HCP - Negative Attitudes About Mental Health Survivors:

- ▶ Unstable
- ▶ Uneducated & Stupid
- ▶ Unaccomplished
- ▶ Non-Functioning
- ▶ Faking It
- ▶ Isolated
- ▶ Crazy / Mad
- ▶ Non-Compliant
- ▶ Manipulators
- ▶ Lazy
- ▶ Dangerous
- ▶ Leaches / Parasites
- ▶ Walking Wounded / Professional Victim
- ▶ Losers

Impacts: Feelings, Behaviours & Health:

- ▶ **Difficulty getting help, distrustful of providers; makes it harder to follow treatment**
- ▶ **I wanted to find a place where I don't have to be afraid to be sick**
- ▶ **It makes me feel like my voice isn't being heard, & they aren't taking their time to listen to me**
- ▶ **Medical model features us as the great unwashed - causes me to distrust - when I do know more, I am dismissed**
- ▶ **Causes me to try to manipulate situations to balance out stigma. Then you hide things, then you lie - then people call you a liar**

Difficulty Getting Help Due to Appearance:

- ▶ I was pushed to the end of the line cause of how I looked
- ▶ I was told I didn't need help - I was too smart - too "high functioning"
- ▶ Just because I dress well and can keep up with self-care doesn't mean that I don't need access to health care

Worsened Health & Symptoms:

- ▶ Pushes non-compliance
- ▶ Become traumatized & triggered
- ▶ Increase in pain, stress, exhaustion & frustration
- ▶ Feel destabilized, overwhelmed & spiraling out of control
- ▶ Increase in hopelessness & apathy - don't want to do things I enjoy
- ▶ Isolation turns into depression, sometimes, that turns into suicidal thoughts
- ▶ Increase in paranoia & hallucinations - don't know what is real
- ▶ Increase in inner rage - want to punch things, hated everyone
- ▶ I felt fucked up, felt like shit, frustrated, scared, took a nose dive... it was a big effort to move from that place

Negative Impact on Sense of Self:

- ▶ Increase in negative self-talk, shame and self-blame
- ▶ Made me feel less worthy - not worth being who I am
- ▶ Start to believe negative attitudes
- ▶ I hardened myself

Acceptance

Being heard & seen

Empathy & emotional understanding

Non-judgmental

Open minded

Kindness

Compassion

Support

Impacts: Feelings, Behaviours & Health:

When everything is disconnected it reconnects you to humanity

- ▶ Raw, skeptical & guarded
- ▶ Accepted & connected
- ▶ Relaxed, relieved & safe
- ▶ Valued, wanted & worthy
- ▶ Hopeful, positive & invested
- ▶ Lowers your defenses
- ▶ Able to express freely
- ▶ More understanding & patient of others
- ▶ More open to listening
- ▶ More amendable & open to suggestions
- ▶ More centered & able to access intuition (gut instincts)
- ▶ Creates growth
- ▶ Increases self confidence
- ▶ Freedom to choose
- ▶ Don't feel like I'm a puppet on a string
- ▶ See HCP as a person rather than a boundary, stop manipulating & lying to them

Positive attitudes of providers:

- ▶ Respects and accepts me - sees the whole me & accepts my quirks
- ▶ Allows me to define myself
- ▶ Uses my proper pronoun/name
- ▶ Sees what I can do not what I can't do
- ▶ Respects my lived experience
- ▶ Respects my boundaries & choices
- ▶ Is willing to earn my trust/respect
- ▶ Listens & collaborates with me
- ▶ Doesn't label/stereotype me
- ▶ Sees me as a valuable community member
- ▶ Honors my intelligence, strength, resiliency & fearlessness
- ▶ Helps me tap into inner strength
- ▶ Meets me where I am at
- ▶ Allows me to do what I need to do
- ▶ Recognizes & accepts steps
- ▶ Doesn't give up on me
- ▶ Doesn't just try to get rid of me
- ▶ Doesn't fear me

- ▶ Puts themselves in their client's position
- ▶ Remembers the little things that makes managing a crisis easier
- ▶ Comfortable discussing mental health & substance use
- ▶ Treats my addiction for what it is
- ▶ Takes my drug use in context when prescribing medication
- ▶ Sees me as an expert with valuable experience & knowledge of my body, life, drugs & how they interact in my body
- ▶ Gives me enough time & doesn't waste my time
- ▶ Is flexible
- ▶ Values creativity & affirmations
- ▶ De-stresses the process
- ▶ Respects different tools & processes
- ▶ Doesn't assume because I am smart I don't have a mental health issue
- ▶ Doesn't measured me by my behavior
- ▶ Acknowledges medical system makes mistakes

What's working:

- ▶ They put you first
- ▶ Staff are open minded
- ▶ CTCHC encourages & nurtures growth, wholeness and recovery
- ▶ I know that they genuinely care. I can vent - they listen to me
- ▶ I feel as though no matter what, my problems will be taken into consideration
- ▶ Encourages me to keep doing what I need to do to be healthy & follow treatment
- ▶ Able to have an open conversation with my doctor about my drug use
- ▶ Spends at least twice as much time with me than a private practice doctor does
- ▶ They assist me through means that make sense to me, such as alternative medical treatments
- ▶ Great spirit of cooperation among staff