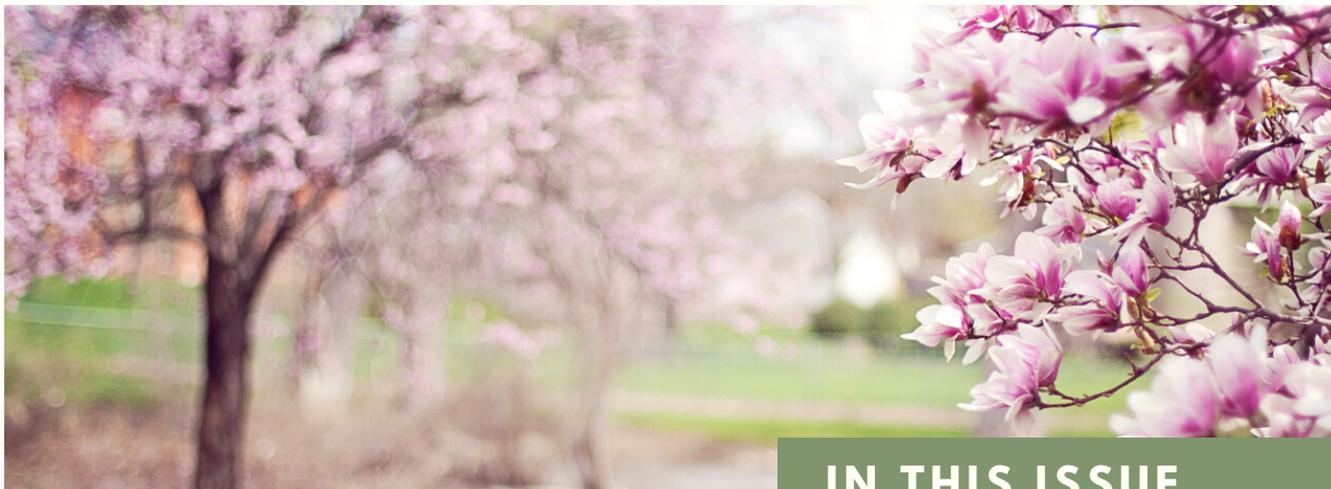


The Al & Malka Green
Artists' Health Centre



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Michener Institute



Announcements

The Free Virtual Wellness Workshop Series Is Finally Here!

The Artists' Health Centre just launched **free, virtual wellness workshops** starting March 2023.

Check out our workshops and **[SIGN UP HERE!](#)**



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This Issue's Contributors: Doyin Adeyale, Leisa Bellmore

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How to be a Healthy Performer

Free Virtual Workshop by Dr. Nana-Adjoa Bourne

MARCH 22ND & 29TH @2PM EST
MARCH 31ST @11AM EST

3-PART SERIES
JOIN HER ON ZOOM!

SIGN UP HERE



This 3-part workshop series will take you through how to have a healthy and sustainable career as a performer, offering new perspectives and easy tools geared towards helping you understand your health and optimizing your body movement.

This workshop will be facilitated by Naturopathic Doctor, Dr. Nana-Adjoa Bourne, whose expertise focuses on sports medicine and pain management. Dr. Bourne has extensive knowledge and experience working with performing artists and athletes in helping them live an active, lifestyle through both her clinical and field experience contributions.

Interview with Spotlight Practitioner

"A strong therapeutic relationship is essential for getting the best health outcomes."

Leisa Bellmore, MSc., ST

Since graduating with honours from Toronto's Shiatsu Academy of Tokyo in 2001, Leisa has supported patients through shiatsu and education. She is also a speaker and researcher with a MSc in Advanced Complementary Medicine Research and Practice, and has published in peer-review journals and presented around the world. Combined with her background in theatre, Leisa has a great understanding of the health conditions artists live with.



Can you tell us about your background and how you became a shiatsu therapist?

My first career was in the arts. I worked as a costumer with a number of theatre companies. I also did some props building and set decoration for films. After twelve years in theatre, I was considering a career change and was impressed with how effective shiatsu was for me. I was also fascinated by anatomy and physiology, so studying shiatsu therapy seemed like a natural choice. Years of working with fine, delicate fabrics, often doing detailed hand work, gave my hands a tremendous sensitivity. Years of rock-climbing gave my hands great strength. That sensitivity and strength allow me to really tune in to what's going on in a patient's body, accurately gauge how their body is responding to touch in shiatsu and adapt the treatment to suit their needs.

Can you discuss the importance of establishing a strong therapeutic relationship with clients?

A strong therapeutic relationship is essential for getting the best health outcomes. Taking time to listen to each patient and taking a person-centred approach that recognizes each patient as the unique individual that they are goes a long way to building a strong therapeutic relationship.



How do you approach treating clients in the artistic community?

My experience working in theatre not only gave me a great love and appreciation of the arts, but also an understanding of the commitment and discipline they require. I think this helps me to understand the impact of stress and chronic and acute health issues on artists. I take a holistic approach to artists' health and consider the bio-psycho-social influences on health and well-being. It's important to consider all aspects of artists' health - not only their physical, mental and spiritual health, but their social circle, work situation, nutrition, hobbies, work-life balance. All of these factors contribute to our health.

Continued on next page

What is one thing you'd like people to know about shiatsu?

It doesn't need to hurt! The pressure used in shiatsu can range from extremely gentle - more touch than pressure - to quite deep. The amount of pressure depends on several things: the recipient's health, their comfort level and their response to the pressure. That said, it should never be painful or uncomfortable. Even very gentle pressure is effective. The other thing to keep in mind is that each and every treatment is tailored to support the individual's specific health needs and goals. So, just as the pressure is adapted to suit each person, the treatment may focus on different areas of the body or can be either stimulating or relaxing.

"We are all unique individuals, so shiatsu treatments should be unique and individualized, too."

How do you address the mental and emotional well-being of your clients in addition to their physical health?

Shiatsu can provide stress relief, grounding and a sense of calm. Studies have shown beneficial effects for stress, anxiety and depression. For those seeking help for mental or emotional issues, the treatment can be more targeted to address their specific needs. Shiatsu has a profound effect on the nervous system, helping to balance it out and triggering the parasympathetic nervous system, putting us into 'rest and digest' mode. It's also very helpful in strengthening the mind-body connection, leaving us feeling more in tune with ourselves.



Can you talk about the role of shiatsu therapy in injury prevention and promoting overall health and wellness in artists?

Shiatsu is not only used to treat specific chronic and acute health issues, but is very effective as preventive care. Regular treatments can promote health, prevent injury and overuse syndromes, manage stress, and help the body to function at its best. With regular sessions people may notice improved posture, easier digestion, improved sleep, enhanced ability to cope and a greater sense of well-being. Incorporating self-shiatsu, stretching and other appropriate self-care techniques puts the user in control and can ease the stress and strain that artistic disciplines can put on the body and mind.

What do you love about your work?

I love seeing patients who come in regularly for maintenance treatments because they've seen the benefits they get from shiatsu. I love seeing patients come after a long break who tell me they've been using self-shiatsu and other self-care so they've been managing well on their own. And I love contributing to the growing evidence base for shiatsu (I have four published research studies and am working on a fifth). I feel very fortunate to have found a second rewarding career.

The Meeting Point between Art and Wellness

The intense discipline that is necessary for artists can lead to compounding issues consisting of creative burnout, emotional exhaustion, and increased injury risk. Artists are also susceptible to repetitive strain injuries that result from poor posture, overuse of the muscles, poor working environments, and excessive working periods without breaks (1). Therefore, finding a healthy balance between art-related activities and strengthening one's health remains imperative for professional artists, and finding solutions to this complication can be found by delving into the relationship between art and wellness. Art can enhance the physical, mental, and social function of one's well being, and wellness is endowed to promote the creation and fascination of Art. This dynamic is apparent with the impact wellness can have on both the physical and mental health of artists (2). At first, the daily endeavours of an artist can be physically demanding on the body, explaining the need for exercise and fitness to address these predicaments (3). But exercise and fitness can further aid artists living with health conditions by vitalizing the creative mind while also fostering problem-solving skills and self-confidence (4).

Additionally, art can be pivotal to the wellbeing of individuals. Psychological studies have indicated that engagement with art is favourable towards an individual's self-esteem, cognition, physical balance, and conditioning.



More specifically, creating art consolidates artists' health by providing ease to both emotional and physical tension by means of communicating thoughts and feelings that individuals find difficult to express and reducing stress hormones (5,6). Finding the right fit between setting achievable goals, performing manageable tasks, and working with a suitable environment is also what stimulates a cognitive process called the "creative flow", in which artists' awareness and enjoyability are optimized while they are completely immersed in their work. This state is beneficial to the creative process of fine and performing artists, in addition to dampening the symptoms of negative affectivity and protecting mental health (7).

Overall, while wellness is vital in sustaining an artist's ability to perform or create art, art likewise enables physical, emotional, and mental wellness of artists (8).

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Spring Health Cleaning Tips

Spring cleaning is not just an opportunity for springtime housekeeping, but can also be an opportunity for promoting your own health. The following are some easy tips you can follow.

1. Clean Dieting

If possible, try healthier food choices such as vegetables, fruits, and low-fat dairy products. Also, replacing sugary drink and alcohol consumption with water can reduce calories.

2. Clean Sleeping

Creating a consistent sleep schedule involves refraining from exercising, eating large meals, engaging with smart devices, and consuming alcohol and caffeine right before bed.

3. Clean Activity

The warmer climate is the perfect opportunity to be more active. Reduce your sitting and screen time habits, and instead dedicate more of your time for walking, exercise, and playing.

4. Clean Check-ins

Regular visits with your doctor ensures that you stay healthy during the spring season. Make sure to discuss with your doctor about any health-related concerns that you have.

How to Prepare for Allergy Season

Allergy season can start as early as February and last until late August. Here are some tips that can help make navigating through this period a lot easier.



Reduce Allergens at Home

Nighttime showers, washing your face, and shampooing your hair can remove pollen residue left on your head and facial hair. You may also consider using an air humidifier.



Avoid Pollen-induced areas

Enjoy the outdoors when pollen is minimized, like going outside during rainy, cloudy, or windless days. Try to avoid activities that expose you to pollen, such as grass-mowing.



Meet with an Allergist

Seeking consultation from your local allergist can help determine allergens that are causing you to show symptoms, and find potential remedies that addresses them.

Free & Low-Cost Dental Health Services

Toronto Public Health Dental Services



Clients will receive dental services in Toronto Public Health clinics at no cost, extra costs for dentures charged at lab costs. For more information, visit [this website](#) or call 416-392-6683.

Ontario Works (OW)



Adults aged 18-64 are eligible for specific emergency dental treatments only. For more information regarding eligibility and health-related benefits contact your Ontario Works Caseworker or your local Ontario Works office. Or visit the following weblink: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-works>.

Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre



**PARKDALE
QUEEN WEST**
Community
Health Centre

The clinic provides basic dental services on a reduced fee schedule. Services include dental examinations, cleaning, filling, and extractions. Visit <https://pqwchc.org/programs-services/dental-services/reduced-fee-dental-services/>, or call 416-703-8481 x 203 for more information about the program.

University of Toronto, Faculty of Dentistry



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FACULTY OF DENTISTRY

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Sunnybrook, Department of Dentistry



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