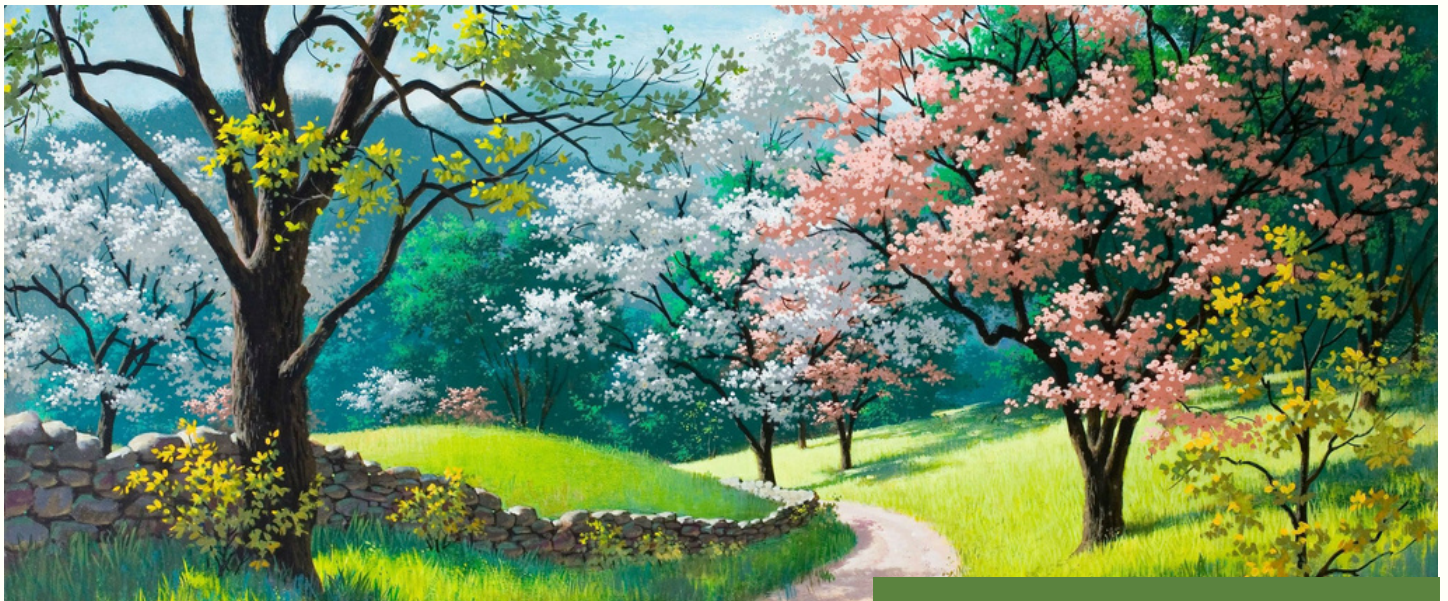


The Al & Malka Green Artists' Health Centre



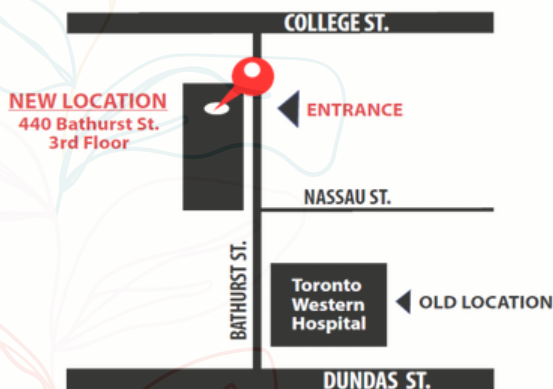
UHN Toronto General
Toronto Western
Princess Margaret
Toronto Rehab
Michener Institute



Announcements

Our clinic is OPEN for in-person appointments!

Current hours: Mondays-Fridays, 9AM-5PM EST



Welcome Back, Susannah!

As of March, Susannah is back in her role as nurse practitioner at the AHC after a secondment to the Connected COVID Care Clinic and maternity leave. She lives on the west side of Toronto with her partner and two children, aged 4 and 19 months. We are so glad you're back!



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Interview with Spotlight Practitioner

"For artists, being in art is not a job; it's a state of being"

Health Practitioner's Spotlight Lauren Leslie, RMT

Lauren was a massage enthusiast decades before becoming a therapist. Her training at Sutherland-Chan prepared her to treat clients with a wide range of issues, from survivors of catastrophic accidents to those struggling with stress and depression. Her son is an aspiring pianist and composer, so she has an understanding of the challenges artists face. She offers Swedish massage, myofascial release, and deep tissue work.



Tell us about your role at the AHC.

*I have been a massage therapist for 10 years, but prior to coming here, I worked primarily with people who were recovering from catastrophic injuries and accidents. At the Centre, there's been a lot that's new and a lot that's the same; there are the injuries or impairments that people want me to work on that usually come from over-usage as opposed to from terrible incidents. **I find that a big part of what I do, in addition to working out the knots and the kinks in people's muscles, is helping them to feel better. That's one of the things I love so much about my work.***

What are some of the most common problems that are presented to you?

*Oftentimes it's tendonitis from over-usage; artists who play instruments and use their hands and their arms a lot. Across the board, almost everybody has that sort of back, shoulder, and neck tension. Lately, a lot of neck and shoulder issues are because of COVID-19. **People are spending time online sitting at their computers or on their phones and leaning forward, slumping over.** Also, and this is similar to my previous practice, a lot of people are feeling depressed and anxious. I'd say that about half of why people come in for a massage is just to feel better.*

What do artists need most to ensure that they properly take care of their body?

*Encouragement to take the time once a week, at least, to sit in a hot tub with Epsom salts. They should invest in a heat pad that they can drape around their shoulders and that'll relax the muscles in their neck and their shoulders at the same time. **Now that the weather's getting nicer, I can also strongly recommend going out for walks.***

What are some of the unique challenges artists might have?

*Artists can have stress coming at them from many angles; there's income, the actual physicality of their work, and there's everything connected to COVID, so I find that there's just a lot going on, being artists. They signed on for a tough role. They may be under-appreciated even though they play such a vital role in our society. My past clients' work wasn't their main source of joy or stress; it was just a source of income. Whereas with artists, it's so much more meaningful and interwoven. **For artists, being in art is not a job; it's a state of being.***

Continued on next page

Can you elaborate a little bit more about what you had mentioned about the interwoven aspect of it?

For most people, work is compartmentalized. In many cases, your employment is something that's in a different place from your family. But with artists, their work is tied in to how their family views them and their choice to be in art. **There's something courageous about making a commitment to being an artist, to fully embracing all that it entails.** It's every part of their lives; it's their energy. It's what they enjoy, it's their entertainment and it's their income. It's their identity; it's both the source of their joy and a source of anxiety and stress. What's really fascinating to me is that from the oldest client to the youngest, so many of the issues are the same in that being an artist infuses and permeates every aspect of their lives.

"Everything that they're doing serves their art, and their art serves them."

How do you ensure that you're effective in each session?

I find that to be effective in my work, in addition to looking at a tight forearm, or trigger points, I must also get an overall sense of what's going on which helps me figure out what's best for a person at a given time. For one artist, it may be to just put some heat pads on a certain type of muscles. And for others, we talk about relaxation, and asking, 'are you getting outside enough?' **So, it's to present that self-care aspect to them.** It's a puzzle each time; it keeps me on my toes.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

I really draw a lot of positive energy from people coming in. **Besides just having a nice interaction, I really admire the commitment and sacrifice that artists have made for society.** I really respect that and it's an honour to be able to give something back to them.

Find us on Facebook!



Have you seen us on Facebook? Our team is regularly posting resources and clinic-related updates. Like and follow us on Facebook to stay in the loop!

[Al & Malka Green Artists' Health Centre - Facebook](#)

Join us at the Centre!



Photo credits: Leisa Bellmore

How Art Helps Healing During the Pandemic

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and modern society faced an unforeseeable change in everyday living. **As we draw close to 2 years of “pandemic life”, art, in all forms, has shown its significance in the healthcare community.** Evidence suggests that art has served as an effective form of psychotherapy and brought people opportunities to easily express their emotions, improve self-awareness and self-reflection, and to build better coping mechanisms to ease their anxieties, loneliness, and pain¹⁻³. To front-line workers, health researchers, students, patients and families, art offers a source of respite, human connection, engagement, and joy.¹

Beyond the confines of hectic healthcare, art extended its arm of healing to ordinary people whose lifestyles were greatly changed. The implementation of social distancing to reduce transmission of the virus limited social gatherings and travel, forcing people to find creative pursuits at home. There was an increase in public engagement in creative activities such as gardening, painting, cooking, jigsaw puzzles and all ranges of fine art, musical and performative pursuits during this period.



Studies on the psychosocial effects of COVID-19 have found that mental health issues such as depression and anxiety have also increased³ in prevalence in all demographic locations. **Engagement in creative activities were a good predictor for higher well-being outcomes.** This suggests that strategies promoting creativity should be considered for protective benefits of psychological health and as a means to cope with crisis.⁴⁻⁵

Ultimately, art has remained an effective way to restore well-being despite the world shifting into a state of isolation and disease combat.

Together with the connectivity that technology provided us, art maintained our humanity in a time of distress.

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Visual Art Outdoors: Tips & Locations

Ever considered moving your workspace outdoors? Nature provides a healing, nurturing space associated with cognitive benefits for your health and work.

1. Get outside!

Spring is here! Consider transporting your visual art workspace outside whenever possible. Enjoy renewed inspiration, in-person interaction, and sunlight after a long, cold winter.

2. Find a location

Open parks and on-water locations are available across Toronto and the GTA. Check out Tommy Thompson, Gairloch Gardens, and the Burloak Waterfront Park. Visit the outdoor Bronte Art Market on June 4th!

3. Set up shop

Pack light and find shade to work underneath, or consider an art umbrella. Lighting will typically change within 60 to 90 minutes, so a shaded canvas and palette is a good idea.

4. Fix your posture

Working outside may prompt you to stand while working. This can help with control and good posture. Make sure to level your easel at or below shoulder height to prevent shoulder and neck strain.

5. Healthy body, healthy mind!

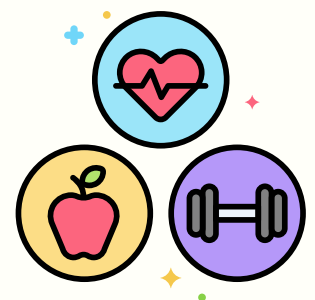
Spending more time in nature helps improve memory, attention, and cognitive flexibility, allowing for longer, healthier stretches of work.

Not a visual artist? Here's how to take your work outside

On days where your work is remote and does not involve active movement, you may be tempted to stay at home. However, this is the best opportunity to venture out and experiment with different workplaces. Be mindful of your security on public wi-fi systems - consider installing a free VPN.

Try out these locations with reliable internet connections for a work adventure:

- Fran's on Yonge & College (upstairs outdoor patio)
- Toronto Public Library Flemingdon Park
- William Connell Park, Hamilton
- Lakeside Park, Oakville (wi-fi available near Lakeshore Rd East)



Finding In-Person Music Events!

Finding Social Connections

Music is incomplete without community, and social connections are more important than ever for introverts and extroverts alike. Music events provide opportunities to find like-minded peers, mentors, and friends. Read more here: [For musicians and artists, COVID-19 pandemic was a turning point](#)

Upcoming Toronto & GTA Events

A number of in-person music festivals are returning to Toronto this summer, where you can participate as an attendee or performer. Notable events include NXNE, TD Toronto Jazz Festival, and the New Music Festival. See more here: [Music Festivals in Toronto](#)

The Toronto Fringe Theatre Festival



The Toronto Fringe Theatre Festival is running from July 6th to 17th this summer! The festival showcases a diverse range of talent in the performing arts, including drama, comedy, improv, and musicals. This event chooses participants based on a unique lottery system and supports each show with a team of volunteers.

While the draw for this year is over, you can still sign up to volunteer! Support local and upcoming actors [here](#). For each volunteer shift, you will receive a voucher for a show at the Fringe!