

The Al & Malka Green Artists' Health Centre



UHN Toronto General
Toronto Western
Princess Margaret
Toronto Rehab
Michener Institute



CREATIVE CONNECTIONS!

It's Free!

A biweekly opportunity to connect with other artists and arts workers in a safe, facilitated discussion space.

GOALS

- Share experiences, triumphs, and challenges through discussion of a weekly theme
- Exchange resources
- Build community

WHEN: Thursdays, 2:30-4:00pm

WHERE: Virtually via Microsoft Teams – join anywhere!

2022 Session Dates:

August: 11th & 25th

September: 8th & 22nd

October: 6th & 20th

November: 3rd & 17th



PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Please use link to register:

<https://artistshealthcentre.ca/displayPage.php?event=4>

- Maximum 20 participants each session.
- Artists' Health Centre clients only.
- Registration closes 24 hours before session.



Artists and arts workers of all disciplines are welcome!



with Susannah McGeachy, NP-PHC, MN!

Find us on Facebook!



Have you seen us on Facebook? We are regularly posting resources and clinic-related updates. Like and follow us on Facebook!

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

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Artists' Health Centre presented at the 40th International Symposium of Performing Arts Medicine Association in Chicago!

This year marks the 20th anniversary of The Al & Malka Green Artists' Health Centre! The Centre's practitioners (Vicki Hawkins, Leisa Bellmore) and researcher (Shelly-Anne Li) hosted a panel session at the International Symposium of Performing Arts Medicine Association (PAMA) in Chicago, IL. They shared the triumphs and challenges of the Centre's journey towards becoming the first and only centre specialized in providing health services to artists of all disciplines. This session allowed the opportunity to network and share experiences with international researchers, practitioners, artists, and administrators on how to plant a unique health centre in their country!



PAMA Performing Arts
Medicine Association

Leisa Bellmore shared her findings on a study exploring practitioners' perspectives on an integrative assessment to serve the health needs of artists with complex health histories and comorbidities: "The Integrative Assessment Pilot Project (IAPP): Exploring a New Development in Integrative Care for Creative and Performing Artists".

Shelly-Anne Li shared her findings on the impact of the Joysanne Sidimus Fund on artists' health outcomes: "Enabling Access to Healthcare: Perspectives from Artists Who Access Subsidized Health Services". She also shared findings from "Artists' Satisfaction with Telerehabilitation in Physiotherapy During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Cross-sectional Study"

A **HUGE THANKS** to artists who shared their perspectives on the Joysanne Sidimus Fund and virtual physiotherapy. Results of these studies will be sent to artists who participated as soon as they're published!



From left to right: Vicki Hawkins, Leisa Bellmore, Shelly-Anne Li
Photo credit: John Santos

Interview with Spotlight Practitioner

"I love the creative process and I love that here in Toronto, I get to be a witness to it."

Susannah McGeachy, MN, NP-PHC

Susannah is a primary healthcare nurse practitioner with a background in performing arts. She holds a BA in Theatre Arts from Case Western Reserve University (2005), Bachelor of Science in Nursing from University of Toronto (2008), and Master of Nursing from Ryerson University (2012). She has worked with people from across Toronto's artistic community and is passionate about connecting with artists and art workers to further their wellbeing and work.



Tell us about your role at the AHC.

My role at the Artists Health Center encompasses a few different things. I do the medical workup and management for folks that are coming in with health issues that are impacting their artistic practice. I help patients navigate what services they can benefit from, both internally at the Centre and externally. I consult with other practitioners to learn more about their health needs. I also do health promotion and education; this includes creating and delivering workshops that are relevant to artists, both here at the Center and with organizations to help promote health. I also liaise and develop resources with other providers and services that exist in the community.

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

I see a lot of acute and chronic musculoskeletal issues, particularly soft tissue injuries. A lot of musicians that are dealing with an overuse type injury, whether that presents as tendonitis or arthritis or bursitis, which affects the joints. I see a lot of chronic overuse type injuries affecting upper extremities and back issues. Dancers, circus artists, actors, and other performing artists use their bodies a lot. I see many artists with mental health challenges, specifically with low mood and anxiety; and, with the pandemic, some struggling with loss of identity.



Can you elaborate on the loss of identity piece?

Artists, when they're unable to practice because of an injury or an illness, it's an intense loss and it can present as a threat to their identity. It's an extreme example but let's say I'm a cellist who's facing a catastrophic shoulder injury and really can't play. That calls into questions such as, "What am I if I'm not a cellist? If I can't do this, then what am I?" It can have significant repercussions, not just on their work, but also their ability to make money, and also on mental health.

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How do you partner with artists to ensure they receive the care that they need?

First, I do an assessment with them and ask as to what their priorities are and what their needs and goals are. Together, we establish their goals for the short term and then potentially the longer term, depending on the presentation. I then figure out what we can do and what they can do to get there. I also do health education, including things like injury prevention and maintenance. So, if somebody's dealing with a chronic overuse type injury, working with them to figure out how they do what they do and see if we can optimize their health for recovery. Addressing ergonomics, warmups, nutrition, hydration and sleep; all those things come into play.

A big issue that comes up for artists is a lack of extended health benefits and unstable income.

"Services that are accessible from a financial standpoint are important; helping them access affordable services is a big part of what I do."

What do you find most enjoyable in your role?

I love that question. One of the most enjoyable things is getting to hear about what new projects are afoot and ways that artists have adapted, pivoted and shaped their artistic careers throughout the pandemic against all odds. I've had artists say, "This appointment has been so useful to me right now; it helps me feel better"; I find that really fulfilling as well.



What are the most challenging aspects of your role?

One of the more challenging aspects is dealing with folks that have significant and ongoing health challenges that threaten their work and their lives. The other piece is, because a lot of our folks are relatively transient; they see us for a short period of time and are doing better and move on, or travel and tour a lot for work. Sometimes I find it challenging to follow-up with those folks.

And finally, how does art impact you?

I'm a passionate theatre goer. And I've gotten more into dance lately. I developed an appreciation for contemporary dance and movement. I really love the creative process and I love that here in Toronto, I get to be a witness to it.



Tips to Staying Healthy as an Artist

Long hours of work can certainly take a toll on your health. It is important to keep your well-being in check. A healthy mind and body can lead to a happier lifestyle and also help boost your artistic potential.

1. Detox Your Studio

Some art supplies contain harmful toxins that can have long-term effects on your body. Check your room's ventilation, enclose all harmful substances, and keep your supplies away from the places you eat and sleep. It may also be a good idea to separate your studio from your living space.

2. Stay Hydrated

It can be hard to stay on top of hydration when you are on a creative roll. A good way to keep track of your water consumption is to draw lines on a large clear water bottle. That way, you can indicate how much you want to drink each hour and be prompted to sip every time you glance at your bottle.

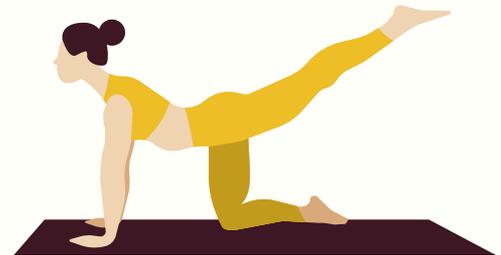


3. Stretch It Out

Your body can be strained from repetitive motions or stiff posture. Try stretching out your body regularly to keep the pain away and minimize the tension.

4. Ditch Worry and Stress

Your mental health is just as important as your physical well-being. Try letting go of stress by practicing mindfulness, connecting with others, or challenging your fear.



5. Sit or Stand

Replacing your work stool with an exercise ball can work wonders in strengthening your core muscles and ease back pain. If you prefer standing, wear supportive shoes and buying a cushioned mat can help avoid any strain on your feet.

6. Meditation

Taking a step back from the hectic life can help alleviate stress and spark creativity. Try meditate on your own in a quiet, comfortable place, or follow a guided meditation from YouTube when taking a break from work.



Online Resources and Supports

Legal Access & Support Network - ALAC

A collaboration between CARFAC Ontario artists and ALAS (Artists' Legal Advice Services) lawyers. Offers free legal advice, non-legal peer support, and resources relating to your practices. Read more about it [here](#).



Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)

A voluntary organization dedicated to mental health prevention and promotion. Offers mental health resources and national programs. Learn more [here](#).



Unison Benevolent Fund

A non-profit, registered charity that provides counselling and emergency relief services to the Canadian music community. They also offer financial assistance and insurance. Learn more [here](#).

