

Social Prescribing and Impact in the Arts

with Sandra Houle, Aly Joy-Lily McDonald, and Natasha Beaudin

Social Prescribing:

the practice of connecting patients to arts, nature, and community activities as part of their healthcare. This approach is reshaping how we think about the factors contributing to health, healing, and the role of culture in our lives.

This event, which was part learning session and part collaborative collage workshop, brought together artists, health professionals, and community leaders. The speakers shared testimonials and examples of how social prescribing has helped patients and community members, and when it can be best applied in practice. We left with shared vocabulary and frameworks to help better communicate the impact of arts and culture in concrete ways understood beyond the arts sector.

We were joined by speakers Sandra Houle, Aly Joy-Lily McDonald, and Natasha Beaudin.



SANDRA HOULE

Registered Occupational Therapist and Doctoral Candidate exploring creativity and wellbeing.



Sandra is a registered occupational therapist and holds a PhD in rehabilitation sciences from the University of Ottawa. Her research focuses on exploring the role of community arts participation for social health and well-being using qualitative and visual approaches such as collage. She currently holds a postdoctoral appointment at Western University exploring access and inclusion in arts-based third places.



ALY JOY-LILY MCDONALD

Artist, Community facilitator.

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Aly is an artist and community facilitator exploring emotion, trauma, bodily autonomy, and identity through acrylic painting. As a survivor and mad individual, her work centers lived experiences of the body, self-discovery, and healing through creativity. She facilitates art-based healing programs and workshops with organizations including the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre and Project Agape, grounded in a belief that creativity is a powerful tool for empowerment and community connection.



NATASHA BEAUDIN

Social Prescribing Project Lead
for the Alliance for Healthier Communities.



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Natasha Beaudin, has worked in the community health sector for over twenty years. She is currently the Social Prescribing Project Lead at the Alliance for Healthier Communities. She previously worked as a health promoter at Centretown Community Health Centre in Ottawa. Her portfolio included food security, smoking cessation, stress reduction, and physical activity and led the social prescribing project at the centre. Her passions are health equity, the social determinants of health, and health promotion. Outside of work, she loves gardening, cross country skiing and playing with her kids.



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