

Art and Creative Skills Collective (ACSC)
Guidelines to Promote Mental Health Wellness

Goals and Objectives:

- Promote mental health wellness using Art as a medium
- Deconstruct the stigma around Mental Illness
- Promote emotional and social competencies among youth
- 21st-century skills-building among youth
- Facilitate the development of positive and peer-learning support
- Skills development for a vocational career in the Arts sector

Art and Creative Skills Collective integrates the guidelines stated in the **Best practice guidelines for Mental health promotion programs** - a joint publication by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, Toronto Public Health. The complete publication can be accessed [here](#).

An overview of the Guidelines:

- Guideline 1: Enhance protective factors, reduce risk factors, and impact determinants of health.
- Guideline 2: Intervene in multiple settings.
- Guideline 3: Focus on skill-building, empowerment, self-efficacy, and resiliency.
- Guideline 4: Train non-professionals to establish caring and trusting relationships with children and youth.
- Guideline 5: Involve multiple stakeholders.
- Guideline 6: Provide comprehensive support systems.
- Guideline 7: Adopt multiple interventions.
- Guideline 8: Address opportunities for organizational change, policy development and advocacy.
- Guideline 9: Commit to program planning, development, and evaluation.
- Guideline 10: Provide culturally appropriate, equitable and holistic services.

Guidelines that apply to Art and Creative Skills Collective's framework:

Guideline 1 - Address and modify risk and protective factors, including determinants of health, that indicate possible mental health or substance use concerns and violence in children and youth.

ACSC Implementation:

- The target audience of ACSC is underserved youth including immigrants, BIPOC, 2SLGBTQI+, Indigenous and newcomers.
- Delivering programs that enhance the life and social skills of youth.
- Providing a discrimination-free and culturally sensitive environment.
- Creating a space to overcome negative life experiences and focus on wellness.
- Providing a nurturing social network of peers, facilitators, trainers, and experts.

Guideline 2 - Intervene in multiple settings, with a particular focus on schools as a key setting for intervention with children and youth.

ACSC implementation:

- Creating a judgement-free and safe space for interaction in both online and offline settings.
- Providing an equal platform for all participants to interact and voice their opinions.
- Offering support, access to resources, and tools to help youth express themselves.
- Referring participants to licensed services and providing additional help when needed.
- Organizing events where youth participants can interact with community members.

Guideline 3 - Provide a focus on skill-building, empowerment, self-efficacy and individual resilience, and ensure that children and youth are treated with respect.

- providing individual skills training
- dealing with feelings of loss, conflict, and anger
- dealing with clients' feelings in a respectful and dignified manner.

ACSC implementation:

- Enhancing 21st-century life skills among youth.
- Providing programs related to various Art forms.
- Offering industry-ready learning opportunities.
- Paying special attention to building leadership and civic engagement skills.
- Encouraging peer-to-peer learning and support.

Guideline 4 - Train non-professionals to establish caring and trusting relationships with children and youth.

ACSC implementation:

- Train youth and promoting peer-to-peer learning.
- Involving experts, professionals, and artists to mentor youth.
- Creating a matured space for one-on-one interaction with ACSC's resourceful staff members.
- Recommending clubs, tools, and opportunities outside of ACSC for community relationship building.

Guideline 5 - Involve multiple stakeholders.

ACSC implementation:

- Plan and execute events where young participants can engage with community members and present their artwork.
- Create a club of alumni members who can support and mentor new youth participants.
- Engage and collaborate with other community agencies to offer sessions that support the overall programming.
- Form a youth advisory committee for needs assessment and continuous streamlining the programs.

Guideline 6 - Help develop comprehensive support systems that are focused on peer and parent-child relations and academic performance.

ACSC implementation:

- Creating a judgment-free space where every young person can voice their opinion.
- Recognize the need for intervention, tangible assistance, and healthcare support.
- Fostering harmonious relationship with family, friends, teachers, and service providers.

Guideline 7 - Adopt multiple interventions.

ACSC implementation:

- Providing after-school Art programming depending on the interests of the participants.
- Using different programming formats to fit the needs of the participating youth.
- Create a supportive environment to develop personal skills.
- Continuously upgrading the program curriculum and making more appropriate resources available with the guidance of industry experts.

Guideline 8 - Address opportunities for organizational change, policy development and advocacy.

ACSC implementation:

- Creating opportunities for youth to engage in a dialogue with teachers, parents, and community members to voice their opinions and needs.
- Advocating for creating a safe and healthy ecosystem.
- Monitoring and identifying legislation and government Mental Health and youth-related policies.
- Implementing the learnings from youth and community surveys and feedback.
- Identifying initiatives and practices that promote youth wellbeing and growth.

Guideline 9 - Demonstrate a long-term commitment to program planning, development and evaluation.

ACSC implementation:

- Making the program logic model and evaluation methods available on public forums.
- Sharing knowledge, impact reports, and intervention results to support interactivity.
- Continuously revising the program goals to create a robust long-term commitment.
- Incorporating, disseminating, and analyzing the latest research and policy changes to offer innovative and futuristic programming for youth.

Guideline 10 - Ensure that information and services provided are culturally appropriate, equitable and holistic.

ACSC implementation:

- Creating a cultural humility ecosystem for developing thoughtful programming, resources, and tools.
- Facilitating sessions respectfully and in understandable language.
- Showing empathy toward the physical, emotional, mental, and social factors that affect mental well-being.
- Demonstrating deep inclusivity, diversity and respect towards participants, families, community members, partners, and stakeholders.