



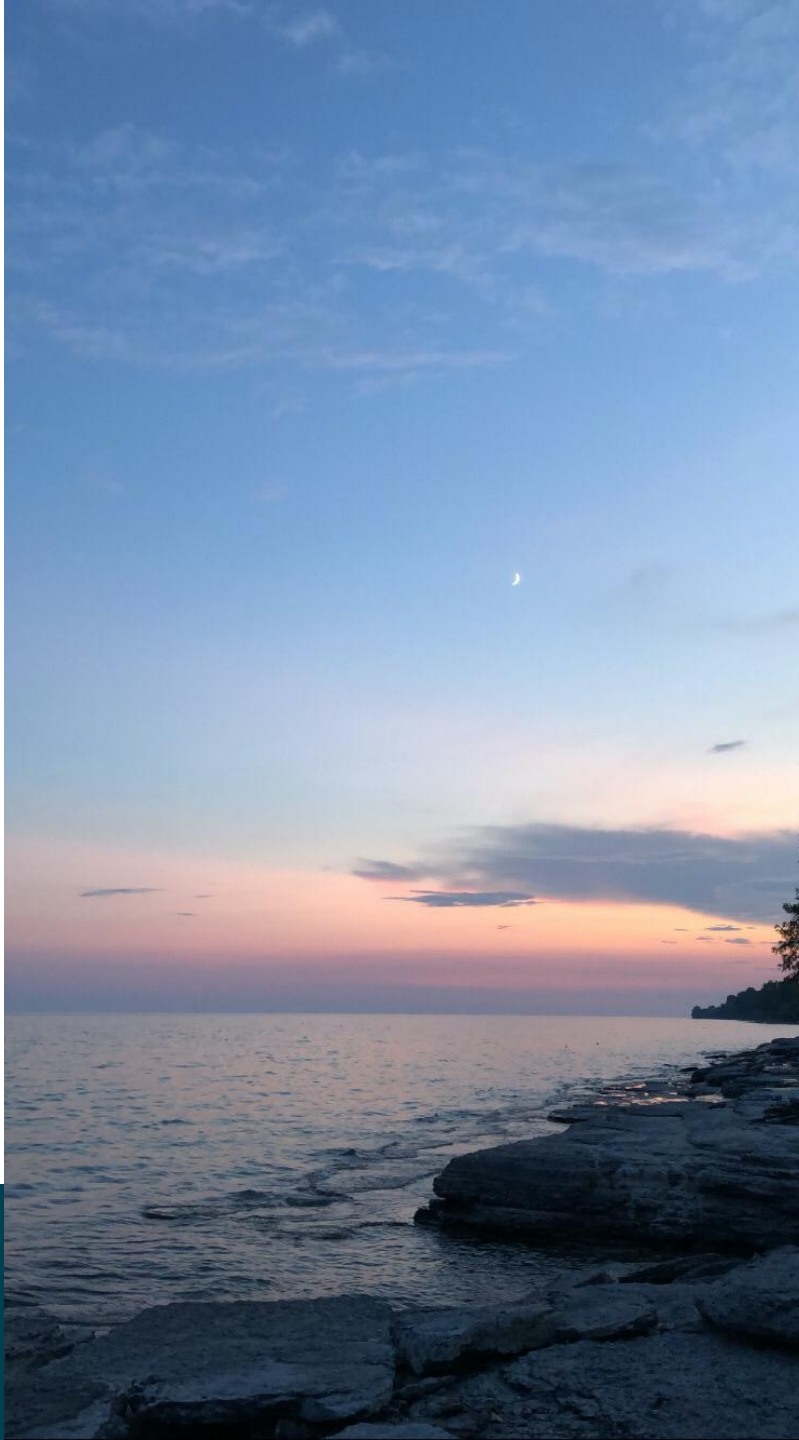
The art of well-being: Connection through creativity

Kate Dupuis, Ph.D., C.Psych.

Schlegel Innovation Leader in Arts and Aging

Sheridan Centre for Elder Research, Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging

SafeCare BC, November 4, 2025



Agenda

1. Arts, health, and aging
2. Strategies for engagement
3. Clinical considerations



SSHRC  CRSH



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Aging and the Arts

Spring 2006

Research on Creativity and Aging: The Positive Impact of the Arts on Health and Illness

By Gene D. Cohen

THE CREATIVE AGE



AWAKENING HUMAN POTENTIAL
IN THE SECOND HALF OF LIFE

DISCOVER THE EXCITING PROSPECTS OF LIFE AT ANY AGE!

*"Fascinating. . . Must-reading for anyone who wants to plan wisely
for 'the rest of life.'"* —HORACE B. DEETS, Executive Director, AARP

GENE D. COHEN, M.D., Ph.D.



Arts participation across the lifespan

- Benefits for multiple domains of health and well-being
- Physical
- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Social
- Spiritual

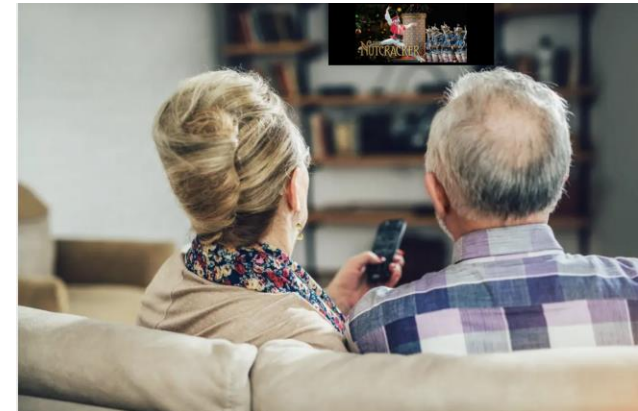


Arts participation across the lifespan

- Considerations around arts-based opportunities
- Feasible?
- Acceptable?
- Sustainable?

Arts participation across the lifespan

- *Primary* and *secondary* benefits: staff, family, friends, volunteers, learners
- Active $\leftrightarrow$ passive
- In-person or virtual
- Contributions to *connection*







Key components of a healthy aging journey

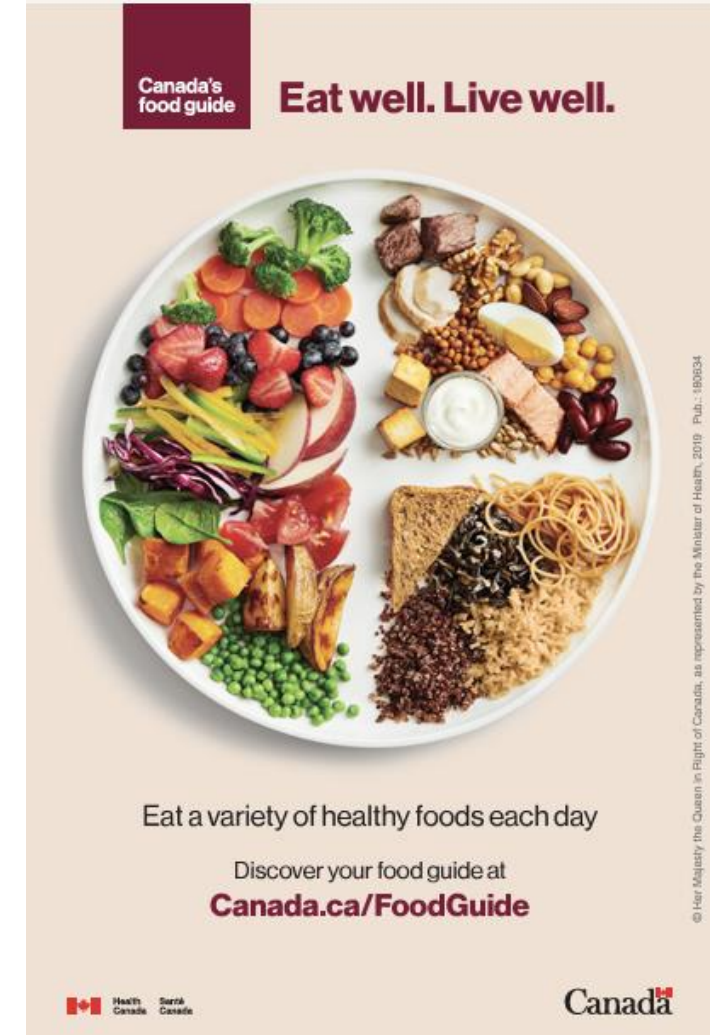


65 years or older

CANADIAN 24-HOUR MOVEMENT GUIDELINES

FOR ADULTS 65 YEARS OR OLDER:

An Integration of Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour, and Sleep



Key components of a healthy aging journey

- Movement
- Eating well
- Sleep
- Managing stress
- Cognitive stimulation
- Social connection

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- Sleep
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Arts engagement!

Arts as a health promotion strategy

- Holistic, person-centred model of care
- Consider potential cross-domain benefits
- Applicability to everyday life



Dance training for older adults in the community

- Safety
- Mastery
- Creativity
- *Confidence* in everyday activities
- Social connection

Secondary benefits of participation

- Family and friend care partners
- Healthcare providers, staff in congregate care settings
- Perception of care recipient
- Connection
- Enjoyment and pleasure
- Respite



Intergenerational Music Therapy Jamboree in long-term care

- Team members stop to watch sessions/interact with participants
- Team members surveyed indicated it was “Re-invigorating to see the energy ... babies bring”
- Jamboree days were “calmer” and gave team members “positive thing to discuss” with the residents
- Joy at work: “It puts you in a good mood for your day”
- Opportunities to participate more formally



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Strategies for engagement

- Considering and addressing barriers to participation

Barriers to participation

- Cognitive status
- Change of residence
- Not seen as a priority/necessary: lack of time, other treatments
- Concerns about safety
- Responsibility on care partner

Barriers to participation

Stigma (“art-ism”)

- Self-perceptions of artistic nature
 - Early-life arts discouragement
 - *Value* of leisure, of art-making
-
- Intertwined with stigma around memory loss/dementia

Barriers to participation: terms we use

Arts

Creativity

Self-expression

Diversity of meaning, interest, demographic, geographic,
life opportunities

Strategies for engagement

- Focus on innate creativity and strengths
- Explore possibilities
- Reflect on creativity in earlier life- tap into that feeling
- Specific activities drawn to/always wanted to try?
- What are steps/goals for getting started?
- Joined by family, friend care partner

A person-centred approach

- Meeting the needs of *individuals*
- Comparing what is *available* with what people *want*
- Talents
- Interests
- Capacity

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Integrating arts into care practices

- Physical location
- Supplies
- Staffing
- Time

**Arts
On
Prescription**

Integrating arts into care practices

- Built environment
 - Sound, physical displays, colours
 - Location for creation (*if you build it, they will create*)
 - Space = Value



Integrating arts into care practices

- Availability of supplies on-site
- Small, portable kits?
- Programming vs. Opportunities
- Breaking down misconceptions



Integrating arts into care practices

- Collaboration and collective expression
 - Mural, community quilt, Choir
 - Leadership buy-in and support

Choir at Sudbury long-term care home hopes to put a little love in your heart

By [Chelsea Papineau](#)

Published: April 24, 2020 at 5:50PM EDT



Integrating arts into supporting staff

- Supporting psychological wellness
- Team-building opportunities
- Recognition and value



Integrating arts into supporting staff

- Small moments during everyday care activities
- Use of music with a resident
 - 84% would feel calmer
 - 85% would feel happier
 - 82% would feel more connected to resident



Integrating arts into supporting staff

- Use of music during personal time (commute home)
 - 89% would feel calmer
 - 89% would feel happier
 - 85% would give me hope
 - 89% would give me more energy



Considerations for success

- Intraindividual comfort levels: *what* do clients/residents want?
 - Comfort with space, group size, technology
- Personal preferences for engagement and connection- may change over time
- Empowerment and choice, while embracing possibility
- Staff resources and capacity, continuing education



Questions?

Connect:

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Virtual music therapy visits



Intergenerational music therapy Jamboree



Concerts in Care Ontario partnership

Intergenerational Music Therapy

A Step-By-Step Guide



Virtual Music Therapy Visits in Long-term Care

Implementation Guide

