



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
Community Health Centers®



ACU
ASSOCIATION OF CLINICIANS
FOR THE UNDERSERVED



STAR²CENTER
SOLUTIONS TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE
FOR RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Creativity & Wellbeing: A Harmonious Union to Improve Health Centers' Organizational Culture of Employee Wellbeing

February 28, 2024

3:00 – 4:00 PM ET

This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of awards as follow: U30CS16089 totaling \$6,695,756 with 0 percent financed with non-governmental sources and U30CS26934 totaling \$550,000 with 0 percent financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit [HRSA.gov](https://www.hrsa.gov).

NACHC's STRATEGIC PILLARS

1



Equity and Social Justice

Center everything we do in a renewed commitment to equity and social justice

2



Empowered Infrastructure

Strengthen and reinforce the infrastructure for leading and coordinating the Community Health Center Movement, notably consumer boards and NACHC itself

3



Skilled and Mission-driven Workforce

Develop a highly skilled, adaptive, and mission-driven workforce reflecting the communities served

4



Reliable and Sustainable Funding

Secure reliable and sustainable funding to meet increasing demands for Community Health Center services

5



Improved Care Models

Update and improve care models to meet the evolving needs of the communities served

6



Supportive Partnerships

Cultivate new and strengthen existing mutually beneficial partnerships to advance the shared mission of improving community health

To learn more about NACHC's Strategic Pillars visit www.nachc.org/about/about-nachc

THE NACHC MISSION

America's Voice for Community Health Care

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) was founded in 1971 to promote efficient, high quality, comprehensive health care that is accessible, culturally and linguistically competent, community directed, and patient centered for all.



Access to Care & Clinician Support

Recruitment & Retention

National
Health Service
Corps

Resources

Training

Networking

- National Cooperative Agreement awarded in 2014
- Funded by the Bureau of Primary Healthcare
- One of 22 National Training and Technical Assistance Partners (NTTAPs)
- Produces FREE Resources, Training, and Technical Assistance

www.chcworkforce.org

Contact us: info@chcworkforce.org

Learning Objectives

- Understand the “why” behind using creativity to improve employee wellness.
- Identify the key role health centers and their leadership play in advancing the well-being of staff using creative outlets.
- Apply principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) to the development of wellness programs centered on art and well-being.
- Discover key steps to implementing a creativity and wellness program at your health center.

Background and Context

- January 30, 2024, White House Summit, “Healing, Bridging, Thriving”: [Healing, Bridging, Thriving: A Summit on Arts and Culture in our Communities | National Endowment for the Arts](#)
- U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy on the Healing Power of the Arts: www.youtube.com/watch?v=76t1sWdxccY
- 2023 Creativity and Healing Webinar Series: www.healthcenterinfo.org/results/?Combined=creativity+and+healing



Allison LaRussa, B.A., CPS, RYT

AVP, Health Humanities, Trauma Informed Sanctuary Frameworks, and Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging
The Wright Center for Community Health

Allison LaRussa began working at The Wright Center in 2021 as the Director of Health Humanities, promoting healthy workforce development cross-departmentally, through creating and overseeing humanities-based experiences for staff, patients, and community. The Health Humanities program also aims to increase wellness, instill healthy social interaction, alleviate stress and mitigate burnout, within various art and mindfulness activities. In many interactions, Allison has seen a transformational change in the way individuals process and experience their emotions from the sessions. In her new role, AVP, Health Humanities, Trauma-Informed Sanctuary Frameworks, and Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging, Allison continues to foster resilience, and provide education and awareness to JEDIB through her activities and workshops. Allison believes in creating safe and inclusive spaces where individuals can explore their mind and body through creativity, thrive, and live into their most authentic selves. Allison believes there is an artist within all of us, and through expression we discover who we are.



An impressionistic landscape painting featuring a vibrant rainbow arching across a sky of soft pinks, oranges, and blues. Below the rainbow, a small town with red-roofed buildings is nestled in a valley. The foreground shows green fields and a few trees, with a large, dark tree on the right side. The overall style is soft and painterly, with visible brushstrokes.

Why art? Why creativity?

Allison LaRussa (she/her)

AVP Health Humanities, Trauma-Informed Sanctuary Frameworks,
and Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging
The Wright Center

Who We Are

OUR MISSION:

To improve the health and welfare of our communities through inclusive and responsive health services and the sustainable renewal of an inspired, competent workforce that is privileged to serve

OUR VISION:

For our Graduate Medical Education SafetyNet consortium framework that integrates patient care delivery, workforce development and innovation to be the leading model of primary healthcare in America

OUR NICHE:

Innovative and responsive primary healthcare through community-centric workforce renewal

OUR VALUES:

- Do the Wright thing
- Be privileged to serve
- Be an exceptional team player
- Strive for excellence
- Be driven for great results
- Spread positivity



10 YEAR VISION:

The Wright Center's Graduate Medical Education SafetyNet Consortiums aspire to be recognized by the President of the United States as THE Health and Human Services (HHS) gold standard community-based model for primary healthcare with integrated workforce development by June 30, 2027.

IntroductionBackground

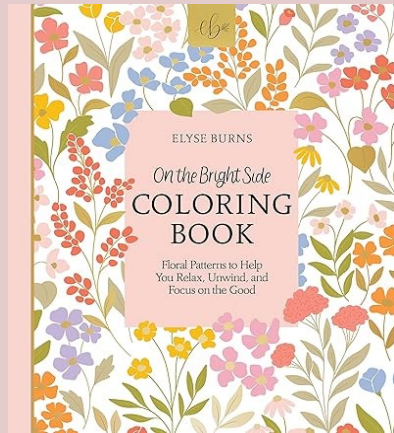
- Began creating as early as I could hold a paintbrush.
- Grew up in a family of creatives.
- An innate feeling to express myself in many different outlets.
- In my teenage years, I realized the powerful and profound impact creativity had on my mental health and wellbeing.





- B.A. from Marywood University, and several certifications including Certified Peer Specialist, Mental Health First Aid Adult and Youth trainer, Integrative Community Therapy facilitator, and Registered Yoga and Fitness Instructor.
- Worked in several inpatient drug and alcohol treatment centers, and medical facilities for the past decade.
- Utilizes therapeutic arts and mindfulness, and creates a safe space for individuals to explore their mind and body through creativity.
- Believes there is an artist within all of us, and through expression we discover who we are.

What is art? Have you been an artist all along



Common Misconceptions and Truths!



Common misconceptions:

- *You need to be an artist to create*
- *Art has to have meaning*
- *Art is only drawing and painting*
- *Art has to be perfect*
- *Art is expensive*

Truths:

- The vastness of art!
- It can be a process of working through emotions
- The creativity and imagination we hold as children still holds true today

Perfectionism and Art



**What you
create does
not have to
be perfect.**

**There is
no innovation
and creativity
without failure.**

BRENE BROWN

Creativity and Wellness are Closely Intertwined



- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Intellectual
- Physical
- Environmental
- Social

Benefits of Art and Impact on the Brain

- Boosts self-esteem
- Can alleviate anxiety, depression and stress
- A unique approach to exploring and expressing emotions
- Tactile, non-verbal
- Somatic
- Improved concentration
- Neuroplasticity - develops new pathways and improves cognition
- Can create community and social connections



Studies and Connection between Art, Healing, and Pub

Throughout history, in many different cultures, creative expression has been an integral part of healing, through pictures, stories, dances, rituals and others.



- *Music therapy has been shown to decrease anxiety. The pleasure shared by participants in the healing process through a music therapy program can help to restore emotional balance as well. There is also evidence of the effectiveness of auditory stimulation, together with a strong suggestion that such stimulation abolishes pain, as a strategy for achieving control over pain.*
- *Art helps people express experiences that are too difficult to put into words. There are no limits to the imagination in finding creative ways of expressing grief. In particular, molding clay can be a powerful way to help people express these feelings through tactile involvement at a somatic level, as well as to facilitate verbal communication and cathartic release and reveal unconscious materials and symbols that cannot be expressed through words.*

- *Movement-based creative expression focuses on nonverbal, primarily physical, forms of expression as psychotherapeutic or healing tools. Through the movement of mind and body in a creative way, stress and anxiety can be relieved, and other health benefits can be achieved as well, improvements in quality of life, shoulder range of motion, and body image.*
- *Studies have shown that, relative to control group participants, individuals who have written about their own traumatic experiences exhibit statistically significant improvements in various measures of physical health, reductions in visits to physicians, and better immune system functioning. There were also improvements in anger expression group in control over pain, depressed mood, and pain severity.*



The Wright Center's Journey with Health Humanities

- Established in 2021
 - Therapeutic art activities primarily targeting our GME learners and residents to help mitigate burnout
- Programming was a learning process and still is!
- Activities expanded widely into all staff, patients and community
- Currently developing a wellness team, as we embark on our Sanctuary journey:
 - Therapeutic art activities
 - Pet therapy
 - Reiki
 - Yoga and mindfulness
 - Staff hours and wellness room
 - Mental health first aid
 - Integrative community therapy and more

Therapeutic Art Sessions

Openness that Invites Equitable Inclusion and Belonging for Everyone

Health Humanities

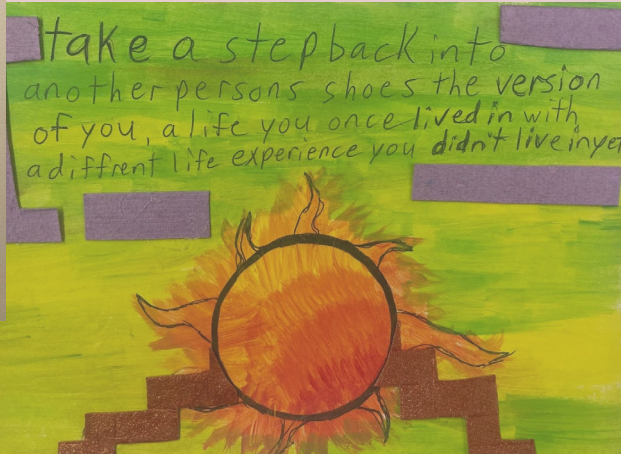
An interdisciplinary field of study that draws on aspects of the arts and humanities in its approach to health care, health, and wellbeing.

- **Creative arts** painting, drawing, collage/mixed media, clay, *including maskmaking, vision boards, and self-portraits*
- **Reflective writing**: exploration of self and professional identity formation
- **Community workshops and events** art displays and murals
- **Mindfulness and movement** breathwork, guided meditations, simple stretches and body scans to instill deeper awareness

Quotes from Staff

- “Engaging in the mural took my mind off the world for a minute. I feel so much more relaxed and at ease.”
- “It definitely decreased my stress. I felt present and it uplifted my mood.”
- “It was just so relaxing and calming.”
- “I feel like I learned a lot about myself in creating and exploring.”
- “A nice break from the stress.”
- “A talent I didn’t realize I had!”

Pictures of Activities



Why JEDIB is Important in the Process and Development of Wellness Programs



- Provide education and awareness
 - Offer personal reflection
- Address unique needs of each individual
 - Intersectionality
 - Equality vs. Equity
- Psychological safety
 - Sense of inclusion and belonging

Mindfulness Activity



References

1. Heather L. Stuckey, DEd, and Jeremy Nobel, MD, MPH (2010). The Connection between Art, Healing and Public Health: A Review of Current Literature. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2804629/>
2. Kara L. Caruthers, MSPAS, PA-C (2022). Understanding the Intersection of Wellness and Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion. <https://paeaonline.org/resources/publicresources/paeanews/understandingthe-intersection-of-wellnessand-justice-equity-diversity-inclusion>

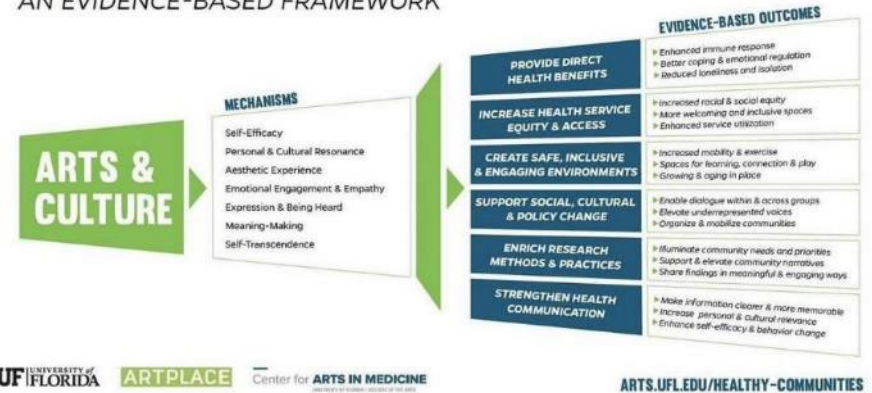
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Golden TL, Sonke J, Rodriguez AK. An Evidence-Based Framework for the Use of Arts and Culture in Public Health. *Health Promotion Practice*. 2024;0(0).

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/15248399241228831>

ARTS & CULTURE IN PUBLIC HEALTH

AN EVIDENCE-BASED FRAMEWORK



References (cont'd)

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the U.S. Surgeon General, House Call Podcasts, “How Music Heals Us, Parts 1 and 2, With Guest Yo-Yo Ma, Cellist & Humanitarian, October 31, 2023: www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/house-calls/yo-yo-ma-part-1/index.html, 2023: www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/house-calls/yo-yo-ma-part-2/index.html

Resources

ACU STAR² Center

- [*Building a Resilient & Trauma-Informed Workforce*](#)

Bureau of Primary Health Care

- [*BPHC Workforce Well-Being TA*](#)
- [*BPHC Workforce Well-Being TA – Newsletter Subscription*](#)
- [*Health Workforce Resiliency Training*](#)

AMA / STEPSforward

- [*Wellness-Centered Leadership Playbook*](#)

Resources (cont'd)

George Mason University

- [Center for the Advancement of Well-Being](#)
- [Thriving Together Series: The Art of Appreciation in the Workplace](#)

Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine Pederson Brain Science Institute

- [Multidisciplinary Research-to-Practice Initiative](#)

Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)

- [Workforce Well-Being Leadership Professional Development Program](#)

National Academy of Medicine (NAM)

- [Action Collaboration on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience](#)
- [NAM Change Maker Campaign for Health Workforce Well-Being](#)
- [Resource Compendium For Health Care Worker Well-Being](#)
- [Intersection of DEI with Health Worker Well-Being: A Systems Approach](#)

Resources (cont'd)

NACHC

- [*NACHC 2023 Creativity and Healing Webinar Series*](#)
- [*NACHC Workforce Wellness Toolkit*](#)

NeuroArts Blueprint

- [*NeuroArts Blueprint: Advancing the Science of Arts, Health, and Well-being*](#)

One Nation/One Project

- [*A National Arts & Wellness Initiative*](#)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the U.S. Surgeon General

- [*Current Priorities of the U.S. Surgeon General: Workplace Well-Being*](#)



Please join us for the next webinar in this series which will be held on **March 27, 2024.**

If you haven't already registered, you can register [here](#).

QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU!



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