

# LOW BARRIER, HIGH IMPACT

## Community Based Research with Newcomer Survivors of Gender-Based Domestic Violence

Knowledge Hub Conference October 1 - 2, 2025

Access Alliance Multicultural Health & Community Services

**Akm Alamgir, PhD, MPhil, MBBS**

Director, Organizational Knowledge and Learning  
Research Lead, HEAL Project

**Christen Kong, MSW, RSW**

Health Promoter - Mental Health  
HEAL Project Coordinator





presents:

# Innovations in Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Trauma- and Violence-Informed Health Promotion

*A NATIONAL CONFERENCE*

Oct 1–2, 2025

## Disclosure

The contents of this presentation is part of the project titled: "HEAL - Hubs of Expressive Arts for Life" funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada [ARRANGEMENT # 2223-HQ-000042] for preventing and addressing family violence for a period of Apr 2022 - Dec 2025. The HEAL project aims to implement effective Expressive Arts Therapy interventions to support the newcomer population experiencing GBDV. The project has been reviewed and approved by the Community Research Ethics Board [Protocol #227. Community Research Ethics Office (Canada) Corp., c/o Centre for Community Based Research, 190 Westmount Road North, Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3G5. Email: [creo@communitybasedresearch.ca](mailto:creo@communitybasedresearch.ca). Telephone: 1-888-411-2736.]

# Learning Objectives

## **Hubs of Expressive Arts for Life Overview**

- Community Based Participatory Research Approach
- Importance of scientific rigour in designing interventions
- Using implementation science principles
- Validation process rooted in community engagement and co-design

## **Challenges & Lessons Learnt**

- Outreach & Recruitment of Vulnerable Participants
- Integrative programming knowledge, skills, & cultural tailoring
- Supporting partner organizations & facilitators

## **Sustainability Impact**

- Arts for Mental Health Model of Care
- Health promotion approach to sustainability
- Effectiveness of arts-based approaches in addressing research areas

# Access Alliance Strategic Priorities

Facilitating access requires **understanding needs and experiences**, working to **address the real barriers** that get in the way, and **building trust** so that clients feel safe and welcome.

**Engagement** is about building and strengthening relationships with our clients and community.



**Facilitating meaningful attachments** for clients by ensuring referrals to safe, comfortable and appropriate community programs **helps to reduce social isolation and improve health outcomes**.

**Health equity** is about helping newcomer clients to achieve their health potential.

# Context

**Epistemological Reality** A conflict and cohesion between the program delivery and the research embedded in it.

**Recruitment Reality** Intersectionality of the population of interest: Trauma-informed, Newcomer, Women, Language Barrier, and Cultural Boundary.

## Retention reality

### Cultural

- Structuralism
- Essentialism
- Constructivism

### Work-related

- Need to work
- Precarious work

### Residential instability



Recherche sur la mise en œuvre de la thérapie par les arts expressifs (TAE) pour soutenir les personnes nouvellement arrivées survivantes de violence familiale fondée sur le sexe (VFFS) à Toronto

Alamgir, Akm & Kong, Christen. (2024). Implementation Research with Expressive Arts Therapy (EAT) to Support the Newcomer Survivors of Gender-based Domestic Violence (GBDV) in Toronto. Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Gender Research, 7(1):19-26, Barcelona (Spain), April 25-26, 2024: <https://doi.org/10.34190/icgr.7.1.2265>.

# Mitigation Strategy

# Operational Excellence

- Community-Based Implementation Research Principles
- Asset-Based Community Development Approach
- Community Advisory Model
- Co-design approach to develop the implementation of the intervention package
  - Scientific rigour and Quality
  - Adaptability and accessibility to the individual situation of the tools
  - Proven effectiveness of the medium
- Meticulous evidence generation protocols
  - Multi-modal (Qualitative/Quantitative/Arts-based) Data collection
  - Multi-level (Baseline, pre-peri-post intervention, 3m-after and 6m-after) Data collection
- Strategic validation of triangulated data
  - With participants
  - With facilitators

# CBR Attributes



## Research Impact Report

### **Inclusive CBR model**

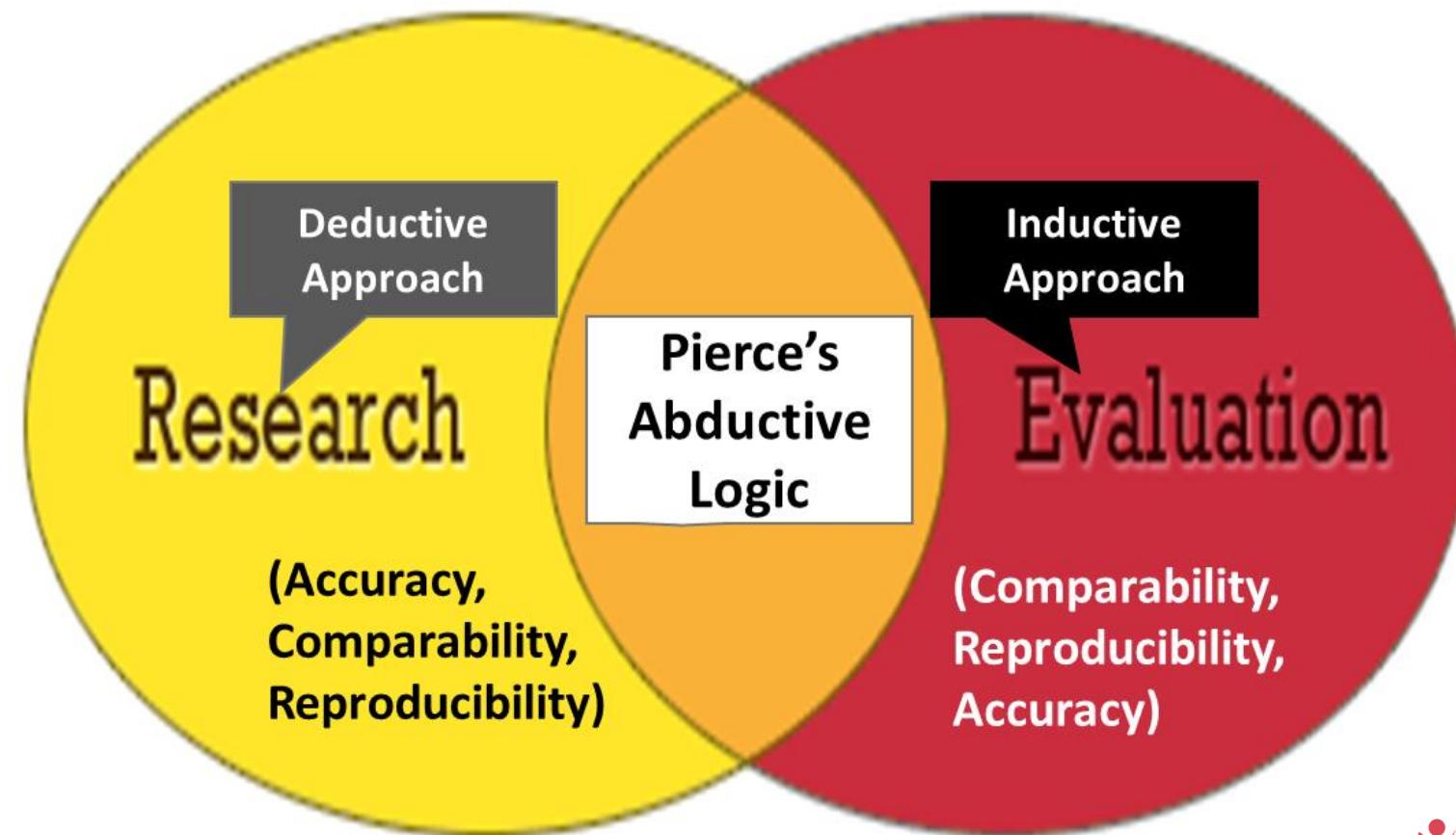
- By ensuring the active participation of stakeholders, whose lives are affected by the research of interest, in all phases of research to produce useful results and make positive changes in the community of interest.
- Engaging in the research process encourages empowerment, capacity building, and decolonization of power relations between the researcher and the live survivors.

### **Democratic CBR model**

- Conducted by trained, engaged communities with empowerment for the benefit of the communities.
- Encourages dynamic community participation by fostering connections and support from peer researchers.

# Evaluation protocols

- Context-Mechanisms-Outcome strategy
- Abductive logic
- Outcome Harvesting approach
- Interpretive Phenomenological analysis



# Impacts

U	<b>Utility</b> intended to increase the extent to which program stakeholders find evaluation processes and products valuable in meeting their needs; i.e. evaluation serves stakeholder needs.
F	<b>Feasibility</b> intended to increase evaluation effectiveness and efficiency; i.e. evaluation is realistic, doable.
A	<b>Accuracy</b> intended to increase the dependability and truthfulness of evaluation representations, propositions, and findings, especially those that support interpretations and judgments about quality, i.e. evaluation has dependable results.
P	<b>Propriety</b> support what is proper, fair, legal, right and just in evaluations; i.e. evaluation is conducted legally, ethically, and within agency mandate.

# Intervention Development and Validation

## Importance of Scientific Rigor

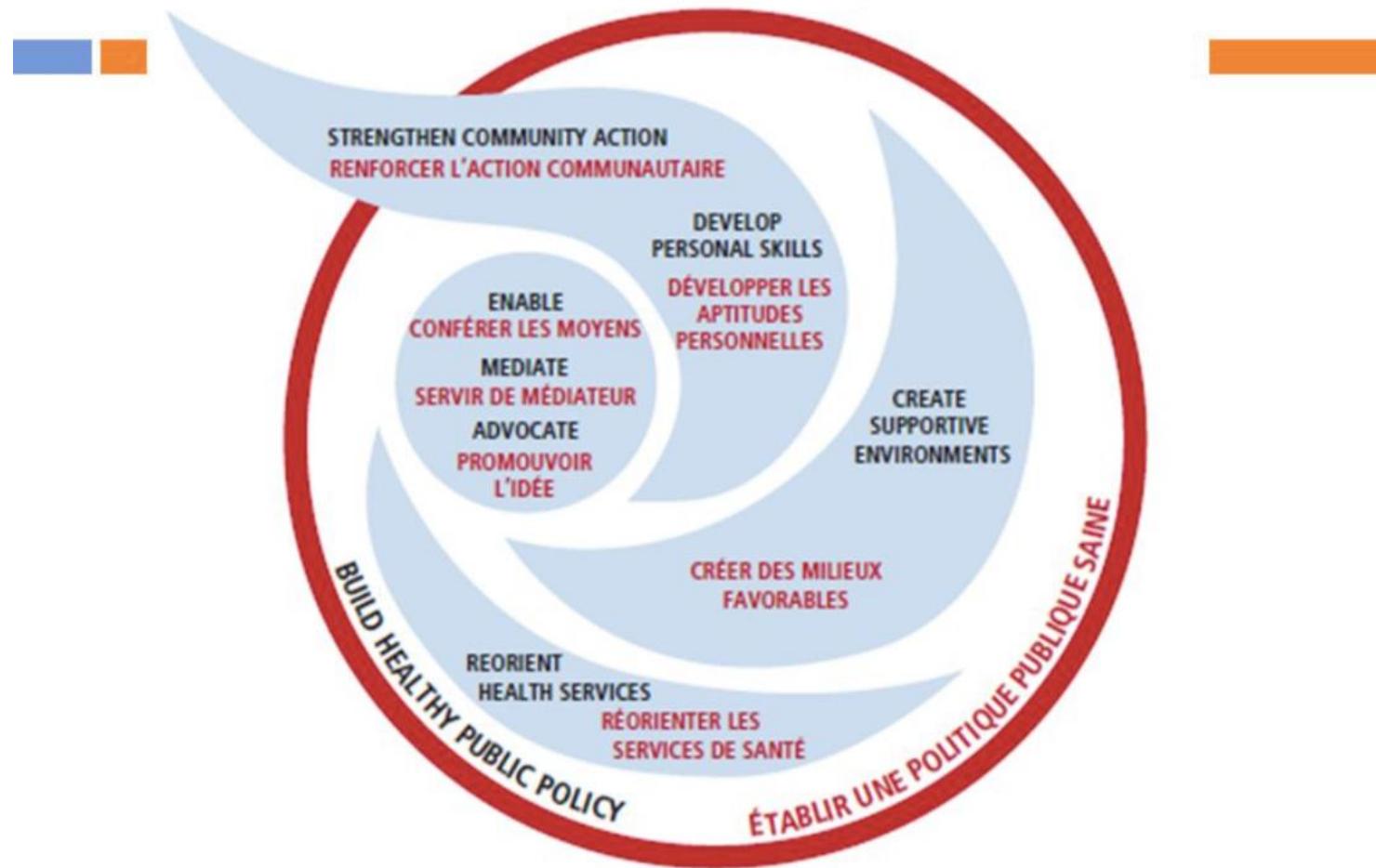
- Application of implementation science principles
- Ensuring quality, adaptability, and effectiveness

## Co-Design and Community Engagement

- Involvement of community members in refining interventions
- Validation through co-design to ensure relevance and acceptance

# Health Promotion Model

## The Ottawa Charter's emblem.



# Impact and Sustainability



## System Level

- Patronization
- Political philosophy
- Funding
- Increase evidence base research for arts in health
- Healthy Public Policy

## Community Level

- Commitment strategy, Increase equity-informed planning/evaluation for programs/services
- Embedding the commitment in the organizational matrix
- Service provider training to better support intersectional needs
- Strengthen interdisciplinary team-based care
- Promoting community-based social change

## Individual Level

- Acceptance of the Arts-based strategy and ownership
- Arts as effective for mental health recovery and trauma healing
- Self-motivation to thrive (not only survive)
- Build self-efficacy and gaining new knowledge



## Connect with Us

340 College St., Suite 500  
Toronto, Ontario M5T 3A9

[www.accessalliance.ca](http://www.accessalliance.ca)

[research@accessalliance.ca](mailto:research@accessalliance.ca)



**Access Alliance**  
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