

Art et Contes en famille

A trauma- and violence-informed approach

Brief description of the project

The Art et Contes en famille project was implemented to provide arts-based interventions adapted to the realities of immigrant families in Montreal's Park-Extension neighbourhood. Inspired by arts-based therapy approaches, Art and Contes offered families a series of workshops combining interactive storytelling, visual arts, dance, movement, theatre, as well as family rituals and games. These workshops were delivered either in the home or in family group settings, depending on the needs and circumstances of each family.

Objectives of Art et Contes en famille:

- Strengthen family and social bonds
- Reduce family stress to improve the well-being of parents and children
- Improve parent-child interaction through play and shared creative experiences
- Foster a sense of safety and belonging



presents:

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

A NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Oct 1–2, 2025

Art et Contes, a trauma- and violence-informed approach

{The sequence of artistic and fun activities in the Art et Contes workshops supports the sensory integration of different facets of identity, while individuals who have experienced trauma and/or violence may instead experience a more fragmented sense of self}

1. Welcome ritual: establishing a safe space and building trust
2. Play & Movement: engaging and grounding the body in the here and now
3. Storytelling: through interactive stories, families are invited to...
 - Embody emotional memories through characters
 - Explore creative solutions that support a transformative outcome and the restoration of agency
4. Visual arts:
 - Turning inward to integrate the emotions and thoughts that emerge into a coherent whole
 - Giving a symbolic voice to internal experience in order to foster greater self-awareness within a safe approach that respects each person's pace
5. Closing ritual:
 - Reflection and sharing: integrating lived experiences into non-verbal and verbal expression, encouraging listening and a non-judgemental stance
 - Allowing oneself to let go of what needs to be released, and to free oneself from burdens that are no longer needed.

Impact of this approach on families



Improved family dynamics: communicating in new ways through artistic expression, followed by verbal and non-verbal emotional expression, active listening, strengthening or repairing attachment bonds, self-regulation, practicing a non-judgemental posture



Developing and reinforcing a sense of belonging: first within the family, and then within the host society through intercultural encounters and exchanges



Violence prevention: recognizing, naming and respecting personal boundaries, as well as the boundaries of others, first within the family and then within the community



Shared enjoyment through play and family-based creative activities not only helps reduce stress, but also helps redefine intrafamily relationships, fosters reconciliation with oneself and with others



Regaining hope and strength to rebuild in the present, while envisioning a better future

