

Mar 29th, 1:00 PM - 2:20 PM

## Community Nursing Intervention: "Victory City" arts and mental health program

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Snider, Jillian Nicole, "Community Nursing Intervention: "Victory City" arts and mental health program" (2016). *UWill Discover Undergraduate Conference*. 11.

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# “VICTORY CITY”

## An arts and mental health community intervention for adolescents

### Description

The proposed program aims to combine the protective factors of creative expression, peer interaction, education, and access to primary health care with arts-based therapeutic interventions to improve the mental health of adolescents.

### Significance

- Mental health is severely underfunded in Canada <sup>(2)</sup>
- Suicide is a leading cause of death among adolescents <sup>(2) (4)</sup>
- 70% of mental illnesses have onset in adolescents <sup>(2) (4)</sup>
- Stigma negatively affects reception of treatment <sup>(2)</sup>



### Literature Themes

- **Best Practice for treatment:** psychiatric counselling combined with psychotropic medication <sup>(5)</sup>; only 1/3 of mentally ill adolescents complete a full clinical counseling program <sup>(1) (3) (6) (13)</sup>. In trials: MST (multisystemic therapy) proves most effective: treatment in home with whole family, focus on coping and protective factors ; MST not typically implemented to date <sup>(1)</sup> School programs more accessible, higher commitment rate: In a trial 98% of teens completed school-based programs ; 37% completed CBT; 15% completed clinic –based treatment
- **Stigma:** Parents and adolescents have negative attitudes about the use of medication in treatment <sup>(13)</sup>. Adolescents feel vulnerable in clinic settings <sup>(1) (13)</sup>
- **Education and training:** school teachers do not feel competent to screen for mental illness <sup>(3) (8) (9) (11)</sup>; art therapy can reduce grief and support trauma counseling <sup>(1) (4) (15)</sup>
- **Research Gaps:** Suicide prevention and effects on suicide rates <sup>(3) (6) (8) (9) (10) (11) (12) (14)</sup>; efficacy of treatment without symptom re-occurrence <sup>(1) (10)</sup>; lack of longitudinal studies <sup>(11) (12)</sup>; the efficacy of school-based suicide prevention programs– inconclusive results: issues with increased suicidality and social isolation <sup>(3) (8) (9)</sup>; the efficacy of art therapy in adolescent chronic mental illness <sup>(1) (4) (15)</sup>

### The Intervention – Victory City

**Upstream approach:** risk-assessment, screening, health promotion, prevention, community involvement, building capacities

- **Integrate:**
  - art therapy, mentoring and peer support into adolescent mental health programs
  - community interventions that are comprehensive and accessible
- **Build:**
  - capacities between schools, the community and the health care system
- **Evaluate:**
  - Mental health outcomes of the arts-based community program
    - Psychometric instruments: self-reported symptoms, suicidality, self-harm behaviour
    - Other indicators - hospitalizations, recurring symptoms, suicidal ideation or planning, school attendance, self-image

# **BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITIES**



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