



## CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

*RECOGNITION... VALIDATION... REASSURANCE...*

*ART + MENTAL WELLNESS*

### *How Do **You** Create A Framework For Mental Wellness?*

This call for participants invites you to a free half-day art workshop, creating collage, drawings, and text-based artworks to improve both personal and collective mental health. No artistic expertise is required and basic instructions and materials will be provided as part of an introductory presentation. Healthy refreshments also included.

Funded by the City of Calgary, this is a public art project that comprises a social practice: bringing people together through art to make work within communities, for which the art is shaped by community participants, for display across communities in Calgary.

With one-in-five Canadians facing a mental health challenge and two out of three unlikely to seek help, a social art practice that seeks to engage multiple audiences can make a positive impact on the way mental wellness is addressed in our world. *Recognition... Validation... Reassurance...* is proposed as a prototype framework comprising three topics for enhancing mental wellbeing. From this, workshop participants will respond by creating their own framework for mental wellness. The project team will review outcomes from the workshops to analyze how art can function in public to address mental wellness.

The aim is to help facilitate insight toward enhanced personal self-reflection to support individual and collective mental wellbeing. Thus, the key question addressed is: How do *You* create a framework for mental wellness? Artistic, and are eligible for display in pop-up exhibitions (short, temporary displays) that will be held with collaborating community groups. Some works will also be selected for display citywide as public art on billboards, transit station posters, and interior panels on buses and trains. Mental illness can be lonely: a public vision for wellness actively confronts this and reduces stigma.

Initial workshops will be conducted with organizations offering mental health support: participation is open to all. The creation of artworks during these sessions is conceived as a social practice to promote a second round of workshops among businesses and venues not regularly considered as focal points for mental health. If you attend a workshop you will be asked a series of questions to help with the process of creating artwork. Examples of questions include:

- How do you feel?
- What is reassuring for you: what makes you feel good or positive?
- Does being recognized contribute toward self-worth or mental wellness?
- Have you ever felt invisible or ignored?
- Does feeling validated contribute toward self-worth or mental wellness?
- Can you recall a dark experience, a place of mental distress, that either you or another person have been through?

- What forms of validation have been positive influences for you?
- What feelings or other forms of expression are important for collective mental well-being?

Workshops are co-facilitated by one of three health professionals: a social worker, art therapist or doctor of nursing who are present to direct participants to support services if required. Persons experiencing mental distress often feel invisible, and/or that they have no voice: a scenario that a social art practice can tackle head on. These workshops aim to promote mental wellness through dialogue in a safe and respectful setting, and through the creation of simple artworks using texts, collage, and drawing.

Before participating in a workshop you would receive more information and sign an informed consent form. This process indicates you can discontinue or withdraw at any time. You will not be required to divulge your health records or personal history either verbally or in written form, and any requests for information are voluntary and optional. Due to the nature of the workshop, participation will not be anonymous. However, participation will be confidential and artwork can be anonymized to protect participant confidentiality. At the end of the workshop you will be given an opportunity to write a sentence or short paragraph as a personal self-reflection. If you wish you can share this as part of your art and creative output within the group. You may keep your work or have it considered for a future pop-up exhibition. If you choose to share your work, you may include your name or choose a pseudonym (a false name). Workshop facilitators and exhibition volunteers sign a confidentiality agreement regarding your personal information.

**TO PARTICIPATE IN**      *RECOGNITION... VALIDATION... REASSURANCE...  
ART + MENTAL WELLNESS*  
On Saturday Feb 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018, from 2 – 5pm  
At EmergeHUB, International Avenue BRZ  
3515 17 Ave SE, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2A 0R5

**CONTACT:** <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/recognition-validation-reassurance-art-mental-wellness-tickets-41524231093?aff=ehomecard>

**Emerge HUB: Phone: 403.248.7288**

Professional health support is the most important factor for physical and mental wellness. Visiting a family doctor is a good first step. In Alberta you can also call health link for information on local services by phoning 811. Additionally, the Canadian Mental Health Association provides support groups in Calgary: 403-297-1708. [scheduling@cmha.calgary.ab.ca](mailto:scheduling@cmha.calgary.ab.ca).  
<http://cmha.calgary.ab.ca/our-services/family-support/>

*The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.*

For more information on this project contact Dick Averbs: [dick.averns@ucalgary.ca](mailto:dick.averns@ucalgary.ca)

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