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AWAKEN AND NURTURE YOUR RESILIENCE: ISP-PTX150C
ISP SUMMER SCHOOL 2025

PURPOSE: AWAKEN AND NURTURE YOUR RESILIENCE - The Role of Expressive and Creative Arts in Self-Care

In the role as empathetic warriors, witnesses, the holders of others' grief and pain, leaders and teachers we each need to be self-aware, to know the time for self-care as a daily routine or when it's time for critical care, knowing when it's time to reach in and when to reach out.

Together we will create a plan of self-care for wellness, a process of decentering and recentering that gives space for personal experiences, that will honour the gifts that Creator has given to help us navigate the complexities of life.

PREREQUISITES: None

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES:

This course will familiarize students with their own self-awareness, explore emotional needs and establishing a process of healing and wellbeing from a culturally sensitive personal space.

Students will be asked to immerse themselves in expressive and creative arts as a method of self-care, to release tension and stress, increase inspiration and imagination and to open doors of possibilities from a creative perspective.

We will discuss the importance of cultural sensitivity, mindfulness and awareness of the impacts of colonialism on First Nations communities: the history, current realities, trauma, and generational trauma.

We will engage in play, creativity and expressive arts in a process-oriented way that respects each human story, allowing space for all our cultural backgrounds, to awaken and nurture each person's own resources for living and raise awareness to the language of the land around us.

FORMAT AND CONTENT: This is a one-week continuing education course held Monday July 12-18, 2025 from 2:00-5:00pm. It will be in person 3 hours each day that will include lectures, require participation, presence and contributions to activities and discussions. There will be daily journal entries and some at home reading and assignments.

TEXTS: Readings will be poetry and will be provided on-line or printed out for students.

Prior to the week please watch:

Dr. Brene Brown on Joy
"We can't find joy without gratitude."
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKV0BWSPfOw>

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The Danger of the single story
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg&t=464s>

Art as Empowerment: The Virtue of Art Therapy
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPsZGBfjuOY>

CBC ARTS – She Broke her legs 3 times but healed through dance
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qoaTGKu9ZmM>

Painting the Path of Indigenous Resilience – Lisa Boivin - TEDxUofT
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GX_TlFeVxGk&t=173s

Prior to the week please read:

Indigenous Cultural Gatherings and Social Dances – University of Calgary independent Student Paper, article written by Aymen Sherwani
<https://thegauntlet.ca/2022/06/28/dancing-to-heal-understanding-indigenous-cultural-gatherings-and-social-dances/>

Healing Through Creative Arts, A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health (Read Chapter 3 – Creative Arts, Culture, and Healing: Building an Evidence Bases) by Linda Archibald and Jonathan Dewar
<https://www.ahf.ca/files/healing-through-creative-arts.pdf>

First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness
<https://www.fnha.ca/wellness/wellness-for-first-nations/first-nations-perspective-on-health-and-wellness>

Land Based Teachings: Indigenous Approaches to Healing
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/accessing-health-care/assisted-living-registry/land_based_teachings_and_indigenous_approaches_to_healing.pdf

COURSE POLICIES

1. **Attendance** For an intensive course, VST requires 100% attendance.
2. **Reading and assignments** as required readings will be given on-line or printout.
3. **Academic honesty** Students are expected to adhere to VST's requirements for academic honesty as published in the Student Handbook.
4. **Inclusive language** In speaking and writing, inclusive language is expected when making reference to humans and a variety of metaphors are anticipated when making reference to God.
5. **Assignment and Course Evaluation**
 The course will be evaluated through an "Approved" or "Not approved" standing based on participation.
6. **Limitation on use of social media**
 Ordinarily, the use of electronic devices in the contexts of classrooms or meetings will be to support the learning, formation, or agenda at hand.

VST is committed to creating safe space and an inclusive learning environment. If you have a diagnosed or suspected learning disability, chronic condition, mental health concern, or physical requirement which you anticipate may impact your participation in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs with the instructor and the Dean within the first week of classes.

CALENDAR

Monday July 14-18, 2025 from 2:00-5:00pm

Day 1 – BEGIN IN A GOOD WAY

- Land Honouring and Territorial Acknowledgement
- Introduction
- Art Based Sensory Attunement (ABSA)
- Identity
- Discovery of our own gifts
- Honour our past and awaken journeys of discovery
- Gratitude

Day 2 – DIVERSITY AND RESILIENCE

- Invitation to a Brave Space
- ABSA
- Impacts of Colonialism on First Nations Communities
- Indigenous people and the importance of Identity
- Empathy and how we carry each human story
- What is the Guswenta (Two Row Wampum Agreement)
- What we carry in our own vessel and being an ally

Day 3 – THE EARTH IS OUR COMMON GROUND

- The power of ceremony in the process of healing
- ABSA
- Gratitude and Reciprocity
- Our place in the world
- Our relationship to the world around
- Land honouring

Day 4 – GROUNDING YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY FROM HERE

- Creating a wellness plan
- ABSA
- Trauma is stored in the body
- Power of being witnessed
- The humility of giving and receiving

Day 5 – CLOSING

- Debrief of the week
- What we take with us
- What we leave behind

- Appreciation of our own gifts
- Appreciation of each other

EXPECTATIONS, ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

There will be daily in-class work, individual and group. The end of the week there will be one cumulative assignment.

This course is an art-based process to develop personal goals for self-care. It will be experiential learning and students will be asked to explore different dimensions of artistic practice to connect to self and to your professional work.

Students should be prepared for creative writing, visual art, dance and movement.

Students are asked to:

- wear comfortable clothing for movement,
- a blanket or yoga mat suitable for the floor or outside on the ground
- an art smock or old shirt.
- a personal item from home that is important to them, a reminder of home, family and/or community
- A piece of inspirational poetry, their own or a personal favourite.

A daily journal will be asked to be kept for the week.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books that will be referenced with quotes or short readings that will be provided in-class:

- Legacy – Trauma, Story and Indigenous Healing by Suzanne Methot
- Braiding Sweetgrass – Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer
- New Developments in Expressive Arts Therapy – They Play of Poiesis by Ellen and Stephen Levine
- My Grandmothers Hands – Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies by Resmaa Menakem
- Relational Psychotherapy by Patricia DeYoung
- Presence and Process in Expressive Arts Work – At the Edge of Wonder by Herbert Eberhart and Sally Atkins
- Principles and Practice of Expressive Arts Therapy Toward a Therapeutic Aesthetics by Paolo J. Knill, Ellen and Stephen Levine
- The Strength in Our Scars and Seeds Planted in Concrete by Bianca Sparacino
- The Myth of Normal – Trauma, Illness and Healing in a Toxic Culture by Gabor Mate