

Suzanne Thomson, BA, DTATI, RCAT

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professional experience

- 1990 - **Art Therapist** (short and long-term contracts)
- Design and facilitate open and closed groups for women who have survived abuse, the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic. Facilitate groups to exhibit art contributing to healing and social change, Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art
 - Develop and co-facilitate therapeutic groups for women who have survived violence as well as community-based arts projects, YWCA Breakthrough
 - Facilitated and developed a year long Intergenerational Project in St. James Town alongside Tamil and Chinese (Mandarin speaking) families who are newcomers to Canada, Oolagen
 - Developed and co-facilitated groups for women who have mental health challenges, YWCA Choices for Living
 - Facilitated individual, group, family therapy for children, youth and adults with a dual diagnosis in day treatment and residential settings, Muki Baum Association
 - Provide individual therapy specializing in the area of childhood and adult interpersonal trauma, sexual abuse, dual diagnosis and personal growth in private practice
 - Designed and facilitated groups in elementary and secondary schools to address peer violence, bullying and conflict mediation, TDSB
 - Provided individual and family therapy services for Sketch, Rockhaven, Syl Apps, Children's Aid Society, New Choice Child and Family Services and Homewood Behavioral Health Corporation
 - Provided group therapy and skills training in mindfulness strategies for *The Drug Project*, Sketch
 - Implemented professional development groups for employees, TDSB
 - Facilitated sexual abuse groups for adolescent girls, Metropolitan Special Committee on Child Abuse
 - Facilitated treatment groups for adolescents at risk through pilot project called *Youth Talk*, TDSB
- 1990 - **Teacher**, Toronto Art Therapy Institute
- Teach graduate level courses. Course topics include working with people who have survived interpersonal violence, people with developmental challenges, peer supervision and developing a career as an art therapist.
- 1999 - **Clinical Consultant and Supervisor** (short and long-term contracts)
- Provide clinical consultation to therapists and nurses at the Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Care Centre, Women's College Health Sciences Centre

- Provide clinical consultation to *Breakthrough* which serves women who have experienced violence, YWCA
- Co-facilitated and co-designed a trauma-informed expressive arts-based group that integrates Aboriginal teachings for Aboriginal women who have survived violence, YWCA and EFry Toronto
- Provide clinical consultation to counsellors and therapists, Athena's Sexual Assault Counselling & Advocacy Centre
- Provide supervision for art therapy students and graduate art therapists.
- Provided clinical consultation to clinical team at Muki Baum
- Facilitated clinical consultation to Choices for Living which serves women who have mental health challenges, YWCA
- Provided visioning workshops for teams, YWCA
- Consulted and designed interactive components for *Here to Help Program*, for children and their mothers who have experienced intimate partner violence, YWCA
- Provided consultation to VAW workers and *Over the Rainbow* (a therapeutic creative play program for children 3-5), Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Centre
- Offered training and consultation on youth victimization and mentoring skills for STAGE (Student Theatre for Awareness, Guidance and Education), Caledon Community Services
- Provided clinical consultation for young women who have been street-involved. Services included: designing and sourcing assessment tools, designing psycho-educational curriculums, developing programs and conducting staff training, Casatta Warrendale
- Supervised clinical team and administrators of a section twenty school and an adult day treatment program, Muki Baum Association
- Provided clinical consultation for youth in foster care who have experienced trauma, New Choice Child and Family Services
- Consulted and designed a ten-week arts-based program to work with women who were street-involved, Sketch
- Supervised interns, Metro Toronto Special Committee on Child Abuse

1999 -

Researcher & Designer of Assessment and Treatment Tools

(short & long-term contracts)

- Redesigned the intergenerational components for the YWCA Toronto's *Here to Help program*
- Authored psycho-educational manual, *thisABILITY: Expressive arts activities for people with special needs*, Muki Baum Association
- Designed a treatment curriculum for adolescents who have been exposed to intimate partner violence, Victim Services of Peel
- Designed a treatment curriculum for latency-aged boys who have been exposed to intimate partner violence, Catholic Family Services of Peel Dufferin
- Redesigned a treatment manual with four different curriculums to address the needs of children and their mothers who have been

exposed to intimate partner violence, Catholic Family Services of Peel Dufferin

- Researched and prepared a report on art therapy treatment for women who are incarcerated, Correctional Services of Canada

1997 - 1998 **Consultation and Therapeutic Services**, Turning Point Youth Services (full-time)

- Provide clinical consultation and training to all residential programs. Facilitate individual, group and family therapy. Provide supervision to graduate students. Developed innovative program, *Planet Struck*, an arts festival for youth who are street-involved.

1996 - 1997 **Clinical Supervisor**, Muki Baum Association (full-time)

- Managed and supervised clinical treatment program for adults with a dual diagnosis. Supervised therapists, students and direct care staff. Provided clinical consultation to families, adult day program and residential group homes. Facilitated staff development and team building opportunities.

1990 - 1996 **Director of Expressive Arts Program**, Central Etobicoke High School (full-time)

- Managed a pro-active treatment program engaging youth from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Individual and group sessions are issue-specific addressing themes such as trauma, relationships, sexual abuse, addictions and offending behaviors. Provided consultation and training/internship programs for educators, administrators, families and community supports. Facilitated TDSB professional development workshops for educators and administrators.

education

1990 **Graduate Diploma in Art Therapy**, Toronto Art Therapy Institute
Thesis: *A comparative study in art therapy with people who had committed assaultive and non-assaultive offenses*, Forensic Services, CAMH, Toronto.

1984 **Bachelor of Arts (Honours)**, University of Toronto

community-based projects

2013 *Transformation by Fire: Women Overcoming Violence through Clay*, A Feature Exhibition presented by the Barbra Schlifer Clinic and the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art

2013 *Fans of Love and Care. Unfolding stories across generations in immigrant communities*, a collaborative project with Oolagen and Family Intergenerational Link

- 2011 *Wearable Truths*, YWCA Breakthrough's project, women who have experienced violence create performance art to share their stories of *Being at home in the body: Creating wearable art to move in the world*
- 2003 - Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art and the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic collaborated over the past 10 years to offer annual art therapy groups culminating in public art exhibits to educate the community about violence against women
- 2000 *Anonomoose*, Moose in the City project, collaboration with youth who were street-involved, Sketch and the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art
- 1998 *Planet Struck*, a two day arts festival under the Bathurst Street Viaduct with youth who were street-involved, John Sobol, Mushroom Enterprises and Turning Point Youth Services

selected workshops

Body/Mind Expressive Arts Approach to Art Therapy, Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art, 2013.

Transforming Vicarious Trauma and Compassion Fatigue into Compassion Vitality through Creative Expression and Reflective Practices, WomanACT, 2013.

Collectively Transforming Compassion Fatigue through Expressive Arts, York University, 2012.

Co-creating a Collective Stance to Attend to the Effects of Our Work, WomanACT, 2012.

Out of the mud the lotus blooms. Women, children and youth who have experienced sexual abuse and violence transform trauma through clay, Canadian Art Therapy Conference, 2011.

Breaking the Silence through Clay, Narrative Training Centre, 2011.

Stepping into Connection: Mapping Our Way Home through the Arts, Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2011.

A series of three workshops: *Expanding your tool kit: How to integrate expressive arts into your practice; Expressive arts: A mind-body trauma intervention; Using expressive arts to engage youth who have been labeled 'hard to serve'*, Safeguards Training, 2010.

Out of the mud the lotus blooms: women who have experienced violence transform trauma through clay. International Summer School of Narrative Therapy. 2010.

Stepping into Connection: Mapping Our Way Home through the Arts. BOOST, 2010.

Creative Connections. Giving Young Women a Voice through Expressive Arts. Jump Program, YWCA, 2009.

Using expressive arts to get a view from above: Migrating from compassion fatigue to compassion vitality. Caledon Community Services, 2009.

Compassion fatigue. Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Care Centre, Women's College Health Sciences Centre, 2007.

Expressive arts therapy workshop with women who have experienced elder abuse. Circle of Care, 2004.

Using expressive arts to develop resiliency in responding to workplace trauma. Music Therapy Association, 2004.

Survivors of violence bring their message to the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art. Canadian Art Therapy Conference, 2003.

Expressive arts as a primary intervention for victims of woman abuse. Victim Services of Peel for the HEAL Network, 2002.

Expressive arts and metaphors: Tools to assess and treat children who witness woman abuse. Safeguards Training, 2001.

Secondary traumatic stress. Six Nations Child and Family Services, 2001.

Sharing without talking: An expressive arts approach in the assessment and treatment of childhood sexual abuse with children and youth. Safeguards Training & Six Nations Child and Family Services, 2000 - 2001.

selected media

2013 *Transformation by Fire. Women Overcoming Violence through Clay.* Toronto, ON: Making a Difference, Global News.

Transformation by Fire. Women Overcoming Violence through Clay. Toronto, ON: Metro Morning, CBC Radio.

2011 Justin Skinner. YWCA helps women heal through art and performance. Toronto, ON: City Center Mirror.

2007 *One STAGE at a time!* Caledon, ON: Caledon Citizen.

2004 Timothy Neesam. *Clay has a memory and so do we.* Toronto, ON: CBC Radio.

- 2003 *New board game helps children address issues of domestic violence.* Washington, D.C.: National Center for Victims of Crime.
 Roger Belgrave. *Child's play could help kids deal with violence. Hero's Journey can reveal turmoil.* Brampton, ON: Brampton Guardian.
- 1998 Kim Eslah. *Street fest helps bridge the gap.* Toronto, ON: Toronto Star.
 Nate Hendley. *Street culture blooms under Bathurst.* Toronto, ON: Eye Weekly.
- 1993 Michele Landsberg. *Therapy class helps troubled abused students get on track.* Toronto, ON: Toronto Star.

catalogue

February 7 to 28 April 2013, *Transformation by Fire: Women Overcoming Violence Through Clay*, Toronto: Gardiner Museum, 2013.

publications

Thomson, S. (2012). Out of the fire: women survivors of violence use clay as a medium for social change. In, H. Burt (Ed.), *Art therapy and postmodernism: creative healing through a prism.* (pp.118 – 134). London: Jessica Kingsley Publisher.

Thomson, Suzanne. (Fall 2006). *Women survivors of violence: Re-Authoring trauma narratives through clay.* Women in Environments International Magazine, Toronto, ON: University of Toronto.

Thomson, Suzanne & Tyrell, Wes. (2002). *Hero's Journey.* A game of adventure for children learning about woman abuse and violence within all relationships. Brampton, ON: Victim Services of Peel.

award

2013 *Transformation by Fire.* Award of Excellence in Exhibitions, Ontario Museum Association.

board membership

2007 - 2009 Board member, Toronto School of Art, founding Member of Diversity and Outreach Committee and Chair of Nominations Committee.