

Recreational and Complementary Therapies Program *Enhancing Health and Quality of Life through Activity and Alternatives*

A day at the beach, a few hours in the garden, popcorn and a movie, a massage – we all know the inherent value of these activities. For people suffering from serious illness, those moments become particularly precious.

At Dr. Peter Centre West End, Recreational and Complementary Therapies promote essential psychological well-being and contributes to wellness for approximately 300 participants in the Day Health Program and 50 residents each year. They play a significant role in our multi-disciplinary treatment approach that also includes counselling, nursing, and art and music therapies.

The Program uses recreation and leisure activities and complementary therapies including massage, reiki, acupuncture, yoga, healing touch and chiropractic to facilitate functioning and wellbeing, and to enhance the quality of life for the people we serve. These diverse therapies helps individuals living with a wide range of physical, cognitive, social and emotional issues to:

- reduce social isolation, promote inclusion and social interaction;
- stimulate functional, physical and memory abilities;
- manage situations and learn new positive behaviours;
- appropriately express emotions and thoughts; and
- develop unrecognized resources.

“The Centre gives me a purpose to carry on. I have nothing else. Some days I don’t want to leave. I don’t want to go home and be alone.”

- Jeff, resident in 2005 - 2006,
participant since 2006

Each individual’s progress is regularly evaluated and documented for follow-up by the interdisciplinary treatment team.

Professional staff and trained volunteers take groups of up to six participants on weekly out trips throughout the year. The destinations and activities are varied and include local restaurants, go-carting, sailing, IMAX theatre, Grouse Mountain, art gallery tours, movie theatres, days at the beach, picnics, camping, and more. Volunteers provide complementary therapeutic treatments to individuals in private, one-on-one sessions at Dr. Peter Centre West End.

Rediscovering Life and Independence

Many participants lack the financial resources, information and sometimes the imagination to engage in and benefit from recreational and complementary therapies.

“They have to be so focused on their health, on medical treatments. They live in survival mode,” says Dianne Simpson, Therapies Coordinator. “Our therapies program is all about choices, about our participants making choices for their own health without anyone else telling them they have to. They have the opportunity to try something they would not necessarily have the chance or the courage to do otherwise.”



Simpson says the program allows the chance for people too often defined by their illness or life disadvantages to step out of these roles.

“It takes them to a place where they can assert themselves and participate in something more typical of someone else of their age and gender. It’s amazing the kind of discoveries, the social interaction and development, even the problem solving that can happen. It’s a way of bringing people together and a way of being valued.”

Supporting a Civil Society

At the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation, we’re helping to rebuild lives shattered by HIV/AIDS, addiction, mental illness, poverty and discrimination because of gender and sexual orientation. The innovative, comprehensive model of care at Dr. Peter Centre West End is improving people’s health, helping people find strength in the face of an incurable illness, and inspiring health care providers around the world.

The ***Recreational and Complementary Therapies Program*** provides an important component of care for the people we serve. Each year we require support from our community of caring donors for this initiative.

We hope you will share the vision and join the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation in making a tangible and lasting contribution to improve the health and lives of people living with HIV/AIDS.

For more information on supporting the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation and its Recreational and Complementary Therapies Program, please contact:

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