



Building Hope through Bibliotherapy: Durham Region Experiences

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Introduction

Investigation into addressing issues of neo-liberalism and marketisation of basic skills programs

Alleviation of loneliness and social isolation experienced by barriered learners in literacy programs

Introduction to model in periodicals, contact with Natalia Tukhareli

Benefits

- A means to mitigate tension between government training mandate and organizational objectives that are meant to promote fair access to adult learning opportunities
- Addresses issues of social isolation, loneliness and dislocation from sense of community experienced by adult learners
- Represents a measure to restore literacy to broader social democracy roots

Funded Project

- Obtained Ontario Trillium Foundation funding from the SEED stream to attract/train 5 partners, delivery bibliotherapy to 55 individuals over 10 sessions
- Bibliotherapy model based on community/non-clinical intervention as researched and supported by Natalia Tukhareli
- Project ran from September 2018 to September 2019

Partners

Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences

Literacy Council of Durham Region

Art Gallery of Northumberland

Trent Valley Literacy Association

Oshawa Public Library

Pickering Public Library

Brain Injuries Association Durham

Outcomes

- Supported 7 partner agencies
 - exceeded target by 2 agencies
- Trained 22 bibliotherapy facilitators
 - exceeded target by 17
- Conducted 10 bibliotherapy cohorts
 - exceeded target by 5
- Delivered bibliotherapy to 86 individuals
 - exceeded target by 31

Learnings

Participant comments, quantitative data and feedback from the facilitators about participant reaction show value of the **shared experience**.

Unlike a book club where all the reading is done before the session the participants were all exposed to the reading at the same time and were asked for an **immediate reaction** to it

This **immediacy** created connections in the group that centered on themselves and their lives rather than literary criticism and allowed for self-exploration in a way that was unusual to most participants

Many commented that there was a **comfort and happiness** in being read to especially for those with low literacy or disabilities who were able to **access** literature they themselves could not read.

Next Steps

- Applied for 3-year Ontario Trillium Foundation GROW grant to provide full time staffing to initiative
- Presented/published research to European Society for Research on the Education of Adults at 2019 conference held in Coimbra, Portugal
- Supporting Ontario Works Durham through delivery to case planners and clients
- Partnering with Bowmanville Public Library to delivery sessions to library patrons in February/March 2020
- Supporting Durham College to introduce the use of bibliotherapy in 4 of its departments: Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Transitions; International Education Office; Campus Health Department; First Peoples Indigenous Centre