

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC) Unit
EASTERN EUROPEAN/ MIDDLE EASTERN SUBCOMMITTEE UNDERSERVED CULTURAL COMMUNITIES SUBCOMMITTEE
October 16, 2019
2pm – 4 pm
Didi Hirsch MHS 1540 E. Colorado St. Glendale Ca. 91205

Present: Rima Safaryan, Seta Haig, Heather Laird, Sarkis Simonian, Garbis Sahatjian, Mastaneh Moghaden, George Gharibian, Sunnie Whipple, Aknesa Ananikyan, Janel Saber, Avo Soltanian, Tamar Sevajian, Anna Yaralyan, Mirtala Parada Ward, Connie Acosta Castaneda

AGENDA ITEM	COMMENTS/DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS
Introductions	Everyone introduced themselves.
Review & Approval of Meeting Minutes	Minutes were approved by Sarkis Simonian and second by Seta Haig
New Capacity Building Project Proposal Presentations	<p>❖ Arabic Speaking Community:</p> <p>1. Focus Groups to Increase Capacity in Mental Health Services in the Arabic Speaking Community</p> <p>– Dr. Heather Laird</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project seeks to explore the needs of the Arabic speaking community of Los Angeles County from the perspectives of the people through focus groups. • A Focus Groups will be created to find out what type of mental health services and resources are needed for the Arabic speaking community. • After the 9/11 attacks, there is a trend happening were people of the Arabic decent are declining to learn the Arabic language and culture, due to fears of being profiled. • More Arab representation is needed within the EE/ME UsCC subcommittee. • Sarkis Simonian asked whether this project will include any informational resources, or just Focus Groups.

- Dr. Heather Laird responded that LACDMH resources will be provided as well, including the Arabic PSAs and the Access Line phone number, to educate the Focus Group members.
- Sunnie asked if there is a difference between Elderly and Older Adults in the Arab community. In the Native American community, Older Adults are referred to as “Elders” due to them continually educating the youth. In order to refrain from offending, what is the proper way of addressing an Older Adult or Elderly person in the Arab community?
- Dr. Heather Laird explained that there is a lot of respect for the elderly within the Arabic community. There are certain words used culturally that show respect. Each Arabic Country and/or Cultural group may have its own pronunciation. For example, Shake is given to a scholarly person or Hagi, or Pasha.
- Dr. Heather Laird also reported that therapy with the Arabic speaking community is all about trust. She reported that she takes minimal notes during therapy sessions with this community because the idea of writing down too much personal information scares people, due to fears of being “profiled.”

2. Creating a resilient informed community within the Arab speaking populations of LA County –

Dr. Heather Laird

- This project is built upon a concept supported by a MHSA mini-grant in 2019.
- It works with various community groups within LA County to educate the community.
- Three, 24-hour workshops will be provided over six sessions.
- Each workshop will be on Creating Resilient - Informed Communities (CRIC). The CRIC workshops will help communities build resilience and promote health and well-being.
- The workshops will talk about trauma and other ills.
- In these workshops community members can learn about resiliency and talk about how it looks like within their own individual community.

❖ Farsi Speaking Community:

1. Poetry Night Groups for Farsi Speaking Older Adults – Mastaneh Moghadam, LCSW

- This project includes a series of 16 “Poetry Night Groups” where Farsi speaking older-adults can gather two times a month and read poetry.
- Poetry is an important part of the Iranian culture and has always been a tool used to help individuals deal with mental and emotional issues.
- Each poetry night group will be facilitated by a poetry expert, who will bring in poems to share and process.
- A licensed mental health practitioner will also be present at each poetry night group in order to provide information about mental health issues and linkage to services. A mental health resource directory will also be created and distributed to all individuals at every session.

- This project can also be effective with the Armenian speaking elderly.
- Keeping the culture alive can add livelihood, bring healing to the elderly, to protect something that is dear to them, and give them life.

❖ **Russian, Arabic, Farsi speaking communities:**

1. Expansion of Russian, Arabic, Farsi Mental Health PSA's to Ethnic TV and Radio Stations – Mastaneh Moghadam, LCSW

- In the 2018-2019 fiscal year, 48, 2 to 3 minute mental health Public Service Announcements were created in Arabic, Russian, Farsi, and English languages. The PSAs were culturally sensitive to the needs of each ethnic community.
- These PSAs were then placed on YouTube and Facebook and distributed all over social media.
- For this fiscal year, the distribution of these PSAs can be expanded to various Arabic, Russian and Farsi Radio and TV stations across USA.
- PSA's should be shown for at least 6 months. (Ideally)
- Mastaneh also reported that certain MH topics were viewed more in certain communities. For examples, for the Iranian community the LGBTQ PSA surpassed everything and for the Arabic and Russian communities, the Suicide PSA was viewed the most.
- It was recommended that the PSAs should read, "Services are only provided in LA County".

❖ **Armenian Community:**

1. Armenian American Community Mental Health YouTube Channel – Avo Soltanian, LMFT

- Avo began by stating that within the last 2 or 3 years, he has been thinking about what is missing in the Armenian Channels, and it has been English language speaking programs.
- English language programs could be for the Armenian Youth and Young Adults who may not understand Armenian well.
- This project will include a YouTube Channel in English to address Armenian communities' mental health needs.
- A mental health professional will invite Armenian celebrities, and mental health professionals to talk about mental health issues in the Armenian community living in the United States. He/she can also invite young people to talk about their challenges and listen to their needs. This way, parents can see the perspective of the young adults.
- The shows can also address LGBTQ and acculturation issues.

- Each program will be for a total of 35 – 40 minutes, and will be shown once every two weeks, or once a month.
- Sarkis reported it might be challenging to get celebrities to participate in this project as they may not want the audience to think they have “mental health issues.”

2. Mental Health and Acculturation Among the Armenian Families and Individuals – Dr. George Gharibian

- The project will produce video clips to provide psychoeducation to address acculturation and mental health issues regarding Armenians in US.
- The video clips will include presentation by psychologists with expertise on the cultural and mental health needs of Armenians in LA.
- Some videos will be in Armenian and some in English, to address Armenian and English speaking Armenians.
- These videos will be provided via internet in sites such as YouTube, LinkedIn, or in other social media.
- Within the Armenian community acculturation problems exist both in the youth and the elder populations.
- Many Armenians in United States are using the internet more than any other means.
- Modern technology, like the internet can be used to connect people within the Armenian community.
- Each show can include thirty minutes or hour-long videos. There will be indoor or outdoor talking sessions (i.e. in a park).
- The shows can include issues surrounding immigration. A major part of the depression and anxiety within the Armenian population living in Los Angeles comes from their immigration and acculturation problems.
- The shows can also include issues surrounding acculturation gaps between parents and children.
- The shows can also cover mental health problems such as PTSD, Schizophrenia, and Bipolar disorders to educate the community about these disorders.

3. Trans-generational Expressive Art Therapy for Armenian Elderly, and Memory Workshops for their Families – Tamar Sevajian

- This project was presented on behalf of the AAMHA Armenian American Mental Health Association. There are a total of 9 members on the board and some of them got together to propose this project.
- The main purpose of this project is to normalize the process of aging for the elderly and their families.
- There will be both art and memory workshops. The workshops can be held back to back, on the same day.
- The project can help engage the elderly in an enjoyable interactive activity to ignite positive feelings of connection to their families and their community.
- The workshops can also be for the family members who are taking care of the elderly to provide psychoeducation and information about memory loss, cognitive impairments, Dementia, and Alzheimer’s

	<p>disease. This will help families better understand what to look for, where to go for resources and how to take better care of their elderly.</p> <p>4. Armenian Wellness Festival – Sarkis Simonian</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A whole day wellness festival in a prime location within the Armenian community to promote wellness and mental health in a fun and relaxed setting. • The festival will consist of mental health seminars, cooking classes for cultural food, live music, entertainment, dance, poetry, yoga classes, and art therapy classes. All these activities will be available in the morning, afternoon and late afternoon to give attendees the chance to participate in more than one activity. • Stress management resources will also be available throughout the day. • Food & refreshments will be provided. • There will be tables of mental health information and resources from LACDMH and contracted/ legal entities that provide services for the Armenian Community.
<p>Future Meeting Times & Dates</p>	<p>Future Meeting: Times & Dates</p> <p>Location of Meetings: TBA</p>
	<p>- January 2019 - TBA</p>