

HAYATSK DEPI NERS
Mental Health Show
Project Summary

The third season of the Armenian mental health TV talk show, entitled, “*Hayatsk Depi Ners*,” was televised on the Armenian-Russian Television Network, ARTN from August 2018 to November 2018. A total of 28 shows were aired.

There are more than 200,000, Armenians who live in Southern California in cities such as La Canada, Burbank, North Hollywood, Glendale, Pasadena, Los Angeles, and Montebello. As a result, the shows were broadcasted in these areas of Los Angeles County. The show focused on education to the Armenian Community about various mental health conditions, the therapeutic process, and how to access these services from LACDMH.

During the third season, the format of the show changed. It included three phases. The first phase was the introduction. It included opening remarks which lasted 3-5 minutes. This was done by a mental health professional and a host. The second phase was the reenactment of a therapy session and this was facilitated by a mental health professional and included actors and actresses. This part lasted ten to fifteen (10-15) minutes. The therapy sessions were scripted beforehand. Actors were hired that were known in the community. The third phase included a TV host and a mental health professional, who explained the therapy session and its process to the viewers. It lasted around ten (10) minutes.

The collaboration between Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health and ARTN also played an important role in the success of the show. Part of the success was hiring a host who was well versed in mental health issues and had the ability to easily engage

the community. LACDMH intentionally partnered with ARTN as they are a TV network that serves the Armenian Community in LA County. They took charge of the production and broadcast of the show, which resulted to the highest community response.

LACDMH's administrative team also played an important part in the development of this project. Dr. Anna Yaralyan, who is the liaison for the Eastern European/Middle Eastern, Underserved Cultural Communities, EE/ME subcommittee, participated in the show as a mental health professional both providing information to the public and by facilitating some of the mock therapy sessions. Dr. Yaralyan is an LACDMH employee who specializes in the mental health needs of the Armenian Community.

The show also included Armenian-speaking actors/actresses. There were some challenges with the recruitment of the Armenian speaking actors/actresses. ARTN's role which contributed to the success of the show involved the development of the set, the script, sound, lighting, production, directing, and editing of all the episodes.

The show was televised during prime time hours, Saturdays and Sundays at 3.30 p.m. It aired on two different channels which helped increased viewership. Additionally, the shows were streamed online, including on www.artn.tv, YouTube, and Facebook. This capacity allowed the shows to also be viewed worldwide where the Armenian diaspora lies.

Overall, the mental health show had great success within the Armenian Community living in Los Angeles County. It was the first and the only one in its kind in the history of Armenian Television in the USA. Based on the feedback provided by T.V. viewers, Armenian Community members felt that the show was interesting, culturally relevant, and educational. The community expressed gratitude for showing what the process of therapy looks like, stating that it expanded their knowledge regarding mental health and how these

issues present within the Armenian Community. The result of the shows surpassed all the expectations. It appeared that there was a shift in the thinking of the Armenian Community about mental health conditions and its treatment approaches. Overall the show helped to decrease stigma about the utilization of mental health services within the Armenian Community. Since the show began, hundreds and hundreds of ARTN viewers have been calling and asking mental health related questions. After the show ended, many community members called ARTN requesting for it to continue and even offering new topics for discussion.

In conclusion, due to the success of the show and the partnership between ARTN and LACDMH, the Armenian-American community has a new and more positive view about mental health services. The show was just another attempt by LACDMH to reduce the level of mental health stigma in the Armenian Community in LA County. This project demonstrated LACDMHs continued commitment to increase its outreach and early prevention efforts to the Armenian Community.