

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
Strategic Communications Division

Eastern-European / Middle Eastern (EE/ME) UsCC Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
4/27/2022

2:00PM – 4:00PM via Teleconference

Present: Sarkis Simonian, Rima Safaryan, Dr. Shushan Kalantarian, Dr. Haydeh Fakhrabadi, Seta Haig, Mastaneh Moghadam, Juline Bajada (Captioner), Armineh Stepanyan, Avo Soltanian.

DMH Admin: Anna Yaralyan, Dr. Luis Guzman, Angel Baker.

| Agenda Items | Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions |
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| Introductions | Everyone introduced themselves. |
| Review and Approval of the last Meeting Minutes | Reviewed and approved meeting minutes from 3/30/2022 . Dr. Haydeh Fakhrabadi approved and Sarkis Simonian second. |
| Capacity Building Project Updates FY2020-2021 | <p>❖ Russian Mental Health Media Virtual Outreach Campaign – Mastaneh Moghadam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Russian mental health PSA project is going well. • PSAs continue to be aired on RTN and ARTN during prime-time hours, seven days a week. • The PSAs continue to receive positive feedback from the Russian speaking community, especially at a time of the current war between Russia and Ukraine, where Russian community members need more support. • The airing started on August 1, 2021, and is scheduled to be completed on July 31, 2022. • The Russian PSAs also continue to be posted on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. • Vendor also reported that support groups continue to be offered for those effected by the Russia and Ukraine war at her Agency, Cross Cultural Expressions. • Anna Yaralyan talked about the importance of the Mental Health PSAs for the Russian Community at this time, as there have been large amount of Russian and Ukrainian refugees to USA. It is also difficult for the Russian immigrant community living in US, as Russia is seen as the perpetrator of the war. • Anna inquired from EE/ME Subcommittee members whether there are any community Agencies, Organizations, Mental Health, and Health Clinics that provide culturally relevant social services, case |

management, health and mental health support for Ukrainian refugees effected from the war. LACDMH wishes to do outreach to this group for needs assessment and to provide resources and MH support.

- Mastaneh reported that Russians are suffering as well and need mental health services too, although they are looked at as the enemy in the general population.

❖ **Virtual Poetry Night Mental Health Outreach Groups for the Farsi Speaking Community Project – Mastaneh Moghadam**

- Vendor reported that the Virtual Poetry Night MH Outreach for the Farsi speaking community has getting tremendous positive feedback.
- This month's topics were about suicide and grief & loss, which is hard for the Farsi speaking community to talk about. Vendor reported that some poems read in the poetry classes are from the collection of Persian Poet and scholar Rumi, whose poetry is very known and liked not only in by the Farsi speaking community, but also worldwide.
- Next months topics will be on poetry and art in Iranian history and LGBTQ identity and will be conducted in the Farsi language. Information will be provided on how writers and poets impacted the culture throughout years.

❖ **Virtual Armenian Community Symposiums Project – Sarkis Simonian**

- Vendor announced that all three virtual Symposiums have been completed successfully.
- Final summary report has been submitted to LACDMH and is in the process of review and approval. There were total of 240 participants.
- All three Symposiums have been posted online, and continue to be renewed on Facebook and more people are watching due to it.
- All three Symposiums included different mental health professionals who added different perspectives.

❖ **Virtual Mental Health Needs Assessment for the Arabic Speaking Community – Dr. Heather Laird**

- Vendor reported that the implementation of this project continues to move along.
- Vendor reported that Amendment was submitted to LACDMH and approved on this project for project time extension. The project will be completed little later than scheduled time due to personal reasons. There is also the Ramadan, important Muslim Religious Holiday, which is celebrated by the Muslim Arabic speaking community and other Muslim Communities each spring.
- The Community meeting has been completed. People at times would go in and out of the virtual meeting, therefore steady participation was difficult to maintain, and there were challenges at times.

- Vendor reported that mental health stigma continues to be prevalent within the Arabic speaking community. One of the ways of penetrating into the Arabic Community is also by conducting outreach in Arabic Christian Churches. This way relationship and trust is built with these community members as well.
- Seta Haig reported that mental health stigma exists in many communities, and effects communities on different levels.
- Mastaneh reported that she looks forward for the results of the Arabic virtual Mental Health Needs Assessment Project, as it is fascinating. Cultural factors play a major role on mental health, especially in Middle Eastern Cultures. Mental health stigma, individual judgments, and fear also play a role in Middle Eastern community members accessing mental health services and resources.

LACDMH Updates

- ❖ **Angel Baker, Division Chief, from LACDMH Office of Administrative Operations Special Programs Unit, provided the following LACDMH Updates:**
 - Angel praised EE/ME UsCC Subcommittee for conducting culturally relevant, important, and successful Capacity Building Projects for the Armenian, Russian, Arabic and Farsi speaking communities.
 - Angel reported that each UsCC Subcommittee funds have increased, and each subcommittee will receive **\$300,000** for the next fiscal year.
 - Angel reported that it is important to identify the mental health needs of our Underserved Cultural Communities and reach community members through outreach, to participate in the UsCC Subcommittee meetings.
- ❖ **Dr. Luis Guzman, Liaison for the Latino UsCC Subcommittee, reported that LACDMH is working on adding a youth component to all UsCC Subcommittees:**
 - Each UsCC will include a youth group, where youth of different universities, colleges, and schools, both public and private, from different parts of LA County will participate in larger UsCC meetings. It will be called the UsCC Youth Advisory Subcommittee.
 - The youth will be between the ages 16-24.
 - Each UsCC Youth Advisory Subcommittee meeting will be held once a month and will last no more than 1 hour.
 - Meetings will be held at a time convenient for youth to participate.
 - Youth Advisory Subcommittee will have 2 co-chairs. At least one youth will be the responsible volunteer to participate in that month's larger UsCC meeting to report back to the larger group on issues/needs/concerns of the youth group.
 - EE/ME Subcommittee members responded positively to the idea of including a Youth Advisory Subcommittee to UsCC Subcommittees. They expressed excitement of including youth in the EE/ME Subcommittee for reduction of stigma and acquiring knowledge and experience in mental health.

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| <p>SOW Updates on Capacity Building Projects FY2021-2022</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Updates on Capacity Building Project FY 2021 – 2022: Anna Yaralyan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Armenian Mental Health PSAs – SOW has been completed, approved, and submitted to the DMH Procurement Division. ✚ Healing Through Arts Project for the Arabic speaking Community – SOW has been completed, approved, and submitted to the DMH Procurement Division. ✚ Russian and Farsi Mental Health Feature Film Project – SOW has been completed, approved, and submitted to the DMH procurement Division. |
| <p>Future Meetings Times and Dates</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Next meeting is on Wednesday 5/25/2022, from 2:00pm – 4:00pm ❖ Discussion if EE/ME Subcommittee will go <u>Dark</u> for the month of <u>July 2022</u>. |
| | <p><u>Join Microsoft Teams Meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (323) 446-6996 United States, Los Angeles (Toll) Conference ID: 985 297 792# |