



County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health  
**Russian Mental Health Media Outreach Campaign**  
UsCC Capacity Building Project  
PO-MH-21009123-1

## **Project Outcomes and Summary Report**

### **Project Description**

The Russian Mental Health Media Outreach Campaign Project was developed by the Eastern European/Middle Eastern (EE/ME), Underserved Cultural Communities (UsCC) subcommittee with the objective of increasing awareness and knowledge of mental illness signs and symptoms as well as improved access to mental health services for the Russian community in Los Angeles County, which is significantly underserved by the public mental health system.

The purpose of this project was to develop a mental health media outreach campaign for the Russian community that resides in LA County, utilizing the 14 video-based Public Services Announcements (PSA's) previously created and archived by LACDMH, as the content for this campaign. The project aimed to edit the Russian PSA's into 30 second spots and air them on various (U.S. based) Russian television and radio stations that have viewership in the Los Angeles County area for a period of 12 months. In addition, the PSA's would air and be advertised via various social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Youtube.

This Project was implemented in three (3) phases starting May 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022. Below is a description of each phase:

#### Phase One:

During phase one of this project, the project supervisor, Mastaneh Moghadam, LCSW worked with the Russian Cultural Consultant, Inessa Rchtouni, LMFT in researching the various media outlets (i.e. radio and television stations) that provide programming to the Russian speaking community. We discovered that the majority of the most popular Russian media outlets (i.e. Russia 1 and NTV) have their offices in Moscow and are run by the Russian government. Therefore, it became evident that we would not be able to utilize them. We then focused on the Media outlets that had their primary offices out of the United States and we specifically wanted to make sure that those outlets have viewership in the Los Angeles area. Although we soon realized there were not many to choose from, we did finally find two media outlets that fit our requirements. We negotiated prices with them and finalized contracts with ARTN (Armenian-Russian Television Network) and Russian Media Group, which owns the television network RTN (Russian Television Network).

ARTN is a local, Los Angeles based media group with offices in the Glendale area. The network airs through every local cable and satellite provider in the United States, including Dish Network, DirecTV, AT&T U Verse, and Verizon FiOS. ARTN also airs all

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health  
**Russian Mental Health Media Outreach Campaign**  
UsCC Capacity Building Project  
PO-MH-21009123-1

over the world with mobile app powered by ConnectToCommunications. ARTN reports a viewership of over 50,000 in the Los Angeles area alone.

RTN offices are located in Brooklyn, NY. They broadcast nationwide, in all states. RTN is part of every cable package for Russian language channels. In Los Angeles, RTN is on Spectrum channel 1610, X-finity channel 3226. They report approximately 20,000 subscribers in California alone through their satellite system.

In our contract with ARTN it was agreed that they will air all 14, 30 second PSA's on a rotation bases, 4x/day (once in the morning hours of 6am to 12pm, once in the day time hours of 12pm to 6pm, once in the prime time hours of 6pm to 12am, and again in the night time hours of 12am to 6am), 7 days/week for a period of 12 months. And in the contract with RTN it was agreed that they will air all 14, 30 second PSA's on a rotation bases, 2x/day (once in the morning hour of 9am and again in the prime time hour of 8pm), 7 days/week, for a period of 12 months. Additionally, the PSA's would air 2x during the 12am to 6am hours. With these contracts in place, we ensured that we exceeded the minimum requirements outlined in the Statement of Work as to the frequency of air times.

During phase one we also completed the editing of the 14 PSA's into 30 second segments so that they can be aired on the television networks per their requirements. We ensured that each edited version of the PSA's continued to include the front title card which stated the title/topic of the PSA, the name of the presenter, as well as all required DMH logos and the statement, "Funded by MHSA." The back closing cards were also maintained which included all LACDMH logos and the statement, "Funded by MHSA," as well as the statement, "LACDMH Services are only available to Los Angeles County Residents," along with the LACDMH Access 24/7 mental health helpline phone number. Edited PSA's were shared and approved by LACDMH.

Additionally, we created an outreach plan as to how we will be distributing and advertising each PSA on social media during the promised 12 month period. It was decided that all 14 PSA's would be placed on the Cross Cultural Productions Youtube channel and we would promote each PSA for a 3 week period on social media, including Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook for a period of 12 months. All Instagram and Facebook shares were additionally boosted in order to ensure a greater number of views. We also created a tracking system in order to capture all engagements, likes, shares and comments.

#### Phase Two:

During phase two of this project we ensured that the PSA's aired on a rotation bases on the two Television stations that we contracted with. Each month the post airing logs from RTN and ARTN were sent to us. These post airing logs indicated the exact dates, times

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health  
**Russian Mental Health Media Outreach Campaign**  
UsCC Capacity Building Project  
PO-MH-21009123-1

and duration that each PSA was aired. All post airing logs have been reviewed and submitted to LACDMH on a monthly bases.

Additionally, we followed our outreach plan and distributed and advertised each PSA on social media (including Twitter, Facebook, Youtube and Instagram) for a full 12 month period. We boosted each of our posts on Facebook and instagram thus ensuring that the PSA's were shared with our targeted audience on a wider bases.

The project supervisor and cultural consultant also kept weekly track of how the PSAs were performing by looking at the number of views (how many times each PSA was viewed); the numbers reached (how many times people stopped to read/learn about the PSA, but didn't necessarily view it); and the number of engagements (how many times individuals pressed the "like" button, or they shared the PSA on their page, or they commented on the PSA), via the various social networking sites. These numbers were updated on a spreadsheet document on a weekly bases. Bi-weekly meetings were conducted with the cultural consultant and the project supervisor in order to review numbers, discuss community feedback, and brain-storm ideas on how to further create awareness and advertise the PSAs.

The Russian cultural consultant also reached out to a number of Russian organizations in order to further advertise the PSAs. She had meetings with the director of the West Hollywood Comprehensive Service Center (WHCSC) at Plummer Park, as well as with the Assistant Director of RU-JU-LA (Los Angeles Russian Jewish Network). Both agreed to tell their clients about the PSAs and also to share the PSAs on their social media platforms.

#### Phase Three:

During the third phase of the project, all the data from the social media campaign was collected and phone interviews were had with our contacts at RTN and ARTN, in order to receive feedback from them on their viewers reactions (if any) to the PSA's. All qualitative and quantitative feedback and data was reviewed in order to make determinations on the final project results and the final summary report was written.

#### **Project Results**

The PSA's aired on ARTN from August 1, 2021 to July 31, 2022; and they aired on RTN from August 15, 2021 to August 15, 2022. During the final follow-up interviews with our contacts at ARTN and RTN, it was reported that the PSA's were overall well received by their perspective viewers. They both reported that the PSA's that seemed to receive the most feedback from viewers was the one's about Grief and Loss, PTSD, Substance abuse, Depression and Anxiety. They also both reported that the PSA that discussed LGBTQ+ identity was the most controversial one that perhaps needs to be further discussed within the Russian speaking community.

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health  
**Russian Mental Health Media Outreach Campaign**  
UsCC Capacity Building Project  
PO-MH-21009123-1

RTN additionally reported that they received a number of messages from community members who felt that the timing of the PSA's was so important, given that the PSA's were airing during the start of the war between Russia and the Ukraine. They reported that this war has had such devastating consequences for the people of these two countries and as a result, mental health issues had severely escalated. Viewers reported that the PSA's were addressing many of the issues faced by Russian speaking immigrants, many of whom had families in these war torn parts of the world and were also bearing witness to the destruction of their homeland. Thus, the PSA's that discussed issues around grief and loss, post traumatic stress disorder, and feelings of depression and anxiety were particularly relevant to the Russian speaking community during the 2021-2022 year. Our contact person at RTN also reported that a number of viewers had sent messages of appreciation and gratitude that these issues were being addressed and resource information was being shared for those facing mental health crisis during these challenging times.

The PSA's were uploaded on the Youtube channel and started being shared on-line starting August 1, 2021.

The PSAs received a combined total of 27,811 views with 89,140 people reached. A total of 10,099 people engaged with the PSAs by either "liking" them, sharing them or commenting on them. The majority of the comments consisted of people stating how important they felt it was that the PSAs were created and that there is a great need for discussion about these topics in the Russian community in order to end stigma surrounding mental health. A number of people also commented on how important it was to share this information given the current crisis in Russia and the Ukraine. One person stated, "Seeing this information reminds us how much the war has impacted our mental well being. This crisis has impacted the mental well being of the Russian and the Ukrainian's and we should all be aware how much the people are suffering." Another individual messaged us and stated, "I just wanted to share my University back home was bombed..its so bizarre...my Mom used to read lectures there in Russian, my cousin graduated from there. This senseless war has been so hard on us. So many lives are lost. Buildings that withstand World War II is now being destroyed. News like this makes me feel off balance and so depressed."

The vast majority of the comments stated: "Thank you for bringing awareness to this subject"; "This is very needed"; "Thank you for sharing"; "This is an important message"; and "Thank you for creating this." A number of people tagged their friends/family members to view the PSAs. Many people reached out and had questions about mental health, DMH and CCE. We received comments asking us to provide more information on obtaining mental health referrals. One Instagram user asked "What type of services does DMH provide?" another Facebook user asked, "Does DMH work with children too?"

The Russian PSA that received the most number of views was "Russian Mental Health Movement," with 3,802 views and 7,773 reached. This may be due to the fact that that

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health  
**Russian Mental Health Media Outreach Campaign**  
UsCC Capacity Building Project  
PO-MH-21009123-1

the issue of mental health and the stigma's around have rarely been addressed within the Russian speaking community in such a public manner. Therefore, people are curious as to what is being said and also very happy that it is being said. Some of the comments on this PSA included, "It is time for this movement."; "So happy to hear this."; "This is amazing."; and "So important to share."

The "Preventing Substance Abuse," PSA reached the most people with 13,478 reached and 1,757 views. One person commented that, "Alcoholism is an epidemic within the Russian community and not enough people realize this." A number of people messaged us asking for resources and information about rehab facilities.

The "LGBTQ+ Identity" PSA also received a noteworthy number of hits with 2,445 views and 8,141 reached. Based on the feedback received, many people felt that this was the most controversial topic and very important to discuss. One comment stated, "There is a lot of shame and guilt surrounding Russian LGBTQ population and hate crimes against LGBTQ individuals has been rising not only in Russia but in US as well. So glad that this PSA has been created." Another comment stated, "This is a subject that needs a lot more attention and discussion in the Russian community. This is a good beginning." We also had a number of people who messaged us asking for mental health resources for LGBTQ people who speak Russian.

The PSA that received the least number of views was "Coping with Grief," with 1,099 views and 2,529 reached. This may be because the topic is not as controversial and therefore people weren't as curious about it as with the other PSAs. Although a few comments that we received about this PSA stated how "thankful" and "grateful" people were for the information provided.

The "Domestic Violence Prevention," PSA received the least number of reaches, with 3,339 reached and 1,296 views. In addition to a number of people who thanked us for addressing this subject, we also received a number of messages from people asking for services that are available to help Domestic Violence victims. We also received a few messages from people who shared their story of being raised in a DV family and being in DV relationships themselves.

The "Preventing Child Abuse," PSA received a number of comments from individuals that showed how this PSA has opened up dialogue for members of the Russian speaking community to share their concerns and experiences on this subject. One person commented, "Child services employees are not well educated to immediately see troubled children! Be more vigilant! Most children are too frightened to come forward! Most parents too lax in reading Children." Another person commented, "As a former foster care client in my experience a lot of the foster parents were not trained or screened properly for their own psychological or psychiatric health. They were just people with an economic advantage and having larger homes they were just kid warehouses." Another interesting comment stated, "There are a lot of people with untreated and unresolved childhood trauma. Sometimes they think they do good to

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health  
**Russian Mental Health Media Outreach Campaign**  
 UsCC Capacity Building Project  
 PO-MH-21009123-1

separate families and end up sending the kids to people who are worse. Half of the people who took care of me when I was in foster care, I would never leave my kids with.”

For a detailed breakdown of total numbers reached and total number of views and engagements for each Russian PSA, please see the chart below:

<b>Title of PSA</b>	<b>Total Number of Views</b>	<b>Total Number Reached</b>	<b>Total Number of Engagements</b>
Russian Mental Health Movement with Yevgeniya Kutepova	3,802	7,773	946
Domestic Violence Prevention with Pasha Sol	1,296	3,339	553
Coping with Grief and loss with Edward Sargsyan	1,099	4,232	458
Talking to children about violence against women with Pogos Rchtouni	1,814	5,927	407
Discussing Anxiety with Pasha Sol	1,470	4,396	482
Preventing Substance abuse with Anna Rchtouni	1,757	13,478	664
Suicide prevention with Pasha Sol	1,902	4,267	614
Talking to children about drugs with Inessa Rchtouni	1,731	4,752	751
Understanding Depression with Lana Silver	2,279	7,779	866

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health  
**Russian Mental Health Media Outreach Campaign**  
 UsCC Capacity Building Project  
 PO-MH-21009123-1

Overcoming Stigma with Elena Leonard	1,826	5,565	744
Understanding How Your Thoughts Effect Your Feelings with Natalie Liberman	2,192	6,337	821
Talking about PTSD with Rita Vakhlis	2,169	6,931	789
Preventing Child Abuse with Natalie Liberman	2,029	6,223	728
LGBTQ+ Identity with Gregory Rchtouni	2,445	8,141	1,276
<b>GRAND TOTAL =</b>	<b>27,811</b>	<b>89,140</b>	<b>10,099</b>

**Project Costs**

For the services described in the Statement of Work’s Deliverables, the Department of Mental Health agreed to pay Consultants (Cross Cultural Expressions) a total of \$47,500 for services rendered.

**Barriers/Challenges and Lessons Learned**

One of the main challenges we faced was that there wasn’t too much of a variety of radio and television outlets, that work out of the United States, that serve the Russian speaking community. As we mentioned above, the majority of the most popular Russian television and radio outlets are located in Russia. However, we felt fortunate that we ultimately found two very good media groups who seemed passionate about the work we are doing and were excited to work with us in distributing these PSA’s.

The second challenge was of course finances. Advertisement on radio and television are always much more expensive than one would think. However, I think we utilized our budget well and negotiated some really good deals that gave the PSA’s the maximum exposure on Russian media given our limited budget. Overall we feel that the project went very smoothly and this was evident by the fact that we were able to complete the project one month earlier then its expected due date.

**Recommendations**

The idea of putting funding in to further distribution of the Russian PSA’s that LACDMH already had in their archives, proved to be a successful way of further engaging the

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health  
**Russian Mental Health Media Outreach Campaign**  
UsCC Capacity Building Project  
PO-MH-21009123-1

Russian speaking community around topics related to mental health and accessing services. The feedback we received from the community in doing this project made it clear to us that this is just the beginning of what needs to be on-going programming that will help educate and normalize mental health concepts to this immigrant community.

Given recent events in Russia and the Ukraine, it is our recommendation that LACDMH engages in further programming that address the mental health needs of the Russian speaking community. Particularly in the areas of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression, Anxiety, and Grief/Loss. Since it appears to be more of a challenge to engage Russian speakers in face-to-face services, it seems that engagement through Russian media and social media are very effective with this community.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we believe that the distribution of the Russian PSA's on Russian television stations proved to be very helpful in getting the information about mental health and accessing mental health services to a greater number of the Russian speaking community that reside in Los Angeles County. Working with Russian media in this manner, while at the same time doing another push with distribution of the PSA's on social media, allowed for greater learning and growth around the issues of mental health, service availability, and reducing stigma's around mental health issues for this community.

Additionally, our timing for this project was very on point because we happened to engage in this outreach during a year that was very challenging for the Russian speaking community due to the Russia/Ukraine war. Per the feedback we received from the two television stations and comments and messages from the community on social media, it showed how important this support and information was during this time to Russian community members.

We think that the PSAs had an impact on how the Russian speaking community views mental health issues. This is supported by the great number of views and engagements each of the PSAs received. It is also supported by the many likes, shares, comments and questions that people had about mental health, LACDMH and CCE.

The significant numbers of views suggest that the PSAs themselves were successful, as they managed to reach thousands of people from the Russian community. The data that we have collected supports and validates our conclusion that this program was a resounding success in accomplishing the goals and objectives that we set out to achieve.