

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
Strategic Communications Division

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

November 30, 2022

2:00PM – 4:00PM via Teleconference

Present: Dr. Heather Laird, Joann Jaimes (captioner), Mastaneh Moghadam, Avo Soltanian, Seta Haig, Sarkis Simonian, Dr. Haydeh Fakhrabadi.

DMH Admin: Dr. Anna Yaralyan.

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions
Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone introduced themselves.
Meeting Minutes Review and Approval	Reviewed and approved meeting minutes from 10/26/2022. Mastaneh approved.
Announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Fakhrabadi and Anna Yaralyan reminded everyone of the 2022 Speakers Bureau Multicultural Community Conference which will take place on December 7-8, 2022, 9 AM – 5 PM. The theme of this year’s virtual conference is: “Elevating Diversity and Community to Empower Healing and Wellbeing.” • Dr. Fakhrabadi and Anna Yaralyan will present at the Conference. • Anna Yaralyan will present on Complex Trauma within the Armenian Community on December 7, 2022.
Capacity Building Project Updates FY2023-2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Arabic Speaking Poetry Night Mental Health Outreach Project – Dr. Heather Laird <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project is like the mental health Capacity Building Project created for the Farsi Speaking Community last year.

- The goal of this project is to increase awareness and knowledge of mental illness signs and symptoms, as well as improve access to mental health services for the Arabic speaking community at different service areas in Los Angeles where high concentration of the Arabic speaking community members resides.
- This project ultimately seeks to reduce isolation, increase social interactions, and provide an opportunity for Arabic speaking adults and older adults to process their emotional and mental health issues using poetry.
- This project hopes to reduce the stigma that continues to exist within the Arabic speaking community toward seeking mental health services and change negative cultural attitudes about mental illness. Additionally, this project aims to normalize conversations around mental health and increase this community's utilization of mental health services.

2. Mental Health Parenting Seminars for the Armenian Community – Avo Soltanian

- This project aims to develop and implement a parenting seminar targeting Armenian parents and community members. One parenting seminar will be repeated various times in a period of a year, in different locations and venues throughout Los Angeles County, as well as virtually, (via Zoom, Teams, etc.).
- As part of this project, the Trainer will conduct the seminars and provide mental health linkage and referral information pertaining to the services offered at Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. Most Armenian families living in Southern California are recent immigrants and have difficulty understanding the mental health needs of their children due to stigma and low levels of acculturation. Many Armenian parents express feelings of helplessness because they don't have the tools and knowledge needed to address the mental health needs of their children. These parents are looking to Armenian professionals for guidance and mental health education. This project hopes to provide guidance and support for Armenian families who are struggling with the mental health needs of their children.

3. Armenian Wellness Festival – Seta Haig

- This project proposal was submitted by Sarkis Simonian. Seta Haig presented this project, due to Sarkis not being able to attend this meeting.
- Project Description: A whole day wellness festival in 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, 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 and experience different methods. Food & refreshments will be provided for in its entirety at the event. There will also be tables for resources from DMH and DMG contracted/ legal entities that provide services for the Armenian Community.

- Project Purpose: To engage the Armenian Community, and familiarize them with wellness & mental health techniques, and at the same time reduce stigma and encourage the community to seek mental health.
- The project objective is to increase awareness about mental health, reduce stigma and familiarize consumers with different aspects and modalities of mental health and drive them to seek mental health help. Due to high level of stigma of mental health and fear of the unknown when it comes to mental health, this festival will help the community to seek help when it's presented in a relaxed and enjoyable setting.

4. Sharing Our Stories: Immigrant Journey's Towards Mental and Emotional Well-being – Mastaneh Moghadam

- Project Description: The projects consists of the creation of two coffee table books (one for the Russian speaking community and another for the Farsi speaking community) that consists of short stories gathered from 15 to 20 Russian and Farsi speaking immigrants where each person gets the opportunity to share their story of a mental health and/or emotional/social challenge or crisis that they experienced as an immigrant in the U.S. Alongside the individual stories, there will also be editorials that will share educational information about mental health issues and available resources.
- Project Objective is to decrease stigmas associated with mental health in a compelling and engaging manner; provide psychoeducation around mental and emotional challenges that Russian and Farsi speaking immigrants often face; and to provide awareness around mental health resources that LACDMH offers to these communities. Now more than ever, Russian and Farsi speaking immigrants are in need of supportive mental health interventions and services. Given the recent tragic events occurring in Russia, Ukraine, Iran and Afghanistan, these immigrant populations are continually being bombarded by stories of loss and grief that impact many peoples mental and emotional health in a negative manner, leaving them in an on-going state of crisis. Such immigrants need support and treatment to overcome the untreated trauma, stress, cultural demands, discrimination, fear and uncertainty that they face every day. Unfortunately, many Russian and Farsi speaking immigrants who need mental health services the most are unable to access them due to cultural stigmas, language barriers and financial limitations. This project can break through barriers by providing a safe and engaging gateway through which community members can gain awareness about shared mental health and emotional challenges, knowledge about mental health issues and linkage to resources and services.

	<p>✚ Anna Yaralyan will send out an email to the voting members to conduct their votes for the projects above and will email and results to the EE/ME UsCC Subcommittee Members, as well as announce it at the next meeting on January 25, 2023.</p>
<p>Capacity Building Project Updates FY2022-2023</p>	<p>1. The Russian and Farsi speaking Mental Health Film Project – Mastaneh Moghadam</p> <p>The purpose of this project is to develop and implement Russian and Farsi speaking Mental Health Films. There will be a development of the two 90-minute film productions in English language, with one of the films Farsi and the other in Russian subtitles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project is going well and on timely manner. • Vendor reported that the scripts of the two movies are approved by LACDMH. • The project is in the pre-production stage. This is where the planning of shooting of the films takes place. These include but are not limited to identifying shooting locations, film schedules, costume and set design, and recruitment of film crew and cast members, and cast rehearsals. • Vendor reported that they will start filming the movies in January or February. <p>2. The Arabic Healing Through Art Mental Health Outreach Project – Dr. Laird</p> <p>This project will consist of ten (10) art events, one (1) time a month, for ten (10) consecutive months, utilizing painting to express thoughts and feelings and open the door for healing. Each event will be conducted in at least one of the eight (8) Los Angeles County Service Areas and will last total of four (4) hours in length. The first hour will introduce the idea of well-being through art, one & half hours will be painting, and the last one & half hours will include expression of thoughts, feelings, and mental health discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Arabic Mental Health art event project is in its first phase of implementation. • The Vendor is in the process of identifying venues where the events will take place. • The Vendor is also in the participant recruitment process. Participant recruitment will happen throughout the project. • Some of the challenges of the project are like last year’s project, where community members don’t want to talk about their personal and mental health issues. They also don’t want to share information about themselves or their families in a group setting. Arabic culture is a private type of culture and stigma to Mental Health is high. As a result, the Vendor is trying to come up with other, nontraditional ways of reaching this community. She is creating the mental health art events so that the participants will feel comfortable enough to share their personal issues through art. • The first phase of the project is taking a little longer to be completed due to these challenges.

	<p>3. Armenian PSA Mental Health Project – Anna Yaralyan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USArmenia TV station got this project! Congratulations! • Next phase of this project will include LACDMH meeting with project Vendor to review the next steps and fee schedule of the project. • Some of the next steps will include but not be limited to completing the PSAs in English language and translating it to the Armenian language.
<p>Future Meetings Times and Dates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Next meeting is on Wednesday 1/25/2023, from 2:00pm – 4:00pm ❖ EE/ME Subcommittee will go <u>DARK</u> in the month of December 2022.
	<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#