

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
UsCC Capacity Building Project
PO-MH-23005145-1

Project Outcomes and Summary Report

Project Description

The Russian and Farsi speaking Mental Health Film Project was developed by the Eastern European/Middle Eastern (EE/ME) Underserved Cultural Communities (USCC) subcommittee (under the Mental Health Services Act) for the purpose of increasing mental health access and reducing disparities for the Russian and Farsi speaking communities that reside in the County of Los Angeles. Cross Cultural Expressions was hired for the purpose of developing and implementing this project. This project targeted the Russian and Farsi speaking communities of Los Angeles County at large by promoting mental health services, increasing mental health awareness and education, and reducing stigma. Through this project, Russian and Farsi speaking community members were educated on how to access mental health services and understand some of the cultural biases associated with mental health conditions and stigmatized societal issues that often lead to mental health conditions for the individual as well as within the family system.

This Project was implemented in five (5) phases starting August 15, 2022 to August 15, 2023. Below is a description of each phase:

Phase One: Script Development/Pre-Production

During phase one of this project, the project coordinator set out to get feedback from both Russian and Farsi speaking community members as to what the social, emotional and mental health needs of each of their communities are at this given time, that should be addressed in the script. After multiple in-depth interviews, it became clear that since both the Iranian community and the Russian community are dealing with a great deal of social and political upheaval in their home countries (the murder of Mahsa Amini and subsequent Women, Life, Freedom Movement in Iran and the Ukraine/Russian War), it was decided that the script writer would focus on the topics of grief and loss for this project. Themes that revolve around stigmatized and taboo issues that these immigrant communities often keep hidden, would also be incorporated within the script.

Through this story we were able to delve into mental health issues within Farsi and Russian speaking communities such as post traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety, that are often linked to experiences of grief and loss. The script explored the multiple losses suffered by immigrants, generational trauma, and the judgements and criticisms that are frequently based in our unresolved fears and insecurities about ourselves, our families, and the world around us. With all of these themes in mind, the script for the mental health film of “The Djinn in The Pen” was written.

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
UsCC Capacity Building Project
PO-MH-23005145-1

The script was then sent to LADMH for approval. Once approval was received, the script was given to one expert from the Russian community and another expert from the Iranian community for adaptation in to Russian and Farsi. Both communities asked that for the sake of families being able to view and discuss these films together, that the films be shot in the English language and then subtitled into Russian and Farsi. With permission from LACDMH, we moved forward with this request.

Once it was established who would fulfill the role of the producer on this project, the producer then set out to recruit a director. After the director was hired, the producer/ writer/director and Iranian and Russian cultural consultants had numerous meetings to discuss the script, the recruitment and auditioning of the actors, the locations, the rehearsal times, the sets and costumes, and other technical aspects of the production. Next, the director/producer began recruiting and auditioning actors.

During phase one, the producer and cultural consultants also developed a pre/post survey questionnaire. The questionnaire included five (5) close ended questions and utilized a Likert Scale in order to conduct a matched pair analysis of the information gained by participants from viewing the films and the 45 minute discussion sessions that would also be recorded and available for community members to view following the film. The pre/post survey's were meant to measure the degree to which the presentations may have affected the participants perception of stigma in relation to mental health issues, their understanding of certain mental health topics, and their knowledge of available mental health resources. Pre/Post survey's were turned in to LADMH for approval and once approval was received, they were translated into Russian and Farsi.

During this phase of the project, the producer also began working on hiring the director of photography, art director, costume designer, sound and lighting designers and the rest of the crew required in filming. Producer also began work on determining shoot locations, auditioning and hiring actors, renting equipment as well as creating contracts and releases for the cast and crew members to sign. Once all cast and crew were hired and all contracts and releases were signed. The director began weekly rehearsals.

Phase Two: Production

During phase two the producer/director continued to work closely with the director of photography and all other crew members in order to ensure that progress was being made in a timely fashion. All locations were secured and insurance for the production was purchased and the shoot day's were finalized. It was decided that we would shoot the movies in 10 days. Due to our very limited budget, we realized that we could not afford any additional shoot days. The shoot day's were generally 10 to 12 hours long. Overall, the shoot went very smoothly and we were able to complete the shoot in the time that was allotted. This was due to the very diligent and organized manner that the director, director of photography and the rest of the cast and crew put into planning, rehearsing and organizing all aspects of the shoot during the pre-production phase.

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
UsCC Capacity Building Project
PO-MH-23005145-1

During this phase, the writer/producer/director along with the cultural consultants, myth consultant/art director, also recorded the 45 minute discussion segment where we discussed in depth the mental health aspects that the films touched upon. We discussed the journey of the main character as she processed and worked through her multiple traumatic losses and how being an immigrant played a role in that trauma. We also discussed the stigma often related to mental health and the accessing of mental health services and introduced new perspectives in overcoming those fears and limitations and reaching out to receive the help needed. We finally discussed how to access mental health services and gave the LACDMH Access Help-line number.

Phase Three: Post Production

During the third phase of the project, the producer/director worked with the editor in order to edit the two films and get them ready to be sent to the music director (who placed an original score on the movies), the colorist (who made sure that the films colors were vivid and accurate and flowed well) and the post-sound engineer (who made sure that sound effects were added and that the dialogue and music was mixed properly and the overall sound of the film flowed well).

Due to the fact that there was also an animation sequence in the films, the producer/director also worked with the animator to ensure that the animation sequence was delivered on time, was culturally appropriate and looked good for the needs of the films.

Finally, the films were sent to the two cultural consultants who were also responsible for translating the films in to Russian and Farsi, working with the editor to display the subtitles and also to make sure that each film had been adapted appropriately to fit the culture that was being depicted in the script.

Phase Four: Distribution

During phase four of the project, the producer continued to work closely with the cultural consultants in order to develop a promotional plan and promotional materials for the purpose of outreach and the promotion of the films.

A movie poster was created and the poster was accompanied with a promotional paragraph (one for the Russian speaking community and another for the Farsi speaking community) that included the tag line for the films and also displayed the YouTube link to the films.

Both of the films were placed on CCE's YouTube channel for viewing. This way community members could view the films and the discussion segment at their convenience. This proved to be a very effective method to distributing the films. The films were promoted to the public through social media (facebook and instagram); on-line magazines such as Iranianhotline.com; through email lists of cast and crew

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
UsCC Capacity Building Project
PO-MH-23005145-1

members, the CCE email list, as well as other organizations including Raha International, JQ International, PARS Equality Center, Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles and City of West Hollywood; radio announcements and interviews via KIRN 670am and VOA Russia; and posters that were distributed at local Iranian and Russian grocery stores.

In order to get a sampling of the impact of the movie on community members, we held two virtual events where we invited members of the Russian and Farsi speaking communities to view the films with us at a certain time via zoom. Individuals who attended these virtual viewing sessions were sent the pre and post survey's to fill out. Any community member who attended these special viewing session and filled out both the pre and post survey's, their name was entered into a drawing and two people received \$100 gift cards to Amazon. This was the incentive that we offered for anyone who would attend these sessions and fill out the survey's.

Phase Five: Outcome and Summary Report

The fifth phase of the project consisted of the collection of all pre and post survey's and registration information (i.e. the demographic information of all participants that was collected) and pre/post survey results. All documentation was reviewed and demographic information was tallied. All comments and questions and feedback that community members communicated to with us via social media, emails, texts and telephone calls was also recorded in order to gather qualitative information about the effects the films and discussion session had on participants and on the targeted communities at large. All quantitative and qualitative data that was gathered was written up and included in the Project Outcomes and Summary Report that was completed during this phase.

Project Results

This project began as a massive undertaking. Just the initial idea of writing a feature length script that would, in an entertaining and engaging manner, address the stigmatized mental health and social issues of the Russian and Farsi speaking communities of Los Angeles County was in itself a lengthy and complicated notion. Then to have that script translated and adapted to the languages of these two communities and to undergo the complicated tasks of hiring a cast and crew and going through all the steps of making two films in the very limited time that we had with the very limited budget that we had was itself a very challenging journey.

We at Cross Cultural Expressions are absolutely overjoyed by the end results of this multifaceted very complex project. In consideration of our time constraints and limited budget, we feel that this project delivered above and beyond expectation both in the

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
 UsCC Capacity Building Project
 PO-MH-23005145-1

final quality of the script and films, but also in the enthusiasm community members showed in their reception of the films.

A total of 106 individuals registered to view the Russian version of the film via our zoom gathering. The demographic information that was collected is as follows:

Gender	# Registered
Male	40
Female	63
Other	3
No Answer	0

Age	# Registered
0 to 15 years	0
16 to 25 years	27
25 to 59 years	42
60+ years	37
No Answer	0

Country of Origin	# Registered
Russia	33
USA	10
Ukraine	39
Armenia	16
Georgia	8

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
UsCC Capacity Building Project
PO-MH-23005145-1

Primary Language	# Registered
Russian	44
Armenian	16
Ukrainian	27
English	19

We received many comments, questions and feedback from Russian speaking community members. The majority of the comments were focused on thanking us for creating such an educational and informative film for the Russian speaking community. Some of the comments we received included:

“I really related to the loss that the main character experienced. I think this subject is so important and I want to thank you for making this film.”

“This film made me think about how resistant I have been to admitting how hard the loss of my county and those I love has been on me. It made me want to reach out and talk to someone about it.”

“I really appreciate the time and effort placed in making a movie like this for my community. We really need more movies like this.”

“The amount of things I learned about myself by watching this movie was amazing. Thank you for making this available. I will watch it again and again.”

“I really loved this movie. I loved the message and also it was such a beautiful movie. The colors were beautiful and I loved that it was also funny.”

“I think this is a very important film. I hope many people watch it. I’m glad you did it in English with Russian sub-titles. It makes it more accessible to people.”

We also received a number of questions that we replied to. Some of the questions from Russian community members included:

“I cried the whole time. Where can I get services?”

“Where can I get a Russian speaking therapist?”

“Can I get a Russian speaking therapist for my Mom? She is dealing with a lot of grief and loss.”

“Where can I receive information on therapy?”

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
 UsCC Capacity Building Project
 PO-MH-23005145-1

“For someone with these similar problems that were in the movie, like depression, how long on average does it take for therapy to work?”

“I see a lot of myself and my family in this movie. But how can I force my family to go to therapy? What is the best way to get a family member or friend to go to therapy?”

“How much does therapy cost and where can I go for help?”

It seemed that amongst the Russian community, there were many questions regarding the effectiveness of therapy when dealing with mental health issues and also the cost of therapy as well as wanting information as to where they can go for help. During the phone calls, emails and texts that we received from Russian speaking community members, all of these questions were addressed by a Russian speaking mental health professional and the phone number to the LADMH Access line was given to all participants.

A total of 152 individuals registered to view the Farsi version of the film via the zoom gathering. The demographic information that was collected is as follows:

Gender	# Registered
Male	55
Female	93
Other	4
No Answer	0

Age	# Registered
0 to 15 years	2
16 to 25 years	28
25 to 59 years	73
60+ years	49
No Answer	0

Country of Origin	# Registered
--------------------------	---------------------

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
 UsCC Capacity Building Project
 PO-MH-23005145-1

Iran	89
USA	23
Canada	2
UK	3
Australia	1
Israel	4
Armenia	24
Afghanistan	6

Primary Language	# Registered
Farsi/Persian	84
English	37
Armenian	24
Hebrew	6
Arabic	1

We received a great amount of comments, questions and feedback from Farsi speaking community members via social media, text messages, emails and phone calls. The majority of participants commented on how educational and engaging they felt the script was and how much they appreciated the quality of the film and the performances of the actors. Many people also commented on how they felt like they could see themselves in this film and they really connected to the characters and the mental and emotional challenges that they were facing.

One participant commented, “I felt like this movie was written about me and everything I have been going through. I need to watch it again and again and take notes. Thank you for creating this.” Another community member stated, “I’m so happy that someone is finally addressing grief and loss. This is something that our community never talks about openly and we all suffer from it.” Another comment stated, “I can’t get over how beautiful this movie was. I was very moved and touch by so much of it.” Another person stated, “Thank you so much for doing this. I cried and I laughed and I learned so much.”

Other comments included:

“I really identified with the character of Nadia. I will be watching this movie over and over again.”

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
UsCC Capacity Building Project
PO-MH-23005145-1

“I watched this movie with my mom and grandmother. We all got so much out of it and talked about it for days.”

“Congratulations on this accomplishment. It’s not easy to create a movie that teaches so much and still continues to be entertaining. I loved it.”

“This was like 50 therapy sessions in one film. I love that I can watch it over and over again because it really helps me with everything I am going through.”

“Thank you all for your hard work and making this movie. I love the performance of the Djinn. I loved that the Djinn was gender fluid. As an Iranian queer person, I thought that was important.”

“Thank you all for bringing this important awareness to our community. Great job everyone. I will watch it again.”

“This was AMAZING! The animation sequence and dance sequence made me cry. I loved it.”

“I watched this movie because my friend recommended it and then I sent it to all my friends to watch. It is so important to share this insight and information with people. Especially those people who I know will never go to therapy.”

“I loved the way you used the character of the Djinn. I could really use a Djinn like that. Maybe I should go to therapy. Thank you for creating this movie for our community.”

“I was so angry with the character of Nadia. Then I realized she is me. Wow! So transformational! Thank you!!”

We literally got hundreds and hundreds of messages such as these and we continue to get messages and feedback all the time. Some of the questions that were asked included:

“How do you get a stubborn person to get help and go to therapy?”

“Do you think the revolution and the upheaval it caused is why so many Iranians experience depression and anxiety?”

“We loved the last movie you made, the sleeping beauty one and we loved this one. When will you be doing another one? I think these movies are so important to our community.”

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
UsCC Capacity Building Project
PO-MH-23005145-1

“Where do we go from here? Where can we get help? How do we convince our family and friends to discuss these issues and get help?”

“I can’t afford therapy. Where can I get affordable care?”

“How did you decide to make a movie about depression and grief? I think this topic isn’t usually talked about.”

“I can’t stop with my sad stories. Where can I get a genie to help me with this?”

“I lost my mother 20 years ago and I still cry everyday. Your movie was very helpful to me. Where can I learn more?”

“How do overprotective parents affect their children’s lives?”

All of these questions were addressed by a Farsi speaking mental health professional and the phone number to the LADMH Access line was given to all participants.

Community members also gave positive feedback in regards to the Pre/Post surveys. They felt that the questions were good indicators of where community members beliefs and understanding lied in relation to the Russian and Farsi speaking communities. They stated that the results of the pre/post surveys confirmed for them how much these communities needed the information that was presented to them.

For the Russian speaking community, the pre-tests indicated that only 29% of participants either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement, “Therapy can be as beneficial for healthy, emotionally stable, successful people, as much as it is for people suffering from serious mental illness.” The post tests indicate that there was a 58% increase in the number of participants who “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with this statement, indicating that the majority (87%) had developed a better understanding about the fact that therapy is not only meant for people with serious mental illness but can be beneficial for anyone who is experiencing distress.

The pre-tests also indicated that only 30% of participants either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement, “Fear of social stigma is one of the main reasons why individuals who suffer from mental health issues don’t seek help.” In contrast, the post-tests showed that 90% of participants were in agreement with this statement, indicating that there was a 60% increase in participants who had gained an understanding that in fact social stigma’s is a main reason why individuals choose to live with mental health issues rather than get help.

In regards to the statement, “Accessing mental health services is not a sign of weakness.” again, the pre-tests indicated that 52% of participants either “agreed” or “strongly agreed,” with this statement; while the post-tests indicated that opinions had shifted by 43% with the majority (95%) agreeing with this statement. Thus confirming

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
UsCC Capacity Building Project
PO-MH-23005145-1

the fact that the project had helped participants understand that utilizing mental health services is not a weakness but actually a beneficial way to deal with life's challenges.

Participants again indicated that the presentations helped them gain awareness of where they can go to access culturally competent and affordable mental health services, when the majority (66%) of them "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement, "I know of two places I can call to find affordable mental health services, with professionals who speak my language and know about my culture," on the post-tests. In contrast, a mere 19% of participants initially "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with this statement on the pre-tests. That was an 47% increase in awareness that the participants gained.

Finally, the pre-tests indicated that only 29% of participants either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement that "Mental health problems like depression and anxiety, can get better if a person goes to therapy." While the vast majority (94%), indicated in post-tests that they "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with this statement. Again indicating a shift of 65% that participants had attained as a result of being exposed to the film and post film discussion.

For the Farsi speaking community the pre-tests indicated that only 25% of participants either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement, "Therapy can be as beneficial for healthy, emotionally stable, successful people, as much as it is for people suffering from serious mental illness." The post tests indicate that there was a 50% increase in the number of participants who "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with this statement, indicating that the majority (75%) had developed a better understanding about the fact that therapy is not only meant for people with serious mental illness but can be beneficial for anyone who is experiencing distress.

The pre-tests also indicated that only 25% of participants either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement, "Fear of social stigma is one of the main reasons why individuals who suffer from mental health issues don't seek help." In contrast, the post-tests showed that 69% of participants were in agreement with this statement, indicating that there was a 44% increase in participants who had gained an understanding that in fact social stigma's is a main reason why individuals choose to live with mental health issues rather than get help.

In regards to the statement, "Accessing mental health services is not a sign of weakness." again, the pre-tests indicated that 18% of participants either "agreed" or "strongly agreed," with this statement; while the post-tests indicating that opinions had shifted by 57% with the majority (75%) agreeing with this statement. Thus confirming the fact that the project had helped participants understand that utilizing mental health services is not a weakness but actually a beneficial way to deal with life's challenges.

Participants again indicated that the presentations helped them gain awareness of where they can go to access culturally competent and affordable mental health

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
 UsCC Capacity Building Project
 PO-MH-23005145-1

services, when the majority (85%) of them “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement, “I know of two places I can call to find affordable mental health services, with professionals who speak my language and know about my culture,” on the post-tests. In contrast, a mere 10% of participants who initially “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with this statement on the pre-tests. That was a 75% increase in awareness that the participants gained.

Finally, the pre-tests indicated that only 26% of participants either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the statement that “Mental health problems like depression and anxiety, can get better if a person goes to therapy.” While the vast majority (69%), indicated in post-tests that they “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with this statement. Again indicating a shift of 43% that participants had attained as a result of being exposed to the project.

Therefore, the results of the pre tests are in alignment with our hypothesis that the majority of Russian and Farsi speakers have limited awareness about the social stigma’s that exist around mental health issues and to what extent these false beliefs and perceptions keeps them from accessing appropriate mental health services that can improve their everyday lives. The results of the post-tests then indicated that after participation in the Mental Health Film Project, the majority of participants had a better understanding and awareness in regards to how therapeutic interventions can benefit their lives and how and where to access such services.

Furthermore, the verbal feedback that was collected was in alignment with the pre and post survey findings, as evidenced by the statement’s presented above. The verbal feedback, even more than the pre/post survey’s appeared to indicate how important this project was to community members and how influential it was in creating open discussion around subjects that are rarely discussed in our targeted communities.

A total of 106 Pre and Post tests were collected from the Russian speaking community. Below is a detailed breakdown of participant’s responses to each question:

RUSSIAN PRE-TEST OUTCOMES: N = 106

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	No opinion (0)
	N - %	N - %	N - %	N - %	N - %	N - %

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
 UsCC Capacity Building Project
 PO-MH-23005145-1

Therapy can be as beneficial for healthy, emotionally stable, successful people, as much as it is for people suffering from serious mental illness.	8 - 8%	23 - 21%	16 - 15%	21 - 20%	4 - 4%	34 - 32%
Fear of social stigma is one of the main reasons why individuals who suffer from mental health issues don't seek help.	6 - 6%	25 - 24%	16 - 15%	22 - 21%	2 - 2%	35 - 33%
Accessing mental health services is not a sign of weakness.	25 - 24%	33 - 31%	20 - 19%	8 - 8%	3 - 3%	17 - 16%
I know of two places I can call to find affordable mental health services, with professionals who speak my language and know about my culture.	7 - 7%	13 - 12%	4 - 4%	26 - 25%	33 - 31%	23 - 21%
Mental health problems like depression and anxiety, can get better if a person goes to therapy.	13 - 12%	18 - 17%	19 - 18%	20 - 19%	8 - 8%	28 - 26%

RUSSIAN POST-TEST OUTCOMES: N = 106

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	No opinion (0)
	N - %	N - %	N - %	N - %	N - %	N - %

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
 UsCC Capacity Building Project
 PO-MH-23005145-1

Therapy can be as beneficial for healthy, emotionally stable, successful people, as much as it is for people suffering from serious mental illness.	40 - 38%	52 - 49%	7 - 7%	2 - 2%	0	5 - 5%
Fear of social stigma is one of the main reasons why individuals who suffer from mental health issues don't seek help.	55 - 52%	40 - 38%	6 - 6%	2 - 2%	0	3 - 3%
Accessing mental health services is not a sign of weakness.	75 - 70%	26 - 25%	2 - 2%	2 - 2%	0	1 - 1%
I know of two places I can call to find affordable mental health services, with professionals who speak my language and know about my culture.	37 - 35%	33 - 31%	13 - 12%	4 - 4%	4 - 4%	19 - 18%
Mental health problems like depression and anxiety, can get better if a person goes to therapy.	63 - 59%	37 - 35%	4 - 4%	0	0	2 - 2%

A total of 152 Pre and Post tests were collected from the Farsi speaking community. Below is a detailed breakdown of participant's responses to each question:

FARSI PRE-TEST OUTCOMES: N = 152

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
 UsCC Capacity Building Project
 PO-MH-23005145-1

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	No opinion (0)
	N - %	N - %	N - %	N - %	N - %	N - %
Therapy can be as beneficial for healthy, emotionally stable, successful people, as much as it is for people suffering from serious mental illness.	18 - 12%	20 - 13%	30 - 20%	30 - 20%	15 - 10%	39 - 26%
Fear of social stigma is one of the main reasons why individuals who suffer from mental health issues don't seek help.	17 - 11%	21 - 14%	33 - 22%	27 - 18%	12 - 8%	46 - 30%
Accessing mental health services is not a sign of weakness.	6 - 4%	21 - 14%	26 - 17%	17 - 11%	20 - 13%	62 - 41%
I know of two places I can call to find affordable mental health services, with professionals who speak my language and know about my culture.	6 - 4%	9 - 6%	6 - 4%	72 - 47%	12 - 8%	47 - 31%
Mental health problems like depression and anxiety, can get better if a person goes to therapy.	18 - 12%	21 - 14%	67 - 44%	9 - 6%	13 - 9%	24 - 16%

FARSI POST-TEST OUTCOMES: N = 152

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
 UsCC Capacity Building Project
 PO-MH-23005145-1

	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	No opinion (0)
	N - %	N - %	N - %	N - %	N - %	N - %
Therapy can be as beneficial for healthy, emotionally stable, successful people, as much as it is for people suffering from serious mental illness.	65 - 43%	49 - 32%	9 - 6%	7 - 5%	0	22 - 14%
Fear of social stigma is one of the main reasons why individuals who suffer from mental health issues don't seek help.	63 - 41%	43 - 28%	18 - 12%	4 - 3%	5 - 3%	19 - 13%
Accessing mental health services is not a sign of weakness.	72 - 47%	43 - 28%	12 - 8%	6 - 4%	5 - 3%	14 - 9%
I know of two places I can call to find affordable mental health services, with professionals who speak my language and know about my culture.	83 - 55%	46 - 30%	2 - 1%	3 - 2%	0	18 - 12%
Mental health problems like depression and anxiety, can get better if a person goes to therapy.	60 - 39%	46 - 30%	3 - 2%	5 - 3%	5 - 3%	33 - 22%

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
UsCC Capacity Building Project
PO-MH-23005145-1

In addition to the 152 individuals who viewed the Farsi version of the film via the zoom gathering, another 810 people have viewed the film on Youtube, for a total of 962 views.

The Russian version of the film has received 264 views on Youtube, in addition to the 106 people who viewed it during our zoom gathering. This brings the total number of views for the Russian version of the film to 370.

We must consider that these are the views to date and that it appears that each week the views increase by 10 to 20 percent. We also need to consider that most people report that they have viewed or intend to view the films with multiple friends or family members, which means that the actual number of community members who have viewed the films are two to three times higher than the numbers captured on Youtube.

Project Costs

For the services described in the Statement of Work's Deliverables, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health agreed to pay Consultants (Cross Cultural Expressions) a total of \$99,000 for services rendered.

Lessons Learned

The biggest challenge of this project creating two feature length films with such a small budget. This meant that we could only utilize the services of cast and crew that were beginners in the art of film making. I think that we were very lucky that we ended up with a cast and crew that although they didn't have a lot of experience, they were talented, hard working and very dedicated to the project. This made the work go very smoothly and the work environment pleasant, which was very nice.

The other challenge was the time frame. Making two movies within the time frame of 9 months is not an easy task. Again, the dedication of the cast and crew to work long hours to make sure that the movie was made within the time required was very commendable.

A challenge that we soon became aware of was that because we were releasing the films via youtube, there was no real way for us to get people to fill out the pre and post survey's required by LACDMH. What we decided to do to resolve this situation was to offer the incentive of entering a drawing to win a \$100 gift card for anyone who was willing to view the film at a specific date and time via zoom. This made it possible for us to give those people the pre and post tests, thus getting a measurable sampling of how the films helped community members reach our intended goals of decreasing stigma associated with mental health in a compelling and engaging manner; provide psycho-education 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.

County of Los Angeles - Department of Mental Health
Russian and Farsi Speaking Mental Health Film Project
UsCC Capacity Building Project
PO-MH-23005145-1

Recommendations

The idea of creating awareness and educating the Russian and Farsi speaking communities of Los Angeles County around mental health issues and linkage to culturally appropriate mental health services through the creation of mental health films, was very well conceived and proved to be a successful way to tackle specifically the stigmatized issues of grief and loss, within these respective communities. However, it is clear to us that this is only another step in what needs to be on-going programming that will help educate and normalize this concept for these communities. Due to the fact that we now have in our possession two feature length films that address these issues specifically for the Russian and Farsi speaking communities, it is our recommendation that continued funding is granted in order for us to not only continue to promote these films to their respective communities on social media (i.e. via Youtube, facebook, instagram, etc.), but to also create additional films that continue to provide education and engagement about mental health issues through story telling. This will help get the information that we have gathered through this project to a greater number of people and will continue to allow for learning and growth within the targeted communities.

The data collected and community feedback has made it very clear to us that such mental health films, especially when placed for viewing on Youtube, are not only very engaging for community members but also very accessible. The numbers that we are able to reach through this project, is not comparable to the numbers that we are able to reach when we do in-person events or even virtual events that specify a certain date/ time for attendance. While we understand and acknowledge the significance and importance of also having in-person, live events, we do recommend that projects like this one also continue to be supported and created.

Conclusion

Overall, the data collected indicates that a significant number of Russian and Farsi speaking community members engaged with this project through viewing the Russian and Farsi version of the films through both the zoom gatherings as well as through Youtube. And by engaging the community's in this way, it is clear that this project was able to shift the targeted communities thinking around mental health issues, provide them with valuable information and with referrals to much needed mental health services.

The pre/post survey's that were collected show that there was a significant shift in participant beliefs and knowledge about mental health issues. And verbal and written feedback that we received from community members confirmed that this project has created a substantial transformation in the perceptions that participants have in regards to mental health issues and has increased the dialogue that community members are having about this subject. The information that we have collected supports and validates our conclusion that this project was a resounding and overwhelming success in accomplishing the goals and objectives that we set out to achieve.