

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
Strategic Communications Division**


**Eastern-European / Middle Eastern (EE/ME) UsCC Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
2/28/2024**

2:00PM – 4:00PM via Teleconference

Present: Mitra Shabani, Alphina Holovchenko, Stacy Dalglish, Armine Stepanyan, Edris (captioner), Vickie Che, Rubou Sous, Seta Haig, Mastaneh Moghadam, Rima Safaryan, Dr. Heather Laird, Sarkis Simonian, Mariam Nahapetyan, Avo Soltanian, Peyman Malaz, Riku Matsuda, Yue Hua Xu, Stacy Dalglish.

DMH Admin: Dr. Anna Yaralyan, Dr. Jennifer Alquijay.

Agenda Items	Comments/Discussion/Recommendations/Conclusions
Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone introduced themselves.
Meeting Minutes Review and Approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed & approved 1/31/24 EE/ME Subcommittee meeting minutes. Minutes were accepted by subcommittee members. There were no subcommittee member objections.
LACDMH Updates	<p>Mirtala Parada Ward provided the following LACDMH Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Jennifer Alquijay introduced herself; she a Clinical Psychologist who has been hired to provide supervisory support to UsCC Liaisons. Dr. Alquijay talked about the EE/ME USCC Subcommittee retreat. She stated that all USCCs are allowed to have a USCC Subcommittee retreat this year. The idea of the retreat is for subcommittee members to come together and identify the mental health needs of their community members and the subcommittee priorities. Also, to come up with mental health Capacity Building Project ideas by identifying the community’s mental health needs. Subcommittee members discussed to have the EE/ME USCC Subcommittees retreat in the month of June. Anna Yaralyan will send out a few times & dates to choose specifically when the retreat may occur in the month of June, through Doodle. Subcommittee members agreed to this.

<p>Co-Chair Selection Discussions</p>	<p>General subcommittee discussions on EE/ME Subcommittee Co-Chair recruitment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mariam Nahapetyan asked for LACDMH to be flexible in terms of possibly allowing certain DMH staff, such as Community Health Workers who directly work with the community to be allowed to become USCC Subcommittee co-chairs. Also, have new EE/ME Subcommittee members to co-chair with Sarkis Simonian to learn about co-chair job duties, even if they haven't attended enough meetings yet to qualify for a co-chair position. • Sarkis Simonian urged those who are thinking about becoming a co-chair to shadow him to the next USCC Leadership meeting, to learn more about USCC Subcommittee co-chair job duties.
<p>Brainstorming of New CBP ideas</p>	<p>New Capacity Building Project ideas identified by EE/ME Subcommittee members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Mental health support groups to help EE/ME community youth to open-up and talk about their inner thoughts and feelings openly & without judgment. • Create support groups for community members to discuss daily stress & anxiety. • Continue to come up with different mental health projects on various Social Media outlets.
<p>EE/ME Subcommittee Capacity Building Updates FY 2022 - 2023</p>	<p>Capacity Building Projects selected for the EE/ME Subcommittee, UsCC FY 2023-2024</p> <p> The Arabic Speaking Poetry Night Mental Health Outreach Project</p> <p>❖ This project involves, a consultant developing and implementing 20 community Poetry Night events. There will be two (2) events a month, for 10 consecutive months. Each event must be at least two (2) hours in duration. Poetry is an important part of the Arabic culture and is traditionally used as a tool to help individuals heal from their mental and emotional problems. The Poetry Night Mental Health Outreach Project will provide a place for Arabic speaking adults and older adults to get together and interact with one another and share their stories. Project estimated end date is August 31st, 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Heather Laird is the Project Vendor. • Dr. Laird reported that 2 Poetry Events were planned & executed at USC. It was full of great poetry and people. Overall, it was a great experience. • There might be 3 more possible Poetry Events on upcoming weekends. • Upcoming Poetry Events could be at Antioch University on Saturday, & Culver City West Community Center on Sunday.

- There will be a break of the Poetry Events for the month of Ramadan. It is a Holiday observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting, prayer, reflection, and community. This year Ramadan will start on the evening of Sunday, March 10 & end on Tuesday, April 9.
- Vendor agreed to continue to identify new venues, times & dates for the Poetry Night Events and submit it to LACDMH for project monitoring purposes.

Mental Health Parenting Seminars for the Armenian Community

❖ This project involves a Trainer implementing a parenting seminar targeting Armenian parents and community members. There will be total of 14 parenting seminars. One parenting seminar will be repeated 12 times in person in a period of a year, in different locations and venues throughout Los Angeles County, and 2 times virtually, (via Zoom, Teams, etc.). Seminars will be conducted at public and private schools, dance, sports, and art schools, academic institutions, after school child and parenting programs, churches and other community organizations in the larger Los Angeles County areas that fit the target population.

- Avo Soltanian, MFT, from Anchor Counseling Group a Professional Corporation for Individual, Marriage, And Child Therapy, is the project Vendor.
- Vendor is in the second phase of this project.
- Vendor continues the process of identifying Venues for this project. He has contacted many Armenian private schools and only got 2 responses. His staff called each school 3 times. Private Armenian schools are difficult to penetrate as culturally, Armenian Parents usually take pride in their parenting and feel that attending parenting seminars might show that they don't know much about being a "good parent" and must learn.
- Seta Haig suggested to also approach Armenian Sport Clubs, such as Homenetmen, (Armenian General Athletic Union), as many parents there are involved in their children's sports & scouting. Vendor agreed to look into it.
- Mastaneh Moghadam suggested that Armenian Churches in LA County would also be a good place to look into, as well as community centers and other religious institutions.
- Vendor will continue the marketing process of the parenting seminars in different ways, including on various social media outlets.
- Project began on 10/16/23 & the project estimated end date is 10/16/24.

Sharing Our Stories: Immigrant Journey's Towards Mental and Emotional Well-being

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ This project targets the Russian and Farsi speaking communities of Los Angeles County at large. It aims to create two coffee table books, one for Russian and another for Farsi speaking communities. The books will consist of short stories gathered from Russian and Farsi speaking immigrants where each person in the community gets the opportunity to share their story of a mental health, emotional, social challenges, and/or crisis that they experienced as an immigrant in United States. • Mastaneh Moghadam, LCSW from Cross Cultural Expressions Community Counseling Center is the project Vendor. • Project began date on 11/1/2023. • Project estimated end date is 10/1/2024. • Vendor completed the First Phase of the book development project, which includes planning, story collection & organization phase. • Russian Community had 25 individuals sharing their stories and Farsi speaking community had 35 people. • Deadline for turning in stories will be in mid-March. The project Vendor who is also a licensed mental health professional, has given people opportunities for mental and emotional support while sharing their stories. • Artwork has also been collected and will be included in the Story Book Project.
EE/ME Subcommittee Capacity Building Updates FY 2023 - 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support Group and Mental Health Educational Seminar for Afghan Refugees 2. Arabic Coffee & Tea Conversation Project 3. Armenian Festival Project 4. Armenian Poetry Circles for Mental Health 5. Russian and Farsi Mental Health Film Project #2 <p>Anna Yaralyan reported that all five SOWs are currently completed & pending for supervisor review and approval.</p>
Next Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Next meeting will be on Wednesday 3/27/2024, from 2:00pm – 4:00pm.
	<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#

