Research and Action on Mental Health Needs and Stigma in the Culturally Diverse Jane/Finch Community

Diversity and Equity in Mental Health/Addictions Conference 2013
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Presented by: The North West Community Mental Health Network and Research Working Group
About the North West Community Mental Health Network

The North West Community Mental Health Network (NWCMHN) consists of representatives from organizations that provide mental health services to residents in the broader Jane and Finch community of Toronto. The purpose of the network is to collaborate and partner with others by responding to mental health issues identified by the network and by residents and service providers in the community.

NWCMHN member organizations:

- Across Boundaries
- Black Creek Community Health Centre
- Black Creek Local Immigration Partnership
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Central Community Care Access Centre
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- COTA Health
- Downsview Services for Seniors
- Family Association for Mental Health Everywhere
- Humber River Regional Hospital
- Jamaican Canadian Association
- Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre
- LOFT Community Services
- St. Elizabeth Health Care
- Toronto North Support Services
- Toronto Police Service
- Toronto Public Health
- Y Connect
- York University Psychology Clinic
- YWCA Toronto
The Jane Finch Community

• One of Toronto’s most diverse and vibrant community

• 2006 Census data: 63% are identified as “visible minority” The main immigrants groups are South Asian (18%), European (13.4%), South American (8%) and Caribbean (7%) *

• Low socio-economic conditions. High level of unemployment (9%) and low income family (52.8%)*

• Poverty and various forms of discrimination, including racism, have been identified and risk factors for poor physical and mental health **

• Despite all the challenges, the community is resilient, and finds strength in the area’s rich cultural diversity

• Jane/Finch community is enriched with pride and spirit.


The Research……..

It is important to note:

• The project was agency/organizationally driven the ideal would be community driven…..

• Small scale means this is just an initial exploration that hopefully will justify further research into the same

• Ideally future research will be participatory action research, with more direction from the outset and throughout given by community members, and more employment of community members as researchers
Improving mental health services — in the — Jane and Finch community

Research with the Afro-Caribbean, Latin American, Somali, Tamil and Vietnamese communities
Purpose

To better understand how local organizations can provide culturally appropriate mental health services and programs for adults and seniors.
Research questions

1. What programs and services would be helpful to individuals and families who have mental health and addiction challenges among Afro-Caribbean Latin American, Somali, Tamil and Vietnamese groups residing in the broader Jane and Finch area?

2. How can programs and services be provided in a culturally appropriate way?
Methodology

- 5 focus groups with residents from the Afro-Caribbean, Latin American, Somali, Tamil and Vietnamese communities.
- 1 focus group with mental health service providers from the local community.
Methodology

• Each focus group was conducted in their official language and audio-recorded.

• Notes from recorders and facilitators were analyzed by the research team.
Recruitment – and –

participants profile

Staff within participating agencies were asked to consider potential participants who:

- Were 25 years old and up
- Belonged to the Afro-Caribbean, Latin American, Somali, Tamil or Vietnamese communities
- Lived in the broader Jane & Finch community
Participants profile:

Latin American FG: 10 people (9 female, 1 male)
Somali FG: 14 people (13 female, 1 male)
Vietnamese FG: 7 people (4 female, 3 male)
Tamil FG: 16 people (15 female, 1 male)
Caribbean FG: 9 people (9 female)
Service providers FG: 10 people

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 66
Questions – for –
Focus Groups with Community Members

1. What does mental health mean to you?
2. How do you know when someone is not well psychologically and emotionally?
3. Where have you previously turned for support related to mental health?
4. Who do you view as mental health professionals?
Questions – for –
Focus Groups with Community Members

5. What barriers or challenges have you experienced when accessing services and support?

6. What do you think an ideal support or service look like?

7. What have you experienced in the way of service and support that has worked well?
Now you are going to be a Focus Group!

We will break into small groups and go through the research questions answering and discussing from our own perspectives....

How will it compare????
Questions – for – Service Providers

1. What are the gaps in mental health services in Jane and Finch?

2. How are the gaps affecting specific groups (LA, Somali, Tamil, Vietnamese, Caribbean)?

3. What is your impression of services that are working well in the community?
4. What is working well within the LA, S, V, T and C communities?

5. What barriers or challenges have your clients experienced when accessing services and support?
Analysis & Results

Thematic analysis employed:

• Categorize into themes
• Refine themes
• Links between themes established
• Similarities and differences among groups established
• Focus on overarching themes
Findings

• Access challenges
• Definitions of mental health
• Sources of support
• Promising practices
Findings

Access challenges

a) Discrimination
   i. Social/Cultural Stigmatization of Mental Health Issues
   ii. Racism
   iii. Place-based discrimination

b) Language

c) Cultural misunderstandings
Findings

Access challenges

d) Time constraints
e) Transportation
f) Economic/financial
g) Lack of awareness and understanding about system
Findings

Definitions of mental health

a) Mental health vs. mental illness

b) Cultural differences
Findings

Sources of support

a) Formal
   i. Professionals
   ii. Providers of alternative and complementary therapies

b) Informal
   i. Family members
   ii. Settlement workers
   iii. Cultural organizations
   iv. Religious leaders
Findings

Promising practices

a) Current promising practices
   i. Welcoming environment at some community centres
   ii. Appropriate information
   iii. Targeted outreach
   iv. Language specific services
Findings

Promising practices

b) Ideal practices

i. Services that pay attention to people as singular individuals

ii. Language specific services

iii. Flexible services

iv. Services that reflect a holistic perspective
Findings

From Service Providers

a) Staff resources
b) Navigating the system
c) Stigma
d) Service Gaps
e) Community assets
Findings

Service Providers’ Promising Practices:

a) Collaboration between organizations

b) Support Groups

c) Holistic/Integrative Approach

d) Language Specific Services

e) Incorporating mental health promotion in broader health promotion/programming
What was your Group’s Perspective?

How *does* it compare????
The Facilitators’ Perspective

• The Recruitment Process
• The Process of Building Rapport/Trust
• Community Life
Recommendations

Enhanced partnerships

• Explore partnership with service providers out of Jane/Finch
• Share expertise among organizations
  \(i.e.\) interpretation
Recommendations

Training and awareness

• Training for service providers on mental illness and cultural competence

• Community awareness (i.e. Mental Health fairs)
Recommendations

Information sharing

- Event for service providers to share information
- Inventory of services
- Plan for keeping current sources of information updated
Recommendations

Further research on mental health and addictions

- Explore funding options and themes for future research
Facilitators & Recorders

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THANK YOU!!

Questions/Comments