

MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION GUIDELINES

For Agencies Serving Immigrants and Refugees

1

Develop and Adopt an Anti-racism, Anti-oppression Policy:

Agencies must have policies that prevent discrimination against clients on the basis of gender, class, race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, creed, ability, or gender identity.

2

Adopt Trauma-Informed Practice Guidelines:

Agencies must understand and apply the principles and guidelines of trauma-informed practice. Trauma-informed practice involves providing services in a way that is sensitive to those who may be living with trauma, regardless of whether they have disclosed their experience.

3

Provide Linguistically Sensitive Services:

Agencies should hire staff that are reflective of the populations being served to help ensure that possible language and socio-cultural barriers faced by clients are minimized. Where this is not possible, agencies should access interpretation services or refer clients to appropriate service providers.

4

Promote Resilience:

Agencies should adopt a mental health promotion approach and aim to enhance protective factors in clients' lives. This includes helping clients access key social determinants of health and engage in advocacy and partnerships to meet these needs.

5

Develop Emergency & Crisis Response Policies & Procedures:

Agencies must ensure they have clear policies and procedures for staff to follow should emergency or mental health crisis situations arise while serving clients. Staff must be trained and fully aware of these policies and procedures.

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6

Provide Ongoing Staff Training & Promote Staff Wellness:

Agencies must provide ongoing staff training and professional development opportunities to enhance awareness and build staff capacity in mental health promotion and relevant internal and external policies and best practice guidelines. The adoption of this protocol could serve as a starting point.

7

Ensure Compliance with all Relevant Legislation Including:

- AODA
- Health Care Consent Act
- Mental Health Act
- Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Personal Health Information and Privacy Act (PHIPA)
- Substitute Decisions Act
- The Ontario Child and Family Services Act

8

Develop Partnerships:

Immigrant and refugee serving organizations, particularly those who do not have specialized mental health staff, are strongly encouraged to develop partnerships and collaborations with their local mental health and primary care service providers to meet the mental health service needs of their clients.

For additional information on the above guidelines and further resources please refer to the complete OCASI Mental Health Promotion Guide for Agencies Serving Immigrants and Refugees.

