



On the Front Lines

How Partner Assault Program (PAR) Front-Line Service Providers at Rexdale Women's Centre (RWC) Promote Mental Health Among Immigrant Men

On PAR



- ▶ A Domestic Violence Court initiative
- ▶ Group counselling program for court-mandated male offenders to better understand the consequences and impact of violence against women, work on accepting responsibility for their abusive behavior and develop effective strategies to deal with anger, stress and conflict.
- ▶ More than 200 men walk through our front door every year, their ages ranging from 18 to 70
- ▶ While our clients are diverse, many are immigrants from war-torn countries, with limited language skills, a sparse support network, and unfamiliarity with the Canadian justice system
- ▶ We support immigrant men in crisis situations, such as homelessness, separation, substance addiction, and suicide ideation



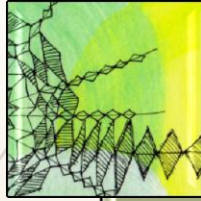
Mental Health Profile of Immigrant Men Attending PAR



Front Line Strategies in Promoting Mental Health



Anti-Oppressive Framework



- Scheduled self-reflection team exercises
- Strengths-focused perspective
- Strategic self-disclosure to equalize power differentials and build trust
- Flexible program content and delivery catered to client needs
- Holistic perspective: being aware of context of clients' lived experience

Trauma Informed Practice



- Safe spaces
- Activities aimed at involving clients in decision-making
- Empowerment and future orientation
- Enhancement of self-esteem
- Assess potential triggers during intake
- Advanced warning of triggering content and post-discussion debriefing
- Healing environment focused gaining meaning

Promoting Resilience



- Emergency donations
- Referral to community programs/services
- On-going follow-up with settlement workers
- Support clients develop effective coping mechanisms
- Foster strong friendships
- Guest speakers (i.e. CAS, Police)
- Information and support with access to children



Group Activity: Mental Health Promotion Guidelines In Action

- ▶ Case Scenario:

Rodrigo is a 32 year-old immigrant man from the Philippines. He worked as a caregiver in Saudi Arabia, before arriving in Canada 5 years ago. He currently has no status as his permanent residence expired. He used to work as a welder but was fired shortly after a domestic violence incident. He now has a criminal record, and is unemployed. He is not eligible for OW because he is legally married and his spouse has a high paying job. He has an ailing father and two younger and unmarried sisters in the Philippines, who depend on him financially. Since the domestic violence incident, Rodrigo has been abusing alcohol and other hard drugs. The Children's Aid Society became involved and placed restrictions that prevent Rodrigo from being alone with his children.

One day, Rodrigo comes to the office with his 2 year-old son, saying that his spouse kicked them out after an argument escalated to physical abuse on both sides. He states that he has nowhere to go and no money for food. He constantly talks about going back home to spend time with his father, and discloses that he recently received a deportation letter. He expresses several times an urgent need to talk to a priest. When two younger workers walk in the room, he suddenly covers his face and retreats to a corner of the room.



Group Activity: Mental Health Promotion Guidelines In Action

- ▶ Guidelines & Guiding Questions:
 - ▶ 1) Assess Client's Current Situation:
 - ▶ What are this client's most urgent needs?
 - ▶ 2) Enhance Protective Factors:
 - ▶ Which protective factors would you focus on enhancing and why?
 - ▶ 3) Reduce Risk Factors:
 - ▶ What strategies do we use to explore this client's major challenges without re-traumatizing them?
 - ▶ 4) Assess Mental Health Support Needs:
 - ▶ How do we overcome challenges associated with cultural influences on the expression of mental distress?
 - ▶ 5) Conduct a Risk Assessment:
 - ▶ How would you intervene in this crisis situation?