Promoting the Mental Health of Newcomer Clients

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Rexdale Women's Centre
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Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrant – with Toronto Public Health and Toronto Newcomer Office

Rexdale Women's Centre

Rexdale Women's Centre was established in **1978.** We support immigrant, refugee and newcomer women and their families to become fully participating members in Canadian society. As a leader in our sector, we enhance our clients' self-sufficiency and competence by providing essential services and facilitating access to community resources.

Rexdale Women's Centre

Our vision is for immigrant, refugee and newcomer women and their families to effectively settle and integrate into Canadian society. We are committed to working with our clients to be self-sufficient and financially secure. They will live happy, safe, healthy and socially engaged lives in which they are honoured and respected for who they are regardless of their background.

Rexdale Women's Centre

Guiding Principles

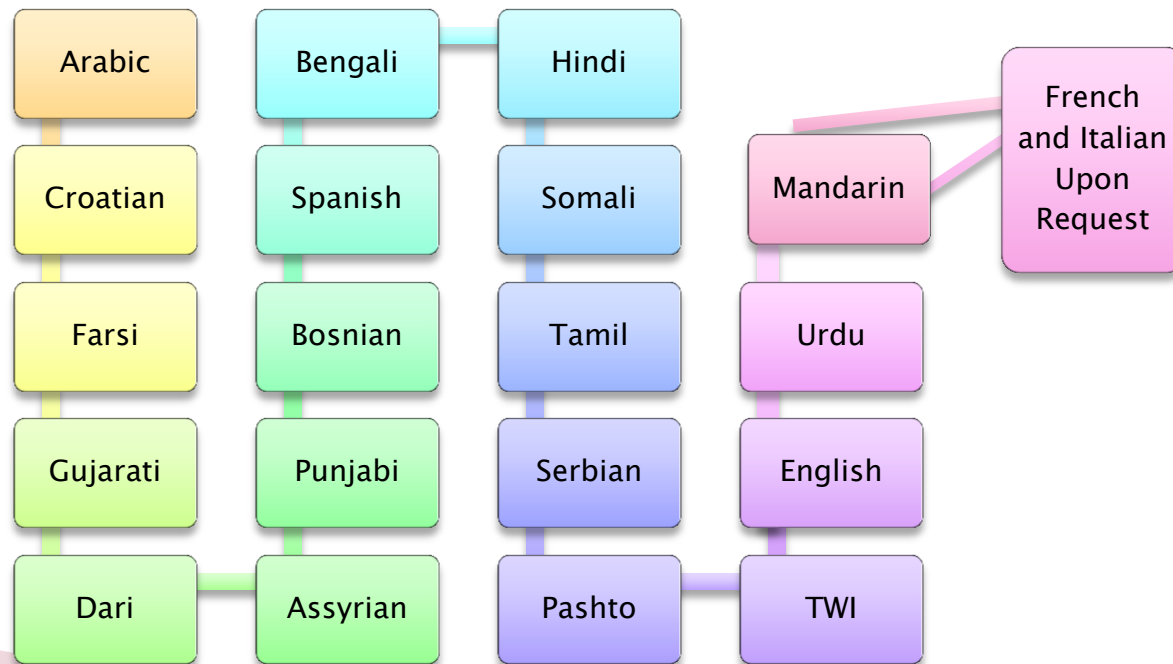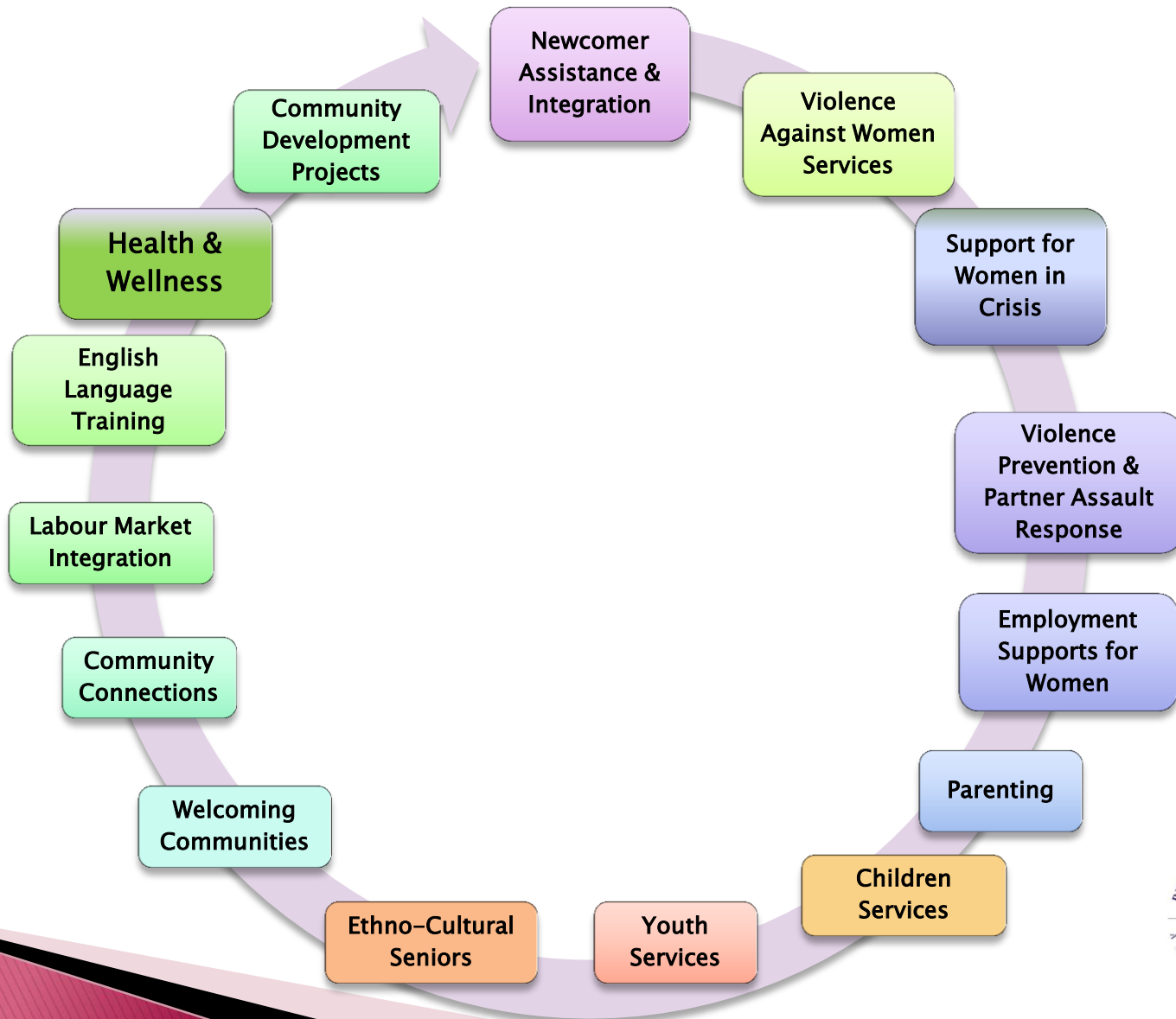| Holistic	Tools, services and resources for integration	Value community diversity	Honesty & integrity
Access and equity	Client's needs are paramount	Promote self-sufficiency & social participation	

Rexdale Women's Centre

- 39 years of service experience
- 11,431 clients served (April 2016–March 2017)
- Over 38,000 services provided
- Services provided in 20 languages

Arabic	Bengali	Hindi		
Croatian	Spanish	Somali	Mandarin	French and Italian Upon Request
Farsi	Bosnian	Tamil	Urdu	
Gujarati	Punjabi	Serbian	English	
Dari	Assyrian	Pashto	TWI	

RWC Services

Community Development Projects → Newcomer Assistance & Integration → Violence Against Women Services → Support for Women in Crisis → Violence Prevention & Partner Assault Response → Employment Supports for Women → Parenting → Children Services → Youth Services → Ethno-Cultural Seniors → Welcoming Communities → Community Connections → Labour Market Integration → English Language Training → Health & Wellness

MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION AT REXDALE WOMEN'S CENTRE

Promoting the Mental Health of Newcomer Clients

HOW TO IMPLEMENT

- Know your organization
  - Who do we serve?
  - What are my clients' mental health needs?
  - What is my organizational capacity?

- Staffing – Skills – Expertise
  - Policies – Limitations– Liability

- Do I have management buy-in – champion?

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HOW TO IMPLEMENT

▸ Team consultations: present the concept

▸ Identify interested staff to pilot

▸ Pilot – feedback – consult with pilot staff

▸ Modifications – adjustments

▸ Re-test and consult –refine - finalize

▸ Organization policy and procedure endorsement

▸ Operationalize across the organization with all frontline workers

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WHAT WORKS:

- Management– organizational buy-in and support
- Guidelines – resource available
- Time to learn – train
- Flexibility to adapt to organization – client needs
- Reference tools – referral information
- Having services to refer to in the community

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WHAT DOES NOT WORK:

- Funding limitations – restrictions
- Assessment – in-take tools
- Limited cultural and linguistic services
- Long waiting lists for services
- Client resistance – fear
- Sector perception as unprofessional
- Insurance liabilities

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SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR STAFF:

- Understanding of what is mental health
- Address myths and misconceptions
- Take time to focus on wellness and not illness
- Create opportunities to build professional connections
- Sick leave policy –employee assistance program
- Reduce over-time- vacations – lunch breaks
- Support staff who face mental health difficulties
- Training–professional development
- Organizational Policies – legislation compliance
- Know when to draw the line

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SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR CLIENTS

- Educate and promote understanding of mental health
- Identify-address stressors
- Address myths and misconceptions
- Take time to focus on wellness and not illness
- Trained – professional staff
- Display policies – legislation compliance
- Welcoming environment
- Know when to refer – partnerships

CHALLENGES IN MAKING SYSTEMIC CHANGES

- Funding limitations
- Not having policies– procedures
- No organizational – management support
- Time constraints –under–resourced staffing
- Not having time to consult – communicate
- Change in job functions – duties – lack of staff buy–in
- Mindset change – Fear of the unknown
- Not addressing fears– barriers – challenges
- Not having appropriate tools– resources
- Not taking the time for training – piloting
- Not re–visiting – re–evaluating – refining

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AGENCY GUIDELINES

- Non-clinical – easy to read
- Guiding statement with concise information
- Quick – visual reference
- Easy to share and communicate
- Broken down into steps
- Easier to assign steps to different levels of staff
- Concise– easier to pinpoint the challenge – task and address it

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS