Mental Health and Wellbeing Yarning Session for Culturally Linguistically Diverse (CALD)Communities in Victoria, Australia

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CENTRE FOR MIGRANT AND REFUGEE HEALTH

19/12/2020

Outline

- Definition of Mental health
- Mental health issues
- Mental Health challenges as a result of COVID-19
- Lack of Mental health support services
- Take home messages of mental health and wellbeing
- Resilience skills
- Power of social connection
- Questions and discussion
- Resources and sources
- CMRH contacts
- References

Centre for migrant and refugee health Inc. (CMRH)

- It is a non-profitable, and a multidisciplinary public health agency that works for low socioeconomic status, isolated and vulnerable communities in Victoria as well as Australia at large.

- CMRH believes health is a human right, and that anyone subjected to any situations that affect his/her mental health has a right for mental healthcare-specific services to be treated, and rehabilitated. And hence, recover from mental health issues such as anxiety, stress, trauma and depression.

- CMRH collaborates with private, government agencies or institutions, mental health specific services providers, ethnic communities (migrants, refugees and asylum seekers) to provide interventions that minimize risk factors, and promote protective factors through mental health promotion, access to mental healthcare-specific services and information sharing.

- CMRH advocates for health policies that support mental health services, thus, quality of health and better health outcomes for targeted population.

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Original Article

Mental Health and Wellbeing of South Sudanese-Australians

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What is mental health?

- **Mental health** is a state of **well-being** in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life.
- A person can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community
- **Mental health** includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.
- **Mental health** is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood
- where else - **Mental illness** is typically characterised as disordered thinking, emotions and behaviour.

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Mental health issues

- Wellbeing and mental health is everyone concerned. It is existing in families and community.
- Research shown that 45% of us will experience a mental illness in our lifetimes (Mind medicine Australian)
- COVID-19 has made difficult for many of us to with normal lives
- COVID-19 has escalated mental health issues in some people.
- loss of job and financial stresses kick in. We know that lack of employment and financial hardship contribute to mental health problem

https://mindmedicineaustralia.org.au/awareness-mental-health-facts/

Mental heath issues

- Research tell that young people in disadvantaged community groups are at risk when they experienced mental health related problems.

- Mental health is a biggest elephant in the room of young people including African young people from the South Sudanese Australian community is mental health problem (Abur & Mphande, 2019).

- Many of these young people do not have enough skills to cope with stress, body image, school pressures and other serious mental health issues such as depression, anxiety (Abur & Mphande, 2019).

Mental Health challenges as a result of COVID-19

- Many lives were almost turndown by COVID-19 Pandemic
- Lockdown increased the high level of mental health issues in society
- Vulnerable community groups such as African community groups were put in the high risk.

E.g. – lockdown of the 9 towers in Melbourne is just a great example

Mental Health challenges as a result of COVID-19

During lockdown, many experienced mental health issues such as:

- **Anxiety**- level of anxiety was very high because of the level of infection and many other things such as lost of jobs
- **Stress** – many of were dealing with stress during lockdown
- **Depression** -social isolation is a big thing for people who stay at home without socialising outside their homes.
- **Trauma** -people who experienced difficult situation are more likely to suffer trauma and other mental health problems (Abur, 2018).

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Mental Health challenges as a result of COVID-19

There were many problems such as:

- social problems in families.
- Economic problem
- Political problem
- Injustice issues as police were involved and some people were given fines

Risks assessment

- **Risk factors**: such as social isolation, loneliness, homeliness, unemployment, racism and discrimination and housing
- **Protective factors** - positive family functioning, social support, community support and physical activity
- **Awareness through data and other information**: evidence-based information and established mental health databases.

Lack of Mental health support services

- Mental health issues are often not appropriately addressed in African community groups because some people refuse not to discuss their mental health issues with families or friends.
- Also they don't seek support services outside of community

Take home messages of mental health and wellbeing

Some simple strategies to take home are:

- Put your mental health and wellbeing first
- Find time to care of yourself and people around you
- Seeking from professional organisations and people you trust
- Remain connected with your friends and your network
- Eat well and sleep well
- Don't ignore mental health signs, they can easily escalate to bigger problem in your life.

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Power of social connection

- **Power of social connection**: having social connections enhances the wellbeing and health of people through daily contact and support for social issues.
- Personal social wellbeing involves a person's relationship with others and how that person communicates, interacts, and socialises.

Resilience skills

TEACHING RESILIENCE SKILLS TO SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS AND OTHERS

ABUR, William

Resilience skills

- Resilience refers to both a process and outcome of coping in response to risk, adversity, or threats to wellbeing (Abur, 2020).
- Resilience skills can assist people who are emotionally challenged by social issues and health issues to overcome ((Abur, 2020).

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Resilience skills

- Ability to have a sense of control and choice in adverse and challenging situations.
- Ability to take charge of yourself, wellbeing and what you are doing, including preparation and time management.
- Creation of protective avenues that can assist during and after crisis or chaos.
- Being willing to identify the problem, to seek and accept help from family members/friends or others.

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Resilience skills

- Ability to focus on strengths and trying to avoid negative thinking/ thoughts.
- Ability to have a sense of purpose and direction in your life.
- Ability to be optimistic in adversity in situation by creating a positive attitude and a feeling of hope while eliminating fear of what could go wrong.
- Ability to build a sense of understanding of your values and caring for yourself and other people around you and in your environment.

Questions and discussion

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Easy to read resources developed specifically help you navigate the challenges you might be facing as a result of COVID-19 (Relationship Australia, Victoria2020)

For more information about Mental Health resources for coping strategies to improving your mental health or supporting someone in the family or the community.

See next page?????

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Resources and sources

Relationship Australia, Victoria

https://www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au/resources/tip-sheets/COVID19-Resources/?gclid=Cj0KCQiA5vb-BRCRARIsAJBKc6KgZ61ZLUgjJbN_89CBv9uilxN_EWgYu3JXVfT3-HI2TJzCrLqZ0zAaArTREALw_wcB

Tips sheet: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Self-care Tips and Strategies

https://www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au/assets/PDFs/Resources/Tip-Sheets/COVID19-Self-Care-Tip-Sheet-20102.pdf

Managing stress and Anxiety

https://www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au/assets/PDFs/Resources/Tip-Sheets/COVID19-Managing-Stress-and-Anxiety-2pp-Tip-Sheet-20071.pdf

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Resources and sources

Working from Home and Managing Social Isolation with your partner

https://www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au/assets/PDFs/Resources/Tip-Sheets/COVID19-Working-From-Home-With-Your-Partner-Tip-Sheet-20072.pdf

Managing Self-Isolation with your Children and Family

https://www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au/assets/PDFs/Resources/Tip-Sheets/COVID19-Self-Isolation-Children-Family-Tip-Sheet-20073.pdf

Working from Home Tips

https://www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au/assets/PDFs/Resources/Tip-Sheets/COVID19-Working-From-Home-Tips-20075.pdf

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Resources and sources

Preventing and overcoming Loneliness

https://www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au/assets/PDFs/Resources/Tip-Sheets/COVID19-Preventing-and-Overcoming-Loneliness-Tip-Sheet-20077.pdf

Being a caring Family Member

https://www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au/assets/PDFs/Resources/Tip-Sheets/COVID19-Being-a-Caring-Family-Member-Tip-Sheet-20079.pdf

Managing Conversation about Money

https://www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au/assets/PDFs/Resources/Tip-Sheets/COVID19-Managing-Conversations-About-Money-Tip-Sheet-20080.pdf

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Resources and sources

[Supporting Children to return to School](#)

https://www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au/assets/PDFs/Resources/Tip-Sheets/COVID19-Returning-to-School-Tips-20086.pdf

7 Positives Separated Families Have found During The Pandemic

https://www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au/assets/PDFs/Resources/Tip-Sheets/COVID19-Positives-for-Separated-Families-20085.pdf

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Resources and sources

Multicultural Mental health – key resource in multiple languages

https://embracementalhealth.org.au

Please have a look at their Resources for leaders in the community page:

https://embracementalhealth.org.au/resources-leaders-community/

www.headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/covid-19

1800 Respect

24/7 counselling and support for family violence

1800 737 732

Beyond Blue Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service

https://www.coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au

1800 512 348

Beyond Blue

1300 224 636

Lifeline | https://www.lifeline.org.au

13 11 14

Translating and Interpreter Services (TIS)

• If you need mental health support in your language, call TIS National on 131 450 or visit tisnational.gov.au (opens in a new tab) to get an interpreter.

For more information, please contact:

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References:

- Abur, W and Mphande, C (2020) Mental health and wellbeing of South Sudanese-Australians, Journal of Asian and African studies, vol. 55, no. 3, pp. 412-428, doi: 10.1177/0021909619880294.

- Abur, w (2020) Teaching resilience skills to social work students and others, African Journal of Social Work, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 23-31.

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