

## **Addressing stigma with newcomer clients**

1. Organize Community educational workshops and seminars about various mental health topics, in diverse languages (if possible) for different age group, (e.g. seniors, youth etc)
2. Invited people with lived experience to share their recovery journey
3. Compile a list of resources in health and mental health services in various languages
4. People might not know the words to describe their feelings. Tailor ESL assignments or other activities to use words for feelings.
5. Because many newcomers are from collectivist countries, the entire family can share the feelings of guilt/blame when one member has a mental illness.
6. Provide support for all members of the family, not only the person with the illness. Inform them that their family members' mental illness is not their fault.
7. Educate your clients about the reality of the causes of mental illnesses. Inform people that it is a medical condition and that it is not a punishment for "bad behaviour." In short, mental illnesses are caused by physical conditions and/or environmental factors, just like physical illnesses.
8. Inform clients about what choices of treatment are available (inpatient/outpatient, family physician, psychiatrist, social worker, community centre, self-help groups) and that treatment is available for mild to severe cases. Inform people that early intervention during a mild stage of mental illness will often prevent it from becoming severe, thus it is best to get help as soon as symptoms appear.

## **On line resources on reducing stigma**

1. Canadian Mental Health Association; <http://ontario.cmha.ca/mental-health/mental-health-conditions/stigma-and-discrimination/>

2. Mental Health Commission of Canada, Opening Minds;  
<http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/Pages/OpeningMinds.aspx?routetoken=5a9fe316742bbd71b34df010ec94468a&terminal=39>
3. Globe and Mail; <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/overcoming-mental-illness-means-overcoming-stigma/article12480148/>
4. CTV news, Stigma Surrounding Mental Illness Major Barrier for Employment;  
<http://www.ctvnews.ca/health/stigma-surrounding-mental-illness-major-barrier-for-employment-report-1.1485833>
5. The Star, Immigrant mental health compounded by language and cultural barriers;  
[http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/unitedway/2013/10/28/immigrant\\_mental\\_health\\_compounded\\_by\\_language\\_and\\_cultural\\_barriers.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/unitedway/2013/10/28/immigrant_mental_health_compounded_by_language_and_cultural_barriers.html)
6. Kirmayer L, Narasiah L, Munzo M, et al. *Common mental health problems in immigrants and refugees: general approach in primary care. Canadian Medical Association 2001; 183).*

### **YouTube videos, anti-stigma campaign, mental illness and immigrants**

1. You can learn a lot about stigma and also review numerous videos on the well known Bell “Let’s Talk” awareness campaign. It’s an anti-stigma initiative that fights the stigma and the dramatic impact of mental health issues all across the country.  
<http://letstalk.bell.ca/en/>
2. Asian American Mental Health, Ramey Ko story  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvvlLdHS1FA>
3. A Dominican mother comes to Boston to establish a new life for her family, but becomes overwhelmed by the changes, both externally and internally. This is the story of her journey through mental illness in a foreign land, her struggle to reconnect with her family, finally getting the help she needed, and her urge to help other immigrants in a similar situation.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGjDNUtTX1w>
4. Jacob Ramsey, who suffers with mental illness, talks about stigma and what to do about it. Mr. Ramsey is a member of Step Up on Second, a not-for-profit organization in Santa Monica, California that provides housing and other services to people with severe mental illness.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2r8aXyCO5Q>

### **Referring hesitant clients to mental health services**

- 1) Listen to their concerns, (why are they so hesitate to seek help? Use active listening and express empathy.)
- 2) Validate their feelings and worries about treatment (“It is frightening to try a new treatment in a new country, but here is more information on the treatment, we can go through this information and see how comfortable you feel. We can research on line to obtain more information if you still have more concerns”)
- 3) Explore available options (“You could talk to your family doctor about this, and you can also try attending a support group to start”).
- 4) Provide information/resources (“I’m not a mental health professional, but this website has a lot of information in your language about the condition. We can discuss more after you read the information”)
- 5) Explain in details of the referral procedure and assure client that we will provide support during the referral process (one stop)
- 6.) Follow-up. This encourages people to actually take action. (“How about we meet again after you talk to your doctor about this? Let’s pick a date together.”)