



A Health Brokering Response to the Mental Health Crisis during the COVID-19 Pandemic





Multi-Cultural Health Brokers Co-operative (MCHB)

- Established in 1994.
- Workers co-operative – owned and operated by immigrant cultural/health brokers.
- Multiple spheres of work.

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Mental Health Crisis

COVID-19 effects on the mental health of vulnerable populations

People in Canada are feeling the effects of COVID-19.*

38%

say their mental health has declined due to COVID-19

46%

feel anxious and worried

14%

are having trouble coping

6%

have had suicidal thoughts

2%

have tried to harm themselves in response to COVID-19

Mainstream response to mental health crisis during the Pandemic:

- Government Websites and Free Wellness Apps
- 24/7 Crisis lines
- Increased \$\$\$ for psychological services from some insurance providers

What is missing?





The power of transformative relationships in cultural brokering

“We envision Brokering work that is grounded in transformative relationships as the basis for supporting healing, that of ourselves, our clients, their families and communities.”

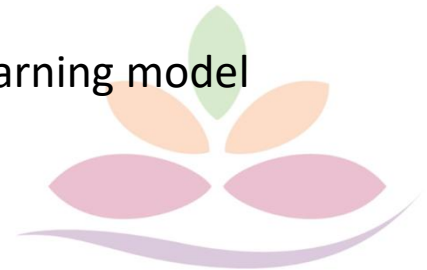
Yvonne Chiu, E.D. MCHB



Developed a series of Core Trainings – exploring the key ingredients of transformative relationships

Grounded in:

- The ADAPT model (“Adaptation and Development after Persecution and Trauma” - Silove)
Justice, Identity, Meaning, Safety and Bonds.
- The recognition of co-arising process and shared humanity.
- Participatory and transformative learning model



Example training module:

What resources do you need to embody to hold a transformative space for yourself and the other?

Especially in the face of pain, overwhelming circumstances and the sense of hopelessness.

- a. Non-verbal resources: e.g. culturally appropriate interpersonal manner and body language, self-awareness and self-regulation
- b. Verbal resources: identifying the kind of language that is empathic, gives us space to relax and reflect, non-judgemental and allows the person to recognize and build on their own strengths?

Case Study ... eliciting and articulating brokers' non-verbal and verbal resources.



In conclusion:

- This is just one example of the multiple roles that health brokers actually play in working with families and communities.
- One of the most effective mental health supports - culturally and linguistically appropriate - and yet not recognized by the system within which it operates.
- Most cost effective mental health resource (and most underfunded).
- An example of the creative response that evolves from truly working at a grassroots level with communities.

