Integrative Healthcare Settings: Exploring Approaches and Benefits for Refugees

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Defining Integrative Healthcare for Refugees:

*Coordination of culturally-appropriate physical health and mental health care services.*

- Coordinating among disciplines, not just offering multiple services
- Culturally-sensitive, validated tools and measures are utilized with refugee populations
- Whole system maintains holistic health approach

Based on definitions provided by SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions, Mental Health America, National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
Objectives

1. Illustrate how integrative healthcare settings help eliminate barriers, such as transportation and stigma, to accessing mental health care

2. Describe how refugee community members and leaders can participate as cultural brokers and health navigators

3. Highlight how resettlement sites and other community partners can support an integrative healthcare approach
Agenda

• Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)
• Refugees in Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh
• Squirrel Hill Health Center (SHHC)
• Benefits of Integrative Healthcare Settings
  – For patients
  – For staff
• Refugee community partners as cultural brokers and health navigators
• How resettlement sites and community partners can support integrative healthcare centers
What are Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)?

- Federally Qualified Health Centers are community-based health care providers that receive funds from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Health Center Program to provide primary care services in underserved areas.
- FQHCs must serve an underserved area or population, offer a sliding fee scale, provide comprehensive services, have an ongoing quality assurance program, and have a governing board of directors that include patients.
- FQHCs are not free clinics, but offer services on a sliding fee scale based on ability to pay.
Refugees in Pennsylvania
Country of Origin

- Syria 26%
- DRC 25%
- Bhutan 16%
- Cuban 10%
- Burma 7%
- Ukraine 4%
- Iraq 5%
- Afghanistan 5%
- Iraq 7%
- Burma 7%
- Afghanistan 5%
- Ukraine 4%
- Syria 26%
- DRC 25%
Refugees in Pittsburgh
651 Arrivals in FY 2015-2016

SHHC Refugee Patient Population

Established Pittsburgh residents: 55%
Initial refugees, immigrants, and secondary migrants: 45%

TOP PATIENT LANGUAGES JAN 2017 (OUT OF 1585 PATIENTS)

- English: 35%
- Nepali: 33%
- Spanish: 9%
- Arabic: 8%
- African Languages: 5%
- Other Languages: 10%
MISSION:
Squirrel Hill Health Center provides patient-driven, high-quality, comprehensive, primary and preventive healthcare and support services, without regard for patients’ insurance status or ability to pay. SHHC strives to create a welcoming environment, with special sensitivity for patients’ race, national origin, primary language, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability status.

OUR COMMITMENT:
We commit to be a Medical Home for patients. We take all of our patients we receive and are committed to taking care of them long term.

WHAT WE OFFER:
Holistic, integrated health care for individual and family members with guided referrals
Squirrel Hill Health Center (SHHC)

- Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)
- Integrated primary medical, behavioral health, women’s health, and dental services
- Pittsburgh
  - 2006 - Squirrel Hill
  - 2015 - Brentwood
- Mobile Unit
- Medical Home
Behavioral Health at SHHC

Behavioral Health Team
• Psychiatrist
• Therapists
• Behavioral Health Coordinator
• Peer Support
• MSW Intern

Behavioral Health Offerings
Low intensity behavioral health services
• Psychiatric medication management services
• Brief and intermediate therapeutic services
• Psychoeducational groups and skills classes
• Peer support services
• Community referrals
Workflow of a Patient to the Behavioral Health Team

Everyone comes in and receives primary care from a PCP.

If needed, we offer behavioral health services.

Community & Level of Care (LOC) Referrals

If needs are more intensive, we coordinate to ensure Intensive Case Management and LOC needs are met.
HOW DO WE, AS AN INTEGRATIVE HEALTHCARE SETTING, HELP ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO ACCESSING HEALTH CARE?
Special Challenges & How We Meet Them

- Citizenship needs
- Mental health stigma
- Trauma-informed care
- Increased suicidal ideation
- Specialist appointments
- Transportation
- Language

- Resettlement agencies & legal help; N648s
- Staff with trauma-informed background
- Staff & peers assist with cultural navigation
- Community supports
- Care navigators arrange Appointments, help with MATP (Medical Assistance Transportation Program), and follow up on records/paperwork
- Interpretation line & multilingual staff
Benefits for Patients

- Staff who speak the same language
- Language line gives client ability to express themselves freely
- Culturally-sensitive, therapeutic approaches
- Clinic is committed to treat patient for their lifetime
- Clinic’s partnerships with resettlement agencies aids in streamlining services and other case management needs
- Easy access to staff from multiple disciplines
- Eliminate transportation barriers with mobile unit to meet in local neighborhoods
- Breaks down stigma around accessing mental health care through culturally appropriate programs and psycho-education
- Specialist and community support referrals
- Meet insurance needs
Benefits for Staff

- Behavioral Health Integration Meeting: regularly share patient needs
- All Staff Behavioral Health Meeting: Informal training in important aspects of care (e.g., de-escalation, trauma-informed care)
- Increased communication through shared physical space
- Medication needs addressed more quickly and increased medication checks
- Equal access to Electronic Health Record (EHR) system helps with assessment and treatment
HOW CAN REFUGEE COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND LEADERS PARTICIPATE AS CULTURAL BROKERS AND HEALTH NAVIGATORS?
Cultural and Health Navigation

Staff
- Build trust in community
- Lived refugee experience
- Cultural medical terms

Peer Support
- Lived refugee experience
- Lived mental health experience
- Navigated health system as patient

Community Partners
- Health education issues Pertinent to community
- Disseminate information about center
- Provide cultural consultation
Staff as Health and Cultural Navigators

- Offer perspective of mental health as part of overall medical health  
  (e.g., mental health affects physical health and vice versa)
- Leave messages in primary language of refugee patient
- Navigate pharmacy and prescriptions
- Explain health system (e.g., ER visits vs. primary care visits)
- Describe medical procedures and build trust
- Acknowledge potential cultural issues in healthcare appointments  
  (e.g., eye, ear, dermatology clinics)
Peer Support Specialists as Health and Cultural Navigators

- Build trust among patients and the health center
- Destigmatize concept of mental health in community
- Offer education w/ lived refugee experience as background
- Acknowledge and validate emotional and behavioral health concerns (e.g., sadness, racing thoughts, nightmares, etc.)
- Assist with understanding medication (e.g., clarify dosage/frequency)
- Assist patient with navigating community resources and health system as previous or current patient
Community Members and Leaders as Health and Cultural Navigators

- Discuss Pertinent community health issues within communities to raise awareness (e.g., gambling; increased suicide)
- Suggest culturally-appropriate mental health interventions (e.g., yoga, community gardening, expressive arts therapies, etc.)
- Assist with navigating social services and the local healthcare system
- Offer informal interpretation
- Connect patients in community with available resources
- Assist with citizenship classes and English literacy
- Provide peer-led groups
HOW CAN **RESETTLEMENT SITES** AND OTHER COMMUNITY PARTNERS SUPPORT AN INTEGRATIVE HEALTHCARE APPROACH?
Resettlement Agencies & Community

• Wonderful community partners with innovative programming are able to address integrated health needs among refugee populations (e.g., health education classes discussing holistic approach; mind-body-behavior connection information)

• Partners committed to the physical and mental health well-being of refugee patients (e.g., regular home visits and communication about health factors can help eliminate barriers to accessing appropriate care) contribute to an integrative approach

• Provide intensive case management when possible (e.g., social security, legal needs, housing, employment, and service coordination) to meet needs of refugees that can often affect health needs

• Help families navigate to SHHC & specialist appointments (e.g., collectivistic, family support) to best facilitate a health referral to a new location and empower refugees to attend future visits on their own

• Identify and connect refugees who qualify for behavioral health services
Immigrant Services and Connections (ISAC)

Six-agency Collaboration that provides information, referrals, and connections to services for immigrants and refugees in Allegheny County

Helps immigrants and refugees in Allegheny County after initial resettlement period

Provides service coordination among workers at refugee resettlement agency

Mitigates language and cultural barriers to improve access to community services

Strengthens each person’s natural supports by developing and working on specific client goals
Questions?

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