



**Taking Culture  
Seriously  
in Community  
Mental Health**



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Centre for Research  
and Education  
in Human Services

# Summary of Service Provider Survey

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**Service Provider Survey Sub-Committee**

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# Who was Involved?

- Online survey, June 2006, two week follow-up
- Provincial networks assisted with distribution:
  - Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs
  - Ontario Peer Development Initiatives
  - Canadian Mental Health Association
  - Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
  - Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
- ED or mental health program area head
- 120 organizations responded
- Representation from each of the 7 MOHLTC regions



# How was the Problem Framed?

- **Two loci of problem:**
  - one in mainstream (lack of funding, lack of cultural competence of staff)
  - the other in cultural communities (beliefs about mental health/mental illness, stigma associated with using mental health services)



# What are Proposed Solutions?

- *Social Investment*: more funding
- *Social Justice*: more hiring of diverse staff, recognition of unique needs of communities including rural, Northern
- *Capacity Building*: “good” training for mainstream staff, public education in cultural communities
- *Restructure Interventions*: outreach to cultural communities, learn from each other re promising practices
- *Accountability*: monitor progress



# How Does Change Happen?

- Greater equity in allocation of resources to community mental health (CMH) system; between mainstream and minority services within the system
- Increased diversity among staff
- Increased knowledge, and change in attitudes and behaviour re diversity among staff
- Increased knowledge, and change in attitudes and behaviour in cultural-linguistic communities re mental health and mental illness



# What are Proposed Outcomes?

- CMH system more responsive to needs of cultural-linguistic communities (more innovative services)
- Mainstream staff more responsive to the needs of cultural-linguistic groups
- Greater cultural diversity in backgrounds of staff in system
- More people from diverse cultural-linguistic communities access CMH services



# Promising Beginnings

- Promising programs reported by 46 respondents
- 23% selected statement describing the philosophy guiding their organization as “We strive to deliver services in a way that considers and addresses issues of both power/privilege and culture” (CE)
- Quantitative analysis showed that those choosing CE philosophy significantly more likely to report practicing in ways that demonstrate cultural responsiveness than those choosing any other philosophy