

CHIMO | **CRISIS SERVICES** 展望社會服務中心

Please Take Off Your Shoes

Final Report

“Please Take Off Your Shoes”

June 14, 2007

**CMHA – CHIMO – RCMP
Educational Event**

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Background

On March 20, 2007, CMHA Richmond contracted CHIMO Crisis Services to design and deliver educational events to help:

- Chinese community members understand the role and interaction of police when a mental crisis requires police involvement, and
- RCMP members understand cultural issues when dealing with a Chinese speaking person experiencing a mental health crisis

The contract also called for a review of relevant literature, and funds permitting, translation of particular materials into Chinese.

Project timelines were very tight with a June 15, 2007 completion date. Following early discussions, key stakeholders agreed that a dramatized play in Chinese and English would best meet the educational objectives. Time lines were developed with as much lead time as possible before the due date June 15, 2007.

The objectives of the play were to have community members and service providers leave the event with a deeper empathic understanding of the role and experiences of the other. The setting consisted of a Chinese family dealing with a family member with a mental health disorder, and a constable trainee preparing for a possible mental health call.

Working with Communities: Script Development and Actors

The content of the script was collected from community members and service professionals. Interviews were conducted with 6 members of the community, members related to R-CMHA Board and staff of social service agencies. Interviews were conducted using standardized questions to ensure collected information was comparable. The questions related to each person's origin, historical and cultural perspectives of authority, the police, mental health, and community members affected by mental health issues. Content from the interviews was analyzed and turned into a script.

Volunteer actors for the play were recruited from the community. In addition, the Richmond RCMP assigned a constable and a corporal to participate as actors.

Marketing and Promotion

On June 14, 2007, two media events promoted the play and the agencies involved. CBC Radio One interviewed Rebeca Avendano, Community Education Coordinator with CHIMO Crisis Services regarding the play. On the same day, The Richmond Review ran a story about the event with photos of the actors also promoting the event.

The Event

The event took place at the Richmond Cultural Centre on June 14, 2007. Refreshments, coffee/tea and cookies, were provided. This venue provides a stage and theatre style seating for over 120 people. Display tables were set up at the back of the room, where educational materials from both CHIMO and CMHA were displayed.

The first scene of the play covered police objectives such as safety procedures, confidentiality, Section 28 of the Mental Health Act, and the support and referral service the police provide. The second scene covered some possible family attitudes and dynamics of a Chinese family with a daughter experiencing a mental disorder. It also included attitudes about the way police are perceived by some Asian families. The play was performed in English, Mandarin and Cantonese.

After each scene, a brief discussion was facilitated in English, Mandarin, or Cantonese that corresponded to the language of the preceding scene. Considering the venue and audience size (120 people), there was significant audience participation from the Mandarin and Cantonese speaking audience members. Audience comments were transcribed in English onto a screen for all audience members to see. At the conclusion of the play a broader discussion followed. After the discussion, the facilitators closed the session and invited participants to fill out the Audience Feedback forms.

Audience members were offered refreshments and encouraged to engage in the social mixer portion of the night. This was very successful as many members of the community engaged in dialogue with the RCMP members, CMHA staff, CHIMO staff and other members of the community. There were approximately 120 people in attendance at this event, including various service providers. There were eight uniformed RCMP members in attendance to meet with community members.

Review of Literature

A review was conducted and the most appropriate material for translation was the script. The script is rich in detail, including important cultural differences between western and Chinese beliefs with regards to mental health and the police. The script also includes information about RCMP safety and procedures. This document was translated into Chinese and distributed at the event. The script also included a translation of the key points of Section 28 of the Mental Health Act.

Evaluation

Chinese and English Audience Feedback forms were distributed to all audience members. Fifty-four evaluations were returned - 31 Chinese and 23 English. For a detailed summary of results, please see Appendix 2. A scale of 1 (Not very) to 5 (Very) was used by audience members to rate Relevancy, Usefulness of the Information, and Effectiveness of the Play. For Relevancy and Usefulness of the Information, participants most commonly answered with 3. Effectiveness of the Play as a way to learn was most commonly rated as 5.

Amongst commentaries on the evaluation forms from participants, there were two underlying themes: 1) greater communication between the community, social service providers, and the RCMP and 2) more educational events like this one. For a full list of commentaries, please see appendix 2.

Analysis and Recommendations

Many of the issues arising with mental health consumers, the police, and the Chinese community are the result of incorrect information.

Roles of RCMP

Frequently the RCMP's role in mental health crisis is to provide safety for all parties concerned. Their work load, the nature of prioritized calls, and Section 28's safety mandate has a tendency to limit their opportunities to build better relationships with consumers. When there is a mental health crisis that does not involve a safety concern, Richmond's MHES is the appropriate service. MHES has an excellent working relationship with the RCMP.

➤ Recommendation

Initiate a stronger collaboration between mental health services and police members. Consider allocating dedicated police members to work with a mental health professional on an on-going basis where police and community members can develop relationships where safety and arrest are not immediate challenges. Once on-site safety is established, relationships can be developed between consumers, family members, mental health service providers and RCMP members.

Language Issues

While the Richmond RCMP is one of the most diverse detachments, Mandarin and Cantonese language skills are a challenge. Thirty-five percent of the detachment is of Chinese heritage, but these figures do not mean language needs are met. The deeper challenge is recruiting immigrants or children of immigrants who have fluent language skills in Mandarin and Cantonese. Police recruitment is confronted with the values of Asian culture and the lower priority Asian families place on policing as a career. The Asian community contributes to Canadian society in numerous ways, however they do not necessarily see policing as the preferred method.

➤ Recommendation

On a cultural level, the Chinese community needs to be able to view policing differently in order to appreciate the contribution they can make as police officers in Canada. Information and education about Canadian police roles for new immigrants may begin to soften their perspective.

Misperception of Police Role

Through interviews with immigrant community members, none were able to recall receiving information about the role, integrity, and professionalism of policing in Canada. As a result, there was a wide range of beliefs about what the RCMP do in Richmond. While some did not trust the police, others thought the police were family mediators. A challenge lies ahead for various service providers, including the RCMP, to adjust immigration practices and provide educational opportunities for newcomers to Canada.

➤ Recommendation

Agencies across Richmond could help deliver information about the role of police for people new to Canada. Educational opportunities exist in language classes and employment readiness programs for newcomers to get acquainted with the function and professionalism of policing in Canada.

Engaging Educational Events

The most favorable response from the Audience Feedback form was the use of a play for educational purposes. While forums, panels and other educational events would likely attract community participation, scenario training and the dramatizations seemed to strike a cord with the audience.

➤ Recommendations from the Audience Feedback

Audience members requested more educational events for the community with smaller audiences that enhance deeper discussions. Some audience members requested language specific events.