Equally Connected Wah Kin Project 2009-2011

Glasgow Association for Mental Health &
Glasgow North Community Health and Care Partnership

Wah Kin Project Launch 8th June 2009
The Scottish Government Mental Health Division in partnership with NHS Health Scotland’s Mental Health and Race Equality Programme have funded the **Equally Connected projects** to focus on the primary care tier of mental health services. One of the aims of primary care mental health services is to offer a range of effective interventions for people experiencing mild to moderate mental health problems. Under race equality legal frameworks, such interventions must be equally accessible to the whole population including black and minority ethnic (BME) communities.

**The Wah Kin (Chinese Health) project** aims to inform and influence practice within primary care mental health services by exploring concepts of mental health and well-being and effective interventions from the perspective of older people from the Chinese community.

The project involves older people from the Chinese community, and statutory and voluntary agencies and workers (including GPs and other primary care mental health service staff) as key stakeholders and partners in taking the work forward.
SOME OF THE RESPONSES TO THE FIRST QUESTION

“What do you do (or would you do if you were able) to keep yourself healthy, thinking particularly about your physical health and your emotional health?”

included:

• Taking exercise, such as walking in the park. This is also good for social contact
• Stretching or doing aerobics
• Eating a good diet, with fresh food
• Doing things you enjoy, such as ping-pong, swimming, line dancing, playing chess and playing Mah Jong
• Doing Tai-Chi to improve circulation and stay alert
• Talking to close friends
• Going to Wah Lok to do activities with friends
• Meditation
• Spiritual beliefs, such as Buddhism
• Prayer
• Trying not to worry
• Having information about mental health. Some people already had some information from GAMH
• Tidying the house
• Going on holiday
• Going on day trips with friends
• Having a positive and optimistic attitude
• Sleeping
• Phoning friends in Hong Kong
• Visiting friends
• Window shopping

SOME OF THE RESPONSES TO THE SECOND QUESTION

“If you don’t do or are unable to do the things you have described in the above question (such as through physical ill health), this can affect your emotional health. You may experience stress, anxiety, sadness, depression or other problems. If this happens, what kind of help/support/services would you find helpful?”

included:

• Having services available during the day
• Lack of knowledge about how physical health can impact on mental health. This is exacerbated by language barrier
• Language barrier and lack of knowledge about what is available make it difficult to use mainstream services
• Prefer to have services available within one building
• Support at Wah Lok is very good. But it’s only open a few days each week. Would like this to be extended
• Suggestion of link mental health professional to visit Wah Lok regularly
• Information sessions on mental health to be provided
• Existing services can be inflexible, e.g. times GP available
• Would like to have Chinese GP who is trained under western system, as don’t know the qualifications of Chinese Medical Practitioners
• Would be good to get counselling
• Problems with interpreters a barrier. This includes practical problems and attitudes of interpreters. Trust key workers at Wah Lok to interpret
• Need Chinese workers within health services
• Would like to be able to access talking therapies if could overcome barriers
• Lack of support for carers identified. Only very limited practical support provided. No emotional support available
EVALUATION

Overall comments about the launch from the participants included:

- Fantastic. Well-organised and good timing
- Three good things - good food, good entertainment and felt good to express my own opinion through group discussion
- It was okay. I had no expectations about it
- I felt grateful of being invited to an event that was specially organised for us
- It was excellent
- Didn't know what to expect but enjoyed the whole event

Comments specific to the demonstrations and entertainment included:

- All entertainment was suitable for us, Chinese older people
- The complementary therapist spent most of the therapy time asking questions and talking

Comments specific to the venue included:

- The food was good
- There wasn't enough Chinese food and drink
- The toilet bowl in the accessible toilet is designed for tall people only

The comments about the venue have been fed back to the Albany Centre.

LEARNING

The event was based on an understanding that older people from the Chinese community are experts in their own situations and that it is essential that their views are fundamental to the development and shaping of services to meet the needs of their own community.

- Older people from the Chinese community are resilient and are clear about ways of promoting and maintaining mental health and well-being in later life
- Older people from the Chinese community have a range of skills and abilities that could be utilised to promote mental health and well-being in later life
- A language barrier has a major impact on accessibility to mainstream services
- The skills, knowledge and attitudes of interpreters have a significant impact on use of interpreting to support access to services
- Concerns about confidentiality also need to be addressed
- Appropriate use of English language also needs to be considered (such as avoiding jargon, using clear, simple language for interpreting and translation)
- There is a lack of knowledge about what support services are available for older people
- Where older people from the Chinese community are aware of mainstream services they are usually not seen as accessible due to the language barrier and cultural differences

The above points were acknowledged and welcomed by the workers who attended the launch, including the members of the primary care mental health team in the north of Glasgow.