

Community Outreach to Help Seniors at Risk

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Project Title: Community Outreach to Help Seniors at Risk.

Project Lead Investigator: Cheryl Armistead, RN, MScN

Project Partners: McGill Ingram School of Nursing CHN Class of 2013, Section 001 and Faculty; New Hope Senior Citizens' Centre; NDG Senior Citizens' Council; Yellow Door; studio interlock audio and Hudson Players Club.

Supported by: Réseau québécois de recherche sur le suicide (RQRS) and the Douglas Mental Health University Institute

The Value of the Innovation:

This small but sweet project is an exemplar of the best that community and academia can be when they work together in authenticity and partnership. With equal doses shared vision, courage, creativity, calculated risk and dedication – a small group of Community Health Nursing (CHN) Faculty and student teams, local seniors’ organizations and members of the Arts community united their talents to create original Canadian Public Service Announcements (PSA) about the hidden issue of seniors’ risk for depression and suicide. This Health Communication Campaign project marshaled *story* and multimedia to mobilize Canadians for seniors’ wellbeing.

Seniors are a valued part of our heritage, our families and our community. They merit fair access to health and quality of life. Canadian seniors’ risk for depression and suicide is on the rise; but is generally poorly understood, overlooked or confused with chronic illnesses and ‘aging’. There is limited Canadian health communication available to help shape societal norms or action about the issue.

We decided it does not have to be this way. Our main goal was to relieve and prevent seniors’ risk for depression and suicide. Key objectives were to influence the importance society attaches to the issue and norms around outreach to seniors; to equip community volunteers to take action with seniors at risk; while providing real world learning opportunities for students to develop basic CHN competencies.

The PSA concept was ‘reveal, to inspire action’. The two main message elements for the Canadian audience were: signs of risk that distinguish seniors from other ages and ‘hope’ via public outreach. With our partners and acting/production experts we integrated story, music and film to bring our message to life. We created bilingual YouTube and TV quality PSAs for distribution across a social media network (SMN) in Canada and beyond; in addition to a workshop toolkit for community organizations.

The performances are rich with emotional wisdom, authenticity and timeless messages that touch and uplift the soul. The music subtly expresses the essence of the human journey from hope lost to the moment of reconnection and belief in one another. The veil is lifted and the audience compelled to reach out.

www.youtube.com/LetsReachOut1010. www.youtube.com/tendezlamain1010.

Evidence to Substantiate the Innovation

The issue is important, growing and needs action (MHCC, 2012; CCSMH, 2006). Multilevel Health Communication Campaigns are effective components of comprehensive health promotion (THCU, 2009; 2005) and valuable Knowledge Translation: timely, credible information made accessible to people in real-world settings (CIHR, 2006). The project depicts Canadian CHN Standards (CHNC, 2011) via focus on partnership and capacity. Working with strengths elicits hope, healing and mobilization (Gottlieb, 2013). ‘Story’ illuminates lived experience to foster understanding (Young, 2007). SMNs such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube promote change through increased project reach, public engagement and access to evidence-based messages (CDC, 2012). Interpersonal communication strategies (workshop toolkit) help

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volunteers engage and enlist seniors at risk. We used sound process as per documented criteria; combining media, interpersonal communication and events for maximum effectiveness and to shift societal understanding and norms around senior depression (PHO, 2012). The project fostered meaningful CHN student engagement and peer learning. Partners were so committed to the cause they volunteered their time and expertise - an amazing feat for a small academic team. The new PSAs are true 'innovation' as they fill a gap in Canadian health communication and *re-imagine what can be*.

Outcomes to Substantiate the Innovation

We launched the PSAs during a National Day of Action event that saw 23 countries join in - thanks to the students' visionary use of social media (Call to Action). We also provided local workshops and webinars.

Project feedback exceeded hopes and validate sustaining *Lets Reach Out*

1. Canadian PSAs created – and in demand.
The PSAs are inclusive, accessible and relevant to the Canadian context. TV PSAs are ready for mass distribution.
2. ***Let's Reach Out*** launched!
The project gave birth to the ***Let's Reach Out*** health communication platform that will continue to be used to advance mental health in Canada (<http://letsreachout.ca>).
3. Increased Canadian awareness and community capacity.
Outreach was united across geography; stories and photos heartwarming and inspiring.
4. Canadian norms: the public agreed the issue is important, relevant and merits action.
5. Community Health Nursing visibility and identity.
We highlighted the power of combining CHN science with the Arts world; and showed students and Canadians what CHN can do and accomplish.

Spin-off benefits: CHN curriculum that resonates with students and their talents; nurturing non-conventional skills/partnerships; evidence that youth care and are engaged in seniors' issues.

Resources

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Acknowledgements

Our many community partners, seniors, students and members of the arts community truly brought the heart and soul to our project. We are grateful and indebted to them for their contributions to raising awareness in Canada and leading by example.

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YouTube PSA

- Members of New Hope Senior Citizens' Centre

TV PSA

- Actor: Dave Fisher (Hudson Players Club)
- Community Volunteer: Kasha Mohr (CHN student)
- Director: Yazan Shukairy
- Producer: Cheryl Armistead (Project lead; CHN Faculty)
- Director of Photography/camera: Ghislain d'Amour
- Grip/Editor/Mixer: Francois Lacasse (studio interlock audio)
- First Assistant Director: Laura Antohi
- Music: Michael Wilson
- Voice-over: Eden Polansky
- Actor's Assistant: Diana Gausden (CHN Faculty; Hudson Players Club)
- Set assistants: Danielle Tetrault, Shane Anzovino (CHN students)

Additional

- Music YouTube PSA: Angela Marino
- *Let's Reach Out* Logo: Drey Design
- Workshop communication video: members of NDG Senior Citizens' Council
- McGill Ingram School of Nursing Class of 2013, Section 001 – for their direct work on the project (4 teams) and all students for helping to send out the Call to Action widely.

Appendices

1. Call to Action: project National Day of Action
2. Health Communication Campaign model

Let's Reach Out

The '10 on 10' Day of Action ~Be Part of the Wave~

Call to Action on April 10th at 10:00 AM local time

What?

Seniors are an important part of our heritage, our families and our communities. The modern reality is they are becoming more at risk for depression over time. Signs of their depression are often not recognized, so seniors may not get the help they deserve. **It does not have to be this way.**

Community outreach to help seniors at risk



So what?

Every senior needs to know they are important to us. Let's reach out today to seniors across Canada.

Let's begin to turn this around!

Now what?

- **Start** by viewing the *Let's Reach Out!* Public Service Announcement on YouTube.
- **Learn more** about seniors' risk for depression – read the Background Tool
- **Be part of the wave** – reach out and connect with a senior in your community.
- **Spread the word** – share this call to action with everyone you know.

Join in the wave!



<http://www.youtube.com/LetsReachOut1010>

International Friends—Join in with us

The time is now!

We all have a part to play in raising awareness and reaching out to community seniors.



Let's Reach Out!

Tendez la main

La journée d'action du '10 à 10', on se mobilise!

Appel à l'action le 10 avril à 10h dans votre fuseau horaire

De quoi s'agit-il?

Les personnes âgées sont une partie importante de notre héritage, de nos familles et de nos communautés. La réalité actuelle est qu'ils sont de plus en plus à risque de dépression au cours du temps. Les signes de la dépression ne sont pas souvent reconnus, de sorte que les personnes âgées n'obtiennent pas l'aide qu'ils méritent. **Ce n'est pas acceptable.**

Mobilisation communautaire pour aider les personnes âgées à risque



Qu'en est-il donc?

Toutes les personnes âgées ont besoin de savoir qu'ils sont importants pour nous. Tendez la main aux personnes âgées dès aujourd'hui à travers le Canada.

Commencez à faire du changement

Alors, que faire?

- **Pour commencer**, regardez le message d'intérêt public *Tendez la main* sur YouTube.
- **Pour en savoir davantage** sur les risques de dépression chez les personnes âgées, lisez le document d'information.
- **Mobilisons-nous ensemble** – tendez la main à une personne âgée dans votre communauté
- **Faites passer le mot** – partager cet appel à l'action avec tous ceux que vous connaissez.

On se mobilise!



<http://www.youtube.com/Tendezlamain1010>

Amis du monde entier—mobilisez-vous avec nous!

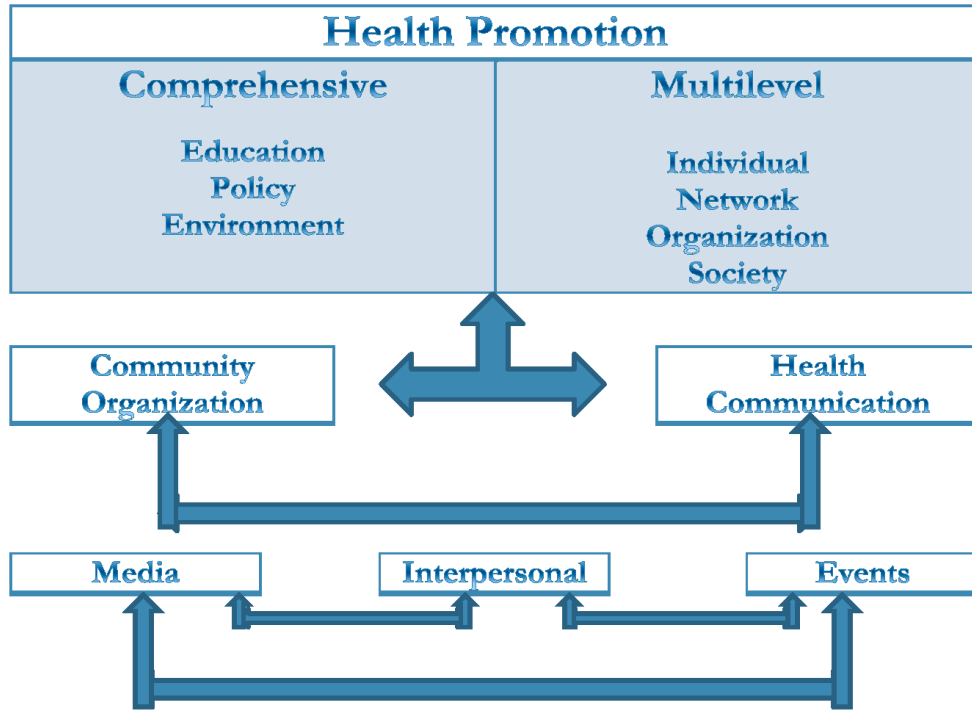
C'est le moment d'agir!

On a tous un rôle à jouer dans la sensibilisation au sujet des personnes âgées à risque dans leur communauté.



Tendez la main

Appendix 2



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