



Innovative ways to involve community health workers in the evaluation of a chronic disease prevention and management program for Russian-speaking immigrants

LET'S BE HEALTHY!

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Documenting outcomes and CHW program evaluation

Let's Be Healthy!

What is our story?

- **Lev Yurovsky** met Sasha three years ago and noted what a good influence Sasha had on him. He came to the U.S. from the FSU 14 years ago where he was a physics scientist. In 1993 when he came to the U.S. his language barrier combined with the transition to the U.S put him into a serious depression for three-four years. When he met Sasha, who told him about the Let's Be Healthy! project for Russian-speakers, he understood its importance, especially for older people who immigrate from FSU and don't speak English. They developed the cooking and other education classes "*to help create an environment for people to come together in this new culture to ease their transition.*"
- Lev now is one of the most consistent attendees of LBH activities including walking, cooking, Art of Health, and Yoga. He doesn't want to stop with the things the LBH project has already accomplished, rather wants to set new goals and add new things. For example, he is working with the staff to create a "chess family club" – which is culturally very attractive to the Russian community members. He is a chess master and can take a lead in this.

History of Let's Be Healthy

LBH is a joint project of Newcomers Health Program and Bay Area Community Resources. The Newcomers Health Program has been serving refugees and immigrants in San Francisco since the late 1970's through community collaborations and a range of clinic and community-based programs. BACR was founded in 1976 to promote the healthy development of individuals, families, and communities.

History of Let's Be Healthy!

- In 2002 the San Francisco Department of Public Health published a community assessment report describing the very high rates of chronic health conditions, lower life expectancy and lifestyle linked conditions such as obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease amongst Russian immigrants in San Francisco.
- Chronic health conditions linked to smoking and lifestyle (e.g. obesity, hypertension, diabetes and heart disease) account for over ½ of all diagnoses among the estimated 700+ Russian-speaking patients seen annually at San Francisco's public health clinics.

Why LBH?

- The project aims to equip Russian Immigrants with the resources they need to maintain healthy lives.
- The project builds upon the strengths of Russian-speaking newcomers – the enjoyment and comfort they take in doing things in groups

Let's Be Healthy!

- 4-year project to promote health and well-being, change community norms about healthy living, and improve self-management of chronic health conditions among Russian-speaking newcomers in San Francisco.
- Funding for the project is through Robert Wood Johnson's Local Initiative Funding Partners Program and includes local funders California Endowment, Mt. Zion Fund, Maisin Foundation, Yahoo! and Kaiser Permanente.

Let's Be Healthy!

- *Community Leadership Development*
- *Community Education Campaigns*
- *Healthy Lifestyles Education and Promotion*
- *Chronic Care Management*

Community Leadership Development - Pomoshniks

- *LBH project engages nine people within the Russian community who are natural leaders to serve as ambassadors for healthy living.*
- *Pomoshnik is a Russian word for “helper.”*
- *Pomoshniks responsibilities include leadership roles in gardening, walking, Art of Health, exercise, and community outreach.*
- *Pomoshniks receive monthly training on wide arrays of issue including job development, basic finance, American idioms in the workplace, stress workshops, and guest speakers from the business community.*

Community Event



Community Education Campaign

- *Health promotional messages are delivered in a variety of venues including large cultural events like a Borscht contest and smaller community presentations*
- *Pharmacy bags sporting a health promotion logo, containing a calendar of LBH activities, postcards with recipes, and brochures are distributed*
- *Local ads in leading Russian-speaking newspapers in San Francisco and through local Russian radio*
- *LBH also participates in many health fairs throughout the year*

Healthy Lifestyles Education and Promotion

- LBH offers over 20 opportunities per month for Russian-speaking newcomers to join together for yoga, walking, exercise, gardening in community garden, cooking classes, and art of health workshops

Gardening



Exercise



Yoga



Chronic Care Management

- In the fall of 2006 the first series of monthly group medical visits for Russian-speaking patients having chronic diseases was held at Ocean Park Center
- We are currently in our third class at OPHC with 12 participants
- The first series (6 weeks) of Healthy Living began in May 2007 and was very popular among Russia-speakers with 22 people enrolled. We are currently in our 2nd session of classes.

Healthy Living Class



Evaluation

- External evaluator (ongoing)
- Pre-post tests
- Medical Tests for Group Medical Visits
- Focus Groups with Pomoshniks and participants
- Yearly Evaluation and Yearly meetings with staff

Let's Be Healthy Program: Improving Health Outcomes through Community Involvement

- Community participation throughout (community leaders)
- Assessments of strengths, needs, and issues
- Involve community members in planning, implementing and evaluating
- Be flexible to change plans based on community response, project evaluation and experiences.

Improving Health Outcomes: Project Evaluation

- **Issues to Consider**

- **Cultural Input**

- Behavior change discussions and intentions, not pledges or “pledge sheets”
- Immigrant experiences related to fear and distrust of written documents and questions
- Who implements evaluation is important

Strategies to involve CHWs and Community Leaders in development and implementation of evaluation

- Input into development of evaluation materials (wording, length, frequency)
- Distribution of evaluation (where, how, who)
- Explanation of evaluation by staff
- Involvement of staff (or outside of staff – example of Pomoshnik Focus Group)

Challenges and importance of translation and interpretation of tools, linguistically and socio-culturally

- Project can come to halt while waiting for translation
- There can be unilateral changes of evaluation on one side
- Strong communication between Russian-speaking and non Russian-speaking on staff (“this does not make sense”)
- Importance of written translation as opposed to verbal translation of written text (complicated survey vs focus group with moderator)

Key Evaluation Findings and Recommendations

- Pomoshnik Component

- **Recommendations**

- Learn from mistakes – 1st training*

- Continue training new Pomoshniks incorporating role playing, discussions, concrete plans, and timeframes for activities
- Participants expressed that they would like to learn additional skills including how to create an educational workshop, organize groups, and conduct media campaigns

Key Evaluation Findings and Recommendations

- **Community Campaign**

- **Recommendations**

We have been great at getting word and materials out ...

Begin conducting interceptor surveys with shopkeepers

Key Evaluation Findings and Recommendations

- Health Promotion/Education Activities

Core group of 277 Russian-speaking newcomers have participated in activities, thousands of contacts (repeated participation)

- **Recommendations**
- Examine attendance data more carefully

Key Evaluation Findings and Recommendations – Chronic Care Management

- **Group Medical Visits**
 - **Recommendations**
 - Special effort to encourage GMV clients to participate in LBH activities

Key Evaluation Findings and Recommendations

- **Healthy Living Series**

Very popular enrolling 22 participants and forming waitlist

- **Recommendations**
- Took out one pre-test
- Conduct focus groups to determine more information than pre-post tests

How Findings Are Communicated to Staff, Participants, and Collaborators

- Evaluation reports distributed to staff & pomoshniks
- Distribution to funders (even if not requested)
- Involve collaborators
- Get together for funders and collaborators on status of project

Challenges, Rewards, and Recommendations for developing and implementing a comprehensive evaluation in community based project led by CHWs for non-English speaking immigrants

- Importance of celebration & update on accomplishments
- Challenge of having a language as barrier
- A “divide” between certain non-Russian speaking staff and participants

Thanks for listening!



Contact Information

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For LBH Evaluation see

www.dph.sf.ca.us/CHPP/newcomers/newreports.shtml