

Chinese Community Helper Program: A Peer Support Program for Seniors

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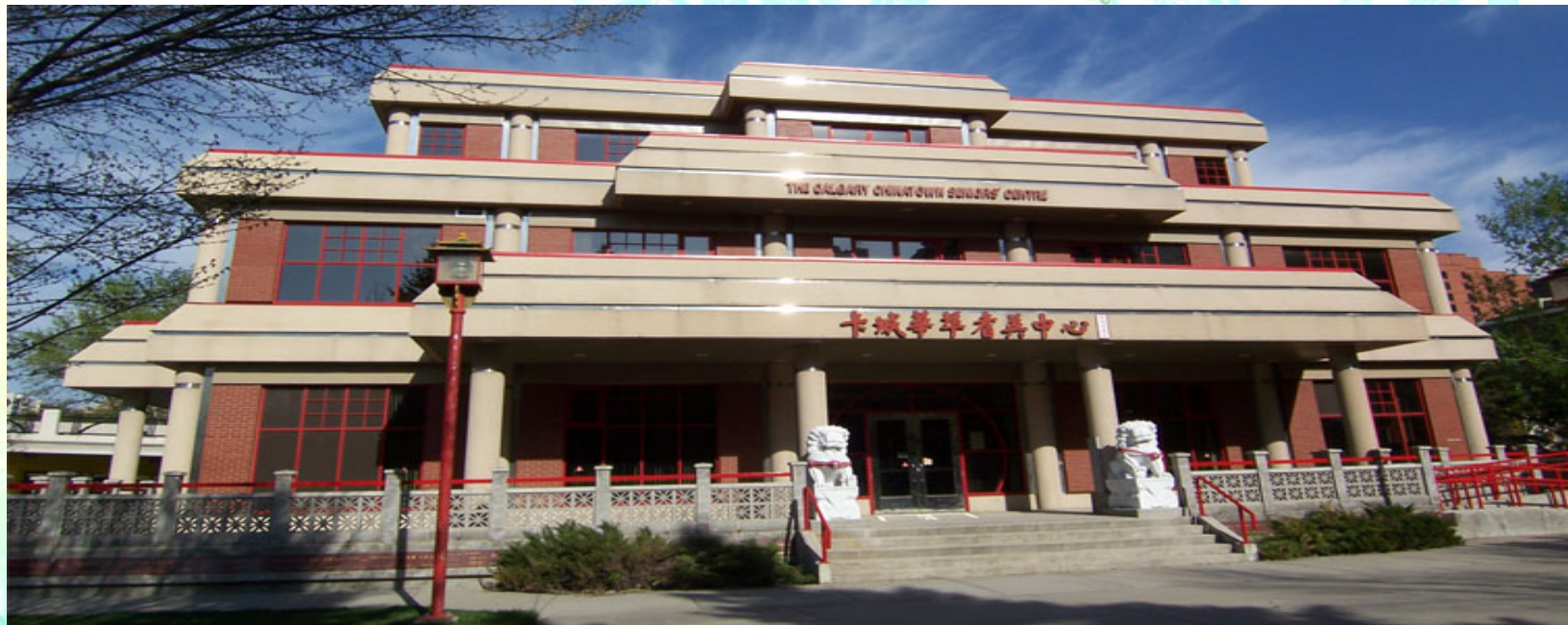
Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens'
Association (CCECA)

September 25, 2018



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Calgary Chinatown Seniors' Centre



2018-09-24

2

CCECA

- Established in 1985 with 50 members
- 2,202 members, 5011 clients in 2017
- 13 directors, 25 staff, 464 volunteers
- Received the Alberta Minister's Seniors Service Award in 2017
- Obtained 3 years accreditation by CARF* in 2017, being the only accredited senior centre in Calgary
- Receives funding from FCSS, United Way, Alberta Lottery Board and Alberta Justice and Solicitor General



CCECA Services

- One stop Services:
 - The Way In – Calgary Older Adults Services (Outreach)
 - Special Needs Support Group (ADP)
 - Chinese Community Response to Family Violence
 - Social/recreational, education, health program (Alberta Healthy Living with AHS)
 - Volunteer Program – Interpretation, Volunteer Visiting program, Chinese Community Helper
- Civic Engagement Group
- Collaborative Initiatives – Emotional Health Committee, Mental Health & Housing, Immigrant Seniors Advocacy Group, Elder Abuse work group, etc.



Chinese seniors: Who are they?



- In 2011, 41% (40,545) of all seniors living in Calgary were immigrants and/or refugees (Statistics Canada 2011).
- Almost one in five Calgary seniors (16,000 people) were part of a visible minority group and of these 42% were Chinese. (Facts about Calgary Seniors, 2009).
- Chinese is the largest visible minority group with an estimate population of 100,000, slightly over 10% are seniors

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Literature Review 1



Risk factors for social isolation among seniors include aged over 75, low income, living alone, health problems, grief and loss, and language or cultural barriers.

(FCSS Research brief 4, 2014)

Literature Review 2



Researches showed that close to one in four (25%) of Chinese elderly immigrants report at least mild level of depressive symptoms which is higher than the reported 10% & 15% in the general elderly Canadian population.

Lai, Chinese Medical Journal 2004; 117(5)

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Literature Review 3

In a study found that trusting and reciprocal social ties were significant related to **happiness** and **life satisfaction** – both directly and through their positive impact on health

(Helliwell & Putnam, 2004).

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Literature Review 4



Informal networks and social support are especially important to the mental health of immigrants and refugees. (FCSS Research Brief 4, 2014)

The most common type of program aimed at reducing social isolation and loneliness found in the literature was a type of

Peer (volunteer) helping/ visiting outreach Model

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Literature Review 5

According to a mental health peer support program for older adults run in Kansas, the program **showed significantly improvement for depression.**

Quality of life indicators for **health and functioning also improved** for participants with symptoms of both depression and anxiety.

(R K Chapin, Reclaiming Joy, The Gerontologist Vol. 53, No.2, 2013)

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Literature Review 6



Research demonstrates that utilizing **peer support in conjunction with clinical supports** in mental health is very effective, with positive outcomes for individuals receiving peer services.

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Literature Review 7

Positive outcomes of receiving Peer support services

- ↑ Improvement in practical outcomes
- ↑ An increased ability to deal with stress
- ↑ An increased sense of community belonging and self care
- ↓ Decreased level of depression and psychosis

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Philosophy



The underlying philosophy of the community Helper program is that “in every community there are people to whom others naturally turn when they need help. They are people from all walks of life and all ages. The one thing that they have in common is that they are considered by others to be helpers”

(Redekopp, 1993,p.1)

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Background 1

In 2015-2016: Flourishing ageing workshop
Started to organize monthly mental health
workshop focuses on “Flourishing ageing”.
Each workshop was attended by 40-60 seniors
who requested support to deal with emotional
distress stemming from isolation and depression.

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Background 2

CCECA received funding from FCSS to launch a pilot project, **“Chinese Community Helper program, CCHP”** in 2016. In conjunction with Canada Mental Health Association (CMHC), we adapt, modify and translate materials based on the Community Helper Program which is based on “Natural Helper” a peer helping program. The Community Helpers Program, originally created in the 1990s for Canada’s Stay-in-School initiative, was updated in 2008 and again in 2012.

Objectives

- This pilot program aims to identify natural helpers and work with them to strengthen their helping skills through training and on going support.
- The intent of the program is to bridge between informal and formal support and provide care and support for seniors in the community
- The key goal is to increase peer support and positive social ties among Chinese older adults

The intended outcomes



1. Significant positive change in their positive social tie and bonding in community
2. Improved quality of life
3. Decreased depression & anxiety symptoms
4. Decreased sense of loneliness
5. Increased social participation
6. Increased social network

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Target Group

- Chinese senior, aged 65+
- Low income, lack of social support
- Lives alone or with spouse
- Express feelings of isolation
- Experience life transition such as bereavement or critical illness
- Experience poor physical/ mental health, but without diagnosis of mental illness



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Project activities

Train the Trainer model

Older adults aged 50+
recruited as volunteer helper

Community Helper
Train the Trainer
(2 days, 12 hours)

Training modules of CCHP

1. Helping Principles & Strategies
2. Basic Helping Skills
3. Mental Health & Ageing
4. Wellness & Self Care skills
5. Community Resources

Intended outcome of
the trained community
helper

- ↑ Confidentiality
- ↑ Using helping skills
- ↑ Knowledge of mental health Stigma
- ↑ Confidence to help Seniors

**Significant positive
change in social
inclusion- social
participation**

Train the Trainer for Helper(12 hours)

Day One (6 hours training)

1. Introduction & ice breaking
2. Helping principles: right & responsibility
 - ◆ Helping strategies: code of ethic and boundary
3. Helping skills
 - ◆ Communication skills
 - ◆ Reflective listening
 - ◆ Empathy
 - ◆ Active constructive response (ACR)
 - ◆ Problem solving skills



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Community Helper Training

Day 2 (6 hours training)

4. Mental Health & Ageing

- ◆ Psychache
- ◆ Mental health VS Mental illness
- ◆ Labeling
- ◆ Suicide and crisis intervention
- ◆ Grief & Loss

5. Wellness and self care skills

- ◆ Stress management
- ◆ Wellness model
- ◆ Self care practice
- ◆ Mindfulness practice

6. Community Resources



Training Intake

One to one peer support in community

Support Follow up

Older adults

Be Volunteers

Trained as community helper

Seniors 65+

N= 112

Trained Helpers

N=49

Seniors received One to One support services (phone/visit)

Helper provided One to One support services in pair (phone/visit)

Center-Based Peer support group

N=112

Monthly Support meeting

N=49

10 weeks

Monthly

CCHP Peer Support Conceptual framework (2017-2018)

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22



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Project activities

- One on one support

- Chinese Community Helpers will provide one-to-one support service to the targeted participants aged 65 and above.
- The pair will meet in person and/or provide telephone support for 10 weeks and will offer shared experience, peer support with peers with lived experience, focusing on wellness and issues that impact their mental health.



Project activities

- Center Based Peer Support Group



- Volunteer helpers will invite seniors to attend the monthly peer support group at CCECA to make new friends and connect to resources
- We will link seniors to formal services when they are ready
- Our goal is to reach 50 isolated seniors annually

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CCHP Activities during visit



Six domains of activities will be provided by trained helper during one to one visit :

1. Peer Emotional Support

Helper applied the following four basic helping skills to help senior to manage emotion:

- Understanding emotion through effective communication
- Reflective Listening to others
- Expressing positive feeling through empathy
- Expressing active constructive response

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CCHP Program Activities Content 1



2. Problem solving skills

The helper will use six steps to help seniors to solve problem:

- Expressing your concern
- Identify the problems
- Exploring the possibility
- Predicting the consequence of the solutions
- Figuring out how to work out the solutions
- Expressing support

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CCHP Program Activities Content 2

3. Self Care Practice

We will do the following activities:

- Basic mindfulness practice, such as breathing exercise
- Relaxation exercise
- Stress management
- Traditional Chinese exercise
- Walking in the nature
- Coloring
- Simple focusing drawing /writing

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CCHP Program Activities Content 3

4. Social Engagement

The volunteer helpers will share community news or activities with seniors. If needed, helpers will accompany seniors to join some social activities, such as

- Social and recreation activities provided by CCECA
- CCHP Monthly center based peer support group
- Meet with friends or peer chat group
- Community activities/events

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CCHP Program Activities Content 4

5. Emergency response preparation

The community helper was trained to help seniors to prepare for emergency by

- Filling the personal emergency information card
- Preparing check list for emergency
- Talking about fire drill

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CCHP Program Activities Content 5

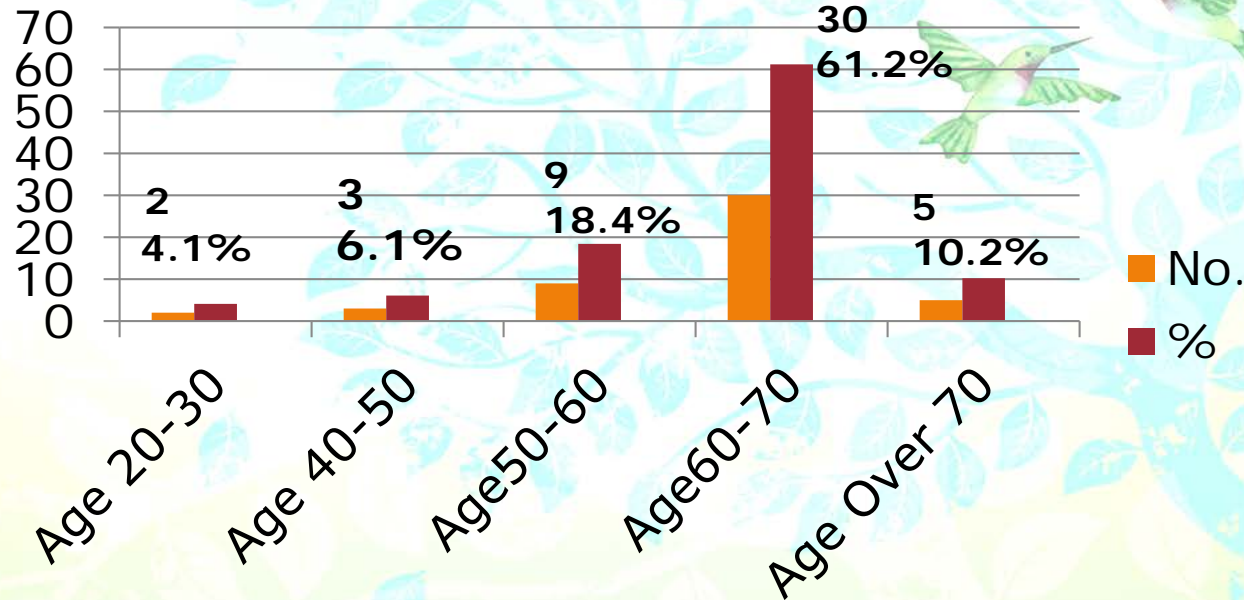
6. Community resources sharing

The helpers will support Chinese older adults to access community resources. The helpers act as a bridge to formal services in CCECA and our service providers:

- The Way in – Calgary Older Adult Services
- Community engagement programs
- Family violence response team
- Adult Day program
- Chinese Counseling services
- Community volunteer income tax program
- Services and programs offered by other stakeholders

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Volunteers' Profile (2017-2018)



Age range : 20-76

The average age: 63

Total trained volunteers : 49 (5 classes)

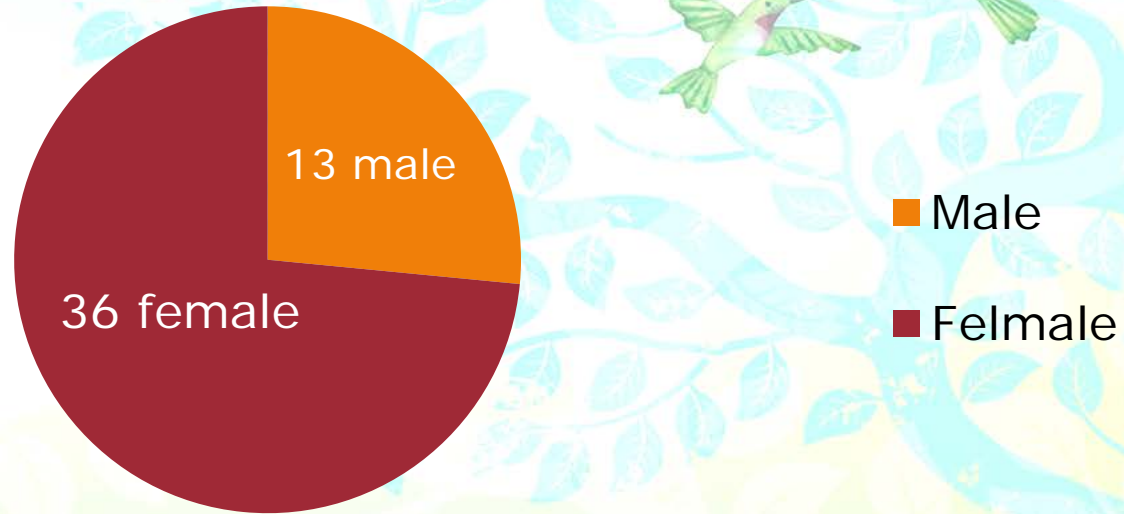
Active volunteers in the program: 32 (as of today)

Program Impact - volunteer helper

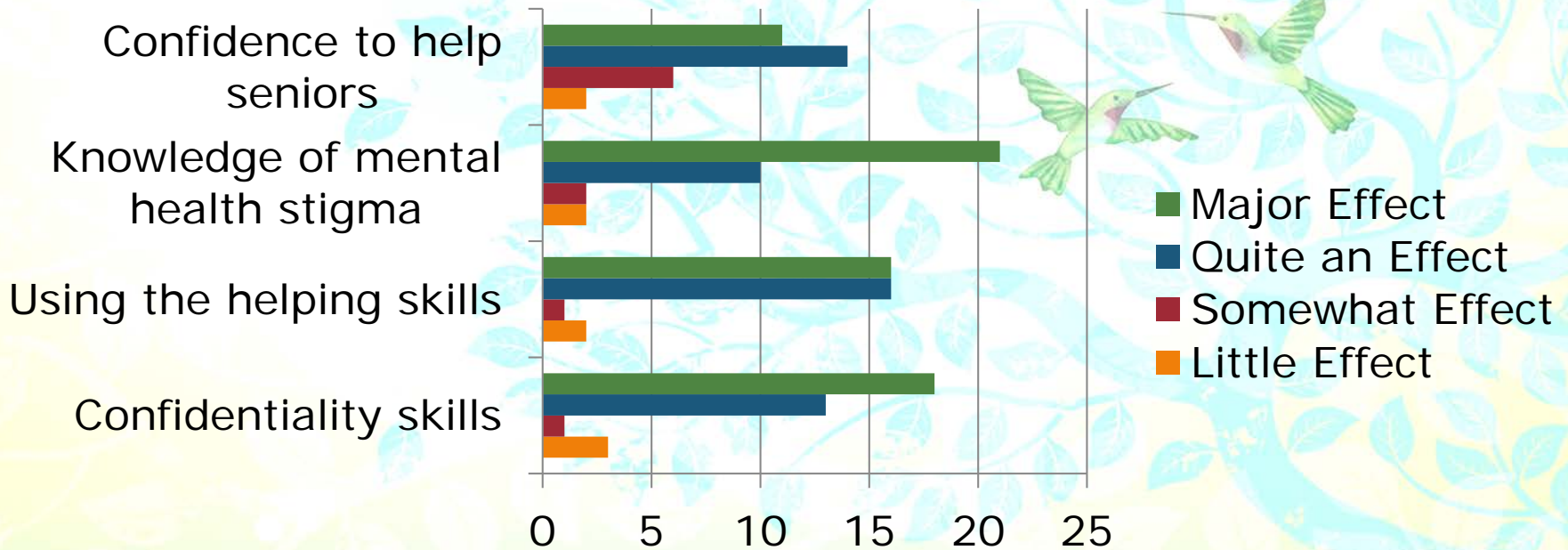
1. Showed significant positive change Yes(+) in social inclusion- social participation in the FCSS program impact report , City of Calgary
2. Period: July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018
3. 25 trained helper doing the pre-post survey

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(006)

Trained helpers (49 in total, 5 classes)



**CCHP train the trainer
(Feb 2017 to Aug 2018
60 training hours delivered)**



The Effect of Training

Effect of CCHP - Train the Trainer training

Before the training

43% reported that they have some knowledge of issues and challenges facing seniors in my community

41% reported that they have some knowledge about their limits and can tell when they are overwhelmed

51% reported that they are knowledgeable about the community resources that are available



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Effect of CCHP - Train the Trainer training

After the training

97% reported that they were **more** aware of issues and challenges facing seniors in their community

97% reported that they are **more** knowledgeable about their limits and can tell when they are overwhelmed

100% reported that they are **more** knowledgeable about the community resources that are available



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Feedback from the volunteer helper

1. The program helps many isolated and lonely seniors.
2. The helping skills of helpers are enhanced.
3. They are proud to be a volunteer in CCHP.
4. They appreciate the support and training from the coordinator and CCECA.
5. They enjoy the monthly support meeting that provide a good opportunity to build network, to gain emotional support and to improve skills .

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Participants' profile

- A total of 112 participants (March 2017 to September 2018)
- 80 clients participated in original CCHP project
- No. of seniors are still in the project = 61
- No. of seniors left the program = 19
- Reason for leaving the program (Discharge rate = 24%)
 - Completion of the 10 weeks visit program
 - Do not need the program any more – stable
 - Passed away (6)
- No. of seniors supported by coordinator due to special emotional situation and issues = 15 (19%)
- **NEW: Evaluation of CCHP (2018): 16** new participants in intervention group and **16** in control group

Program Impact - target group

1. Showed significant positive change Yes(+) in positive social Tie and /or Bonding social capital in the FCSS program impact report , City of Calgary
2. Period: July 1, 2017 to June 30,2018
3. 104 participating seniors doing the pre-post survey (004)

Feedback from participants

1. Seniors found the program very useful because helpers speak same language with similar cultural background and age
2. Seniors found the volunteer helpers very friendly, caring for them like family and they are good listeners.
3. Seniors reported that they make new friends after this program
4. Some of the isolated seniors reported that they have increased participation in CCECA's activities

Client story 1

- Mr. X, aged 85, was admitted to a general hospital for two months due to overdose of sleeping pills after a conflict with his wife.
- His reported to have poor relationship with his wife and he felt his wife didn't care for him
- He showed poor and distress mood with anxiety and depressed symptoms
- He was additive to gambling, going to casino
- He is a smoker



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Client Story 2

After joining the program, Mr. X has the following changes:

- He stopped taking sleeping pill and can sleep well
- He quit smoking. He goes to casino occasionally to relieve stress
- The coordinator convinced his wife to stop working and she spent more time to take care of him. The relationship improved.
- By talking to volunteer helpers regularly, he is happier with less symptoms of anxiety and depression



The background features a light green and yellow gradient with a pattern of stylized green leaves and branches. Two hummingbirds are depicted in flight, one slightly above and to the right of the other, both facing left. The text is centered in a bold, dark brown font.

Conclusion, Challenges and Lesson learned

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2018-09-24

43

Conclusion 1

1. The positive change in FCSS program impact report (participants) showed significantly improvement in **positive social ties and bonding social capital** after joining the program
2. **Follow up and peer support group** are important to **sustain** relationship. Seniors have to continue to practice what they learn in everyday life.

Conclusion 2

3. The trained volunteer helper had improved in:
 - Capacity in helping seniors
 - Awareness of mental health and stigma
 - Activities for social living skills
4. The positive change in FCSS program impact report (volunteers) showed significantly improvement in **social participation and social inclusion** after joining the program

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Challenge 1

1. It is difficult to make referral for program participants who may have mental symptoms but are unwilling to seek professional help due to language barrier and cultural difference.
2. 35 % of trained volunteer helpers leave the program after 10 weeks. They may find a new job or other commitments. On going recruitment and training are required to sustain the program.
3. Due to seniors' poor mobility and limited transportation options, some seniors cannot attend the center based peer support group.

Challenge 2

4. Since we have only one staff, it is challenging to follow up with all volunteers and provide emotional support to seniors who cannot be helped by volunteer helpers.
5. Matching seniors and the trained volunteer helper can be difficult because of location, availability and language.
6. It is very hard to identify isolated seniors with emotional issues because they are invisible and seldom leave their homes.

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What we have learned 1

1. To provide more practical activities (such as mindfulness , self care exercise, relaxation activities) during the visit to engage seniors
2. Connect and gather seniors living in the same facility and form a peer support group. It is more successful than inviting them to CCECA peer group
3. To ensure the success of this program, ongoing recruitment , training and recognition of volunteers are crucial.

What we have learned 2

4. The Program Co-ordinator has to provide emotional support to those who have mental issues and cannot be supported by the volunteer helpers. A case worker is required to help those who will not seek professional help.
5. It is important to work with apartment managers and other stakeholders so that they can refer isolated seniors to the program. On going promotion is crucial.
6. It will be helpful to do an evaluation of the program so that we can identify areas that we need to work on to provide more support to program participants and volunteer helpers.

Questions & Answers

For more information,
please contact:

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email: liza.chan@cceca.ca or celia.li@cceca.ca



Thank you



Questions
are
guaranteed in
life;
Answers
aren't.

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