Creating Effective Suicide Prevention Strategies for the Hmong Community: We Are The Peace We Need. We Are Our Own Solutions.

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Suicide Prevention Objectives

• Create community awareness
• Promote community dialogue
• Promote wellness
• Increase access to services
• Increase the provider community cultural compatibility to serve Hmong
• Promote system changes

Suicide/Violence Prevention Road Map

Hmong Community

Suicide Prevention
Community Capacity

System Change
Which One of me do you really know?

Hmong Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BORN</th>
<th>RAISED</th>
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<td>• Asian &amp; Asian</td>
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DIFFERENCES BETWEEN REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT

• Body comes first
• Mind comes later
• Leaves native land for safety.
• Cannot return home.
• Circumstance is often abrupt and/or traumatic.

• Mind comes first
• Body comes later
• Leaves native land for prosperity.
• Returning home is a choice.
• Circumstance is planned with anticipation.
Hmong IN AMERICA

- Hmong can not continue life as they have known it.
- Acculturating into the American ways of life is a complex process.
- Hmong live in limbo.

Lifestyle Changes

- Agrarian
- Industrial
- Informational

Laos-1975 Hmong’s Lifestyle Changes  America-2005

Culture Shock

- Old behaviors are not getting the accustomed responses.
- The realization that one longer knows the “rules of the game” and does not understand how to behave.

Source: Bridging Cultural Barriers for Corporate Success by Sandle Thendresan
Measurement of Wellness

- Physical functioning
- Wellness is understood more so as having to do with physiological and spiritual problems rather than psychological.
- *Appear* to be less PSYCHOLOGICAL MINDEDNESS

COMMON BELIEFS IN CAUSES OF ILLNESS

- Supernatural phenomena
- Punishment for past sinful acts
- Relationship with ancestors
- Mandate for life
- Stability of the soul
- Genetic predisposition

Traditional Remedies For Health Conditions

- Herbal Medicines
- Shamanism
- Incantation
- Soul Calling
- String Tying
- New Names Ceremony
Traditional Remedies For Health Conditions

• Bridge Ceremony
• Praying to “Ntuj”
• Fulfilling the Bargaining with Ntuj
• Religious Conversion
• Clan Conversion
• Modern Medicines
• And others

Treatment Expectations

*Definition affects interventions and outcome expectations*

- Tangible vs Intangible
- Spiritual vs psychological/words
- Quick fix vs long-term management
- External vs internal self-driven

Cultural Context

• Refugee vs Immigrant
• Healer lead vs Partnership
• Symptoms vs Causes
• Quick fix vs Management
• Life and Death is cyclical
• The Concept of “Whole”
Hmong Life Cycle

Strategies

• Teen Magazine
• Radio Show
• Community Retreats
• Monthly Talking Circle
• Cross-Cultural Case Consultation
• Training for Professionals