2016 - 2017

HEALTHY FAMILIES HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
EVALUATION SUMMARY

Purpose:
This evaluation of the Healthy Families Healthy Communities program aimed to understand participants’ experience in the program and assess the impact of the program on their lives.

What is Healthy Families Healthy Communities?
The Healthy Families Healthy Communities (HFHC) program is an initiative for youth and women from Tamil, Afghan, Iranian, and Somali communities to share experiences, learn new information about Canada, and address issues around family violence. The program has been in operation since 2013.

What does HFHC Involve?
- Family Services Toronto (FST) hires and trains peer leaders from Afghan, Iranian, Somali and Tamil communities to facilitate youth workshops and support groups.
- Community facilitators from FST conduct workshops for women in the community.
- In the Afghan & Somali communities, some women were parents of participants in the youth group.

Workshops dealt with three themes:
- Self
- Family
- Community

Evaluation Process

Surveys
FST’s Knowledge Building team developed surveys to identify fundamental aspects of programs.
- Participants indicated satisfaction with sessions from 1 (‘strong dislike’) to 5 (‘liked a lot’).
- Participants indicated agreement with a set of statements related to program impacts on attitudes towards self, family and community.

Focus Groups
HFHC staff conducted and assisted with focus groups and informal feedback sessions to gain a deeper understanding of program impacts.
- Peer leaders and community facilitators led discussions in participants’ first language.
- Participants reflected on key learnings and experiences in the program.

What are the goals of HFHC?
- Increase interpersonal skills in problem solving and communication in the family.
- Increase interpersonal connections among community members.
- Develop participants’ capacity to address issues of violence in family and community settings.

- Increase knowledge about community crisis, health and social services.
- Increase knowledge about life in Canada, including laws, rights and responsibilities.
- Help participants negotiate differences between their culture of origin and Canadian culture.

*There was no evaluation conducted with the Tamil women’s group in 2016-2017.*
Program Improvements

In 2016 – 2017, HFHC included four groups for women in the community:
- Afghan Women
- Tamil Women
- Somali Women
- Iranian Women

BECAUSE OF THIS PROGRAM...

IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP WITH SELF
- I have a better understanding of myself.
- I learned strategies to take care of myself if I feel angry, stressed or lonely.
- I feel more connected to others.

IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP WITH FAMILY
- I know how to tell if a relationship is healthy or unhealthy.
- I have built a closer relationship with my children.
- I know healthy ways of dealing with conflict.

IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMUNITY
- I know how to access more services in my community.
- I have a better understanding of how violence affects children and youth.
- I have a better sense of how to have healthy community relationships and connections.

Over 85% of Iranian and Somali participants expressed agreement with the above statements.
In 2016 – 2017, HFHC conducted four groups for youth in the community*:
- Afghan Youth (F)
- Somali Youth (F)
- Afghan Youth (M)
- Iranian Youth (M/F)

**The family part of the workshops was the most interesting to me. I tried using what I learned about communication with my brothers and sisters.**

**I really loved the program. I became more socialized after joining the program. I am interested in continuing and meeting new friends.**

**How did the program help you?**
- Learned strategies for dealing with intense emotions
- Increased knowledge of rights and definition of abuse in Canada
- Increased confidence identifying healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Developed communication, problem solving and conflict resolution skills
- Gained knowledge about available services for newcomers to Canada

The statements above were expressed by Iranian youth in focus groups following program completion, and by Somali youth in a conceptual mapping exercise in the program’s final session.

**Iranian-Canadian youth** said that HFHC helped them increase social connections by:
- Introducing them to new friends through peer support meetings;
- Increasing their confidence to meet people outside of their Iranian peer group;
- Teaching them to have a “good attitude towards everyone”.

**Somali-Canadian youth** said that because of their participation in HFHC groups, they:
- Became more aware of the warning signs of abuse;
- Gained confidence and pride in their identity as Somali-Canadians;
- Learned strategies to promote self-confidence, self-acceptance and a positive internal voice.

**Afghan–Canadian youth** identified that HFHC promoted development in many key areas, by:
- Teaching them strategies for dealing with intense emotions;
- Increasing their knowledge of their rights and the definition of abuse in Canada;
- Increasing their confidence in identifying healthy and unhealthy relationships.

**For more information about**

Healthy Families Healthy Communities:

Visit us online at familyservicetoronto.org or call us at (416) 595 9230.

**Icon Credit:**
*Person*, by ngamlerdlekdesign (Noun Project)

---

*M = Male, F= Female; Based on participants’ self-identification of their own gender.
The Iranian male and female youth groups combined based on the preference of the participants.