Community Outreach to Underserved Nepalese & Bhutanese Communities
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Introduction
The Hume Center was established in 1993, and since then, we have been offering preventative services and providing support to a diverse community. Starting in 2010, we expanded our impact in the community by developing a comprehensive program specifically to serve the South Asian Community called the South Asian Community Health Promotion Services Program. This program, with major funding provided by Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services Mental Health Services Act funding, offers community programs and services that are unique and best suited for our consumers, whether that is an individual, family, community, or organization. In 2018 the program was further expanded to include outreach workers who represented the hidden and hard to reach South Asian communities of Nepal and Bhutan.

Nepal & Bhutan
Nepal, officially the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is a country in South Asia. It is mainly in the Himalayas, but also includes parts of the Indo-Gangetic Plain. It is the 49th largest country by population and 93rd largest country by area. Nepal is governed according to the constitution of Nepal. It defines Nepal as having multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious, multi-cultural characteristics with common aspirations of people living in diverse geographical regions, and being committed to and united by a bond of allegiance to the national independence, territorial integrity, national interest, and prosperity of Nepal. Nepalese Americans began migrating to the United States from early 20th century. It is estimated that 25,000 Nepalis are living in the northern California.

Religions:
Hinduism, Buddhism, Kirat, Islam, and Christianity

Major Languages:
Nepali

Most Bhutanese refugees are part of a minority, ethnic Nepali group called Lhotzsampa who had been living in Bhutan for decades. This group was targeted during ethnic cleansing in the 1980’s by the majority and ruling ethnic group, Druk. In 1990, protests for democracy led to the arrest and torture of activists and the Bhutanese government expelled all Lhotzsampas from Bhutan. Individuals fled to Nepal and West Bengal but were neither able to attain citizenship nor return to Bhutan. Many seek resettlement in a third country, such as the United States, and have spent years, even decades, in refugee camps in Nepal. Around 500 Bhutanese are living in the city of Oakland.

Religions:
Buddhism, & Hinduism

Major Languages:
Nepali & Dzongkha

Mental Health
Major health concerns among Bhutanese refugees include depression and other emotional illnesses due to forced displacement and cultural alienation. In both of the communities, individuals with severe mental disorders, as well as their family members, are targets of stigma and discrimination to the point where they hesitate to come forward for appropriate treatment. Even patients with neurotic disorders do not like to consult mental health professionals because of the stigma of mental disease. Due to the decade long Maoist insurgency and political instability in Nepal, most of the families migrated to the Bay area as asylum seekers whom have experienced decades of trauma. There has been an increase in suicidal ideation and death by suicide is a burning issue for both Nepalese and Bhutanese communities. Other struggles within the community such as family separation for a long time, immigration issues, job loss due to COVID-19, untreated mental illnesses are the significant issues to create mental health issues in Nepalese and Bhutanese communities living in the Bay Area.

Stigmas and Barriers of Mental Health: 
Lack of knowledge about Emotional Wellness & Resources available. 
Shame & Guilt (Saving Face)

Model Minority Myths
Lack of culturally and linguistically relevant support and services
Lack of proper words describing Emotional Wellness topics

Goals of the South Asian Community Health Promotion Services Program
1) Through outreach we want to educate and increase knowledge about emotional wellness within Nepalese and Bhutanese communities in order to break stigmas around mental health.
2) We want to provide access to care through prevention/early intervention services and workshops by utilizing culturally and linguistically grounded interventions. These services are free of charge to our participants for up to 1 year of services.

Services & Participants Served
July 2019-April 2020

Outreach & Prevention Services Provided
Groups/Workshops
Community Wellness Support Group
This is a wellness support group that provides learning and encouragement to help increase overall health and wellness. The group is open to adults who are struggling with family separation and isolation in the Nepali and Bhutanese communities.

Immigration Support Group
It is estimated that more than 25 thousand Nepalis are living in the Bay Area. Among them, most of them are asylum seekers. The community members who are seeking asylum have been struggling with the right resources in their own language. This support group was found very effective for their emotional health as well as immigration support.

Badminton Group
This group was launched to promote health and increase socialization through sports in the community.

Youth Group
The participants join the group and talk about current affairs and their related issues. The virtual group has been supportive in helping isolated youth to connect with each other and share their emotions and feelings.

Resources Group
This virtual group was launched after the COVID-19 to support at-risk Nepali and Bhutanese families. This virtual platform is found beneficial to connect communities of need with specific resources. Communities are connected with free yoga, meditation, EDD related resources, Emotional health, domestic violence, and COVID testing information.

Consultation with other organizations
Nepali Association of Northern CA
This organization which was established 25 years ago was established by a group of Nepali immigrants living in SF Bay Area. This first Nepali organization has been supporting Nepali community members settled in CA to help preserve Nepali culture and language, decreasing social isolation of community members and bridging gaps to resources to help the Nepali community thrive.

Bay Area COVID-19 Task Force Committee
Community Leaders came together during the pandemic to provide much needed resources (Food, PPE supplies, etc.) to Nepalese and Bhutanese community members who became isolated due to the shelter in place.

East Bay Asian Pacific Islander for Contra Costa COVID-19 Care
A group of community leaders, community members and community providers coming together to help support linguistically and culturally appropriate information about the pandemic and how to remain safe and healthy.

Preventive Counseling
(f during outreach and prevention we identify that the individual or family need a higher level of care then we begin to provide more goal oriented individual, family and couples consultation services through preventative counseling to participants for up to 1 year

References
2. https://artsandculture.google.com/entity/nepal/m016wzt