

## Follow up to Jan 9<sup>th</sup> Dialogue Vulnerable Chinese Community

Forty concerned service providers and businesses from the downtown east side attended the dialogue to discuss how they could best support the vulnerable Chinese population and also how to stop the violence, physical abuse and non-verbal abuse in food lines. Through this discussion other issues were brought up as well which provided a great platform to create the changes needed as expressed by this group.

Change does not happen overnight in a community where complex issues have been the norm for many years. Working in a coordinated effort as a united community creates a movement towards positive change through education, awareness and sharing of resources. Determining the shared groups' ultimate goal and mapping backwards allows the group to remain on track measuring early and intermediate accomplishments setting the stage for producing long-range results. The BC Community Response Network (CRN) is here to facilitate the initiation of this movement by encouraging collaborative efforts among community members, then passing along the shared responsibility to the community members.

Key findings that arose from the dialogue are listed below. With a view to move forward the process suggested is using the facilitation method of Community Builders Approach to Theory of Change as a guideline. The previous two dialogues helped to clarify the ultimate outcome, the longer term goals and the shorter term goals. The purpose of this meeting is to quickly check in that we are clear and agree on the ultimate outcome and long term goals that will help us stay on track as we create and operationalize the action plan.

### **The Ultimate Outcome**

Social Cohesion – Chinese feeling safe and respected in Downtown East Side community; racism greatly reduced; service providers/agencies, businesses and faith based organizations fulfilling population's needs through ongoing education and awareness; community/groups continues to do check in and review of community needs at Community Response Networks quarterly meetings.

### **Long Term Goals**

1. Violence no longer exists in food lineups - physical, verbal and non-verbal
2. Cultural understanding and acceptance between Chinese, First Nations/Aboriginal and white population. Dominant myths are clarified
3. Language barriers are down as service providers hire or train staff to be multi lingual
4. Ongoing collaboration and sharing of resources between all community members

### **Interventions/Short Term Goals** in no particular order

1. Create advocacy/interpreter resource in public spaces ie; food lines
2. Training to build staff cultural competency
3. Educating Chinese elders and non-Chinese elders about each other's cultures
  - a. Identify strategies for communicating

4. Demographic Research of Chinese community
5. Learning language to support Chinese (multiple dialects) and Chinese to learn some English
6. Survey Chinese elders re their issues and how they would like these issues addressed
7. Consider time lines of aging populations and some of the issues faced today will dissipate as that cohort dies off
  - a. Give this population ownership and recognition for their experiences
8. Break down the misconceptions of large cohorts
  - a. 1 member of each group break down communication barriers
9. Garner financial support to sustain movement – to support continued management and facilitation - by individual or organization not related to the community.
10. Create communication protocol for CRN members
  - a. Stop the ineffective referral cycle, people falling through the cracks (beyond mental health issues)
11. Awareness campaign – ie; World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

### **Operationalizing Outcomes (Action Plan - Mapping)**

1. Clarify and operationalize the interventions using the above list as a guide.
  - a. Prioritize what actions you want to begin first
  - b. What resources are needed to support the action
  - c. Who in community has the resources to support the action required
  - d. How will this action be executed
  - e. Timing - What length of time are we willing to dedicate to make this happen
  - f. Measurable indicators of success
  - g. What are the outcomes we are looking for
  - h. Lead - who is willing to take the lead to start

The organizations who stepped up to offer support from the initial dialogue were; Downtown Eastside Women's Centre; Union Gospel Mission; Mission Possible; Salvation Army; MOSAIC; SUCCESS; Carnegie Community Action Plan; First United Church; UBC Learning Exchange

Note:

I wanted to note those suggestions beyond notes from the dialogue with possible directions for moving forward;

1. Creating a working group charged with collecting demographic information about our target population.
2. Creation of a work group charged with developing strategies to curb the violence – physical, verbal and emotional – currently occurring in food lines
3. Creation of a workgroup charged with exploring opportunities for population- specific programing and space
4. Survey Chinese elders on what they think the issues are and how they want issues addressed
5. Improve cultural awareness a) educating service providers about Chinese elders b) educating Chinese elders and non-Chinese elders about each other's cultures

6. Identify strategies for communicating with Chinese elders – creating visual signs, identifying interpreter resources etc.

Here is a synopsis of all recommendations and thoughts from the three groups at the dialogue on Jan 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Positive actions that are already taking place or have been suggested;**

1. DEWC – started anti-racism group – joined by Chinese and Aboriginal women
2. Confronting dominant myths
3. Help bridge cultures to create understanding; generate interest by talking to women to see if they want to take part.
4. UBC Learning Exchange looking for more opportunities to collaborate
5. Harbour Light connecting all seniors who use services so that common issues can be identified
6. History classes, storytelling,
7. Volunteers from universities help with translation
8. Intentional programs that bring people together
9. Programs that build leadership
10. Chinese elders volunteer to cook allows them to give back to community
11. First United want to offer tax session in other languages
12. SUCCESS tax filing 2,000 per year and still more to do
13. Sunrise Market and London Drugs wants to support community
14. Ensure no duplication of services or be aware of duplicated services to support one another
15. Take out containers for those who don't want to come out at night for food
16. Advocates to help with documentation
17. Culturally appropriate food
18. Liaison, advocates and/or community leaders to support in food lines or large groups
19. Nonverbal activities increase tolerance
20. Staff leadership increases understanding
21. Story telling provides cultural awareness
22. More volunteers with Chinese capacity
23. Change our personal belief systems from Board to Staff to Individuals
24. Round tables for seniors of different dialects
25. MOSAIC and SUCCESS can support around language issues
26. Share resources

**Here is a list of barriers mentioned;**

**Language**

1. Chinese not able to participate fully in community
2. Host community does not have competency to support in Mandarin or Cantonese
3. Chinese speaking can't participate in decision making
4. Can't have opinions heard
5. Barrier between Chinese seniors and larger community
6. Difficulty even with posted signs due to literacy
7. Encounter violence between Chinese elders of different regions/dialects
8. Not grasping protocols and rules of systems
9. Showing up for services without appointments – making workers impatient

10. Difficulty knowing hours to obtain things for free
11. Outreach worker only speaks Cantonese
12. Conflict in lineups between those in addiction and Chinese elders and staff
13. Unable to ask for access to medical services particularly specialists
14. Communication during programs difficult leading to conflict when more than one group of Chinese dialects
15. Chinese seniors' illiterate unable to read signs
16. Mandarin is a barrier Cantonese less so
17. Resources are limited
18. Translation falling short
19. Lack of resources - translators
20. Barrier for referrals
21. Hard to integrate
22. Lack of medical services
23. Need help with tax returns

## **Cultural**

- Chinese cohort seen as aggressive and impatient when butting in line, going for food more than once
  1. Impatient, want immediate service creates conflict and negative feelings with workers providing service
  2. Don't understand concept of lining up
  3. People in lines compete
  4. Some Chinese are very persistent – individual attitudes?
  5. Don't learn our system - protocols
  6. Lack of cultural foods in food kitchens
  7. Racism- lack of respect
  8. Problems between sects/dialects/communities - coming from China
  9. Chinese elders find questions invasive making it difficult to support them
  10. Mandarin is barrier Cantonese less so
  11. Conflict between Chinese seniors
  12. Chinese believe not speaking out will protect their dignity
  13. Sponsorship issues
  14. Historical divide - Socio cultural divide - Chronic distrust between Chinatown and Strathcona
  15. Come from a hierarchal society
  16. No clear picture of demographics for Chinese in downtown eastside
  17. Family division
- Community lacking cultural capacity
  1. Caucasian lack understanding of Chinese and don't understand why some are as they are
  2. Caucasian tempers flare when Chinese are aggressive or pushy in food lineups creates domino effect of violence
  3. Not all service providers have the resources to educate staff around cultural issues
  4. Lack of resources
  5. Racism
  6. Myths that all Chinese are wealthy and have good homes; have no needs
  7. Lack of understanding of each other's cultures Chinese, First Nations/Aboriginal and whites causes anger and hostility
  8. Hard to identify homelessness

## Cohorts

1. Groups formed amongst those who have similar experiences appear to isolate themselves. Others on the outside may feel intimidated
2. False indication of not requiring support from community
3. Sense of familiarity gives false sense of security keeps Chinese from integrating into system
4. Lack of understanding from outside why some Chinese people behave the way they do  
i.e.; aggressiveness in food lineups; angst around not having enough food
5. Low or no income experience – a backlash within families related to sponsorship
6. May be well dressed and therefore circumstances misunderstood
7. Older groups lived during hierarchal times and may have a problem with one person being the authority on navigating or being “ambassador” for others in mixed groups
8. Big groups evoke hostility
9. Misconception that Chinese community is large and they don’t need help
10. Tension amongst all poor
11. Physical conflict between Chinese seniors themselves

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