

Somali Youth Justice Addiction Outreach

Addiction Services for Somali Youth in Conflict with the Law

A Partnership Between
Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services and Canadian Friends of Somalia

Presentation to:
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Somali Community in Ottawa Background – Culture - Challenges

- Muslim, Semitic People. Variations of conservative/ Muslim; not conservative
- Educated, formerly responsible positions in Somalia
- Verbal culture...remember. Writing down shows uncertainty
- 18,000 to 23,000 population*. All fled a war
- Language




Somali Community in Ottawa Background - Culture

- New to bureaucracy
- Avoid Police Attention: Authorities are "High Risk"
- *Stay off government lists (*census?)
- Family Solves all issues
- Keep shame from family
- Respect for elders
- 'Pray the Qu'oran'




Challenges

- War Trauma, PTSD
- "Absent Fathers"
- Poverty
- Culture Shock
- Mother with 2-3 jobs, night work
- Alcohol/Drugs poorly understood in Muslim families
- Authorities are high risk in Somalia



Challenges


- Alcohol and drugs are 'haram', no knowledge/skills in addiction;
- Kids want to be Canadian, do and have what Canadian kids do and have;
- 23 Ottawa and Somali Youth dead in West in 3 yrs: naïve, drug trade.



Not So Foreign

Different? What do these factors do elsewhere?

- West Side Story – 1960's N.Y.C. gangs
- "Yohawks" & "Squirrels" Gangs were the impetus behind YSB creation (Ottawa – 1960)
- Lord of the Flies
- Teddy Boys; England 1950's Gangs
- Mods vs Rockers; England 1960's Gangs
- Lost Boys & Peter Pan



Not So Foreign Cont'd

- Posses
- Red Guards – China 1960's
- Soccer Hooligans - England & Europe 1980's and 1990's
- Snakeheads - B.C. 2000
- Street Gangs (informal)
- Runners ("favours for favours")



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Context: Ottawa Somali Youth Issue

- Somali Youth over-represented in Courts (Social Planning Council of Ottawa – "Examining the Degree of Exclusion and Inclusion for Ottawa's Somali Community" - 2008)
- Somali Youth Court Liaison Worker needed*
- Educate high-risk on community services and accessing*
- Highlight and work with community on PIP program*
- Develop culturally sensitive capacity to recruit staff (Mayor's Task Force on Somali Youth – 2004)



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Project History

- **Canadian Friends of Somalia** request to **Centre for Addiction & Mental Health (CAMH)** Ottawa Office. CAMH sent out Request.
- **Rideauwood Offers:**
 - Strengths Based Partnership
 - Capacity Building
 - Somali/Rideauwood Cross-Training: Culture & Addiction
 - Sensitivity to Addiction and Skills to address it
 - Somali Staffing
 - Integrate with Existing Programs
 - Familiarity with "Mainstream" Service



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Background *Continuum Achieved*

- **Prevention Programs** – for Parents, Youth, Community.
 - Health Canada funded; 3 years (2009-2012)
 - CFS, Rideauwood, CAMH Partnership 2009-12
- **Capacity Building For Somali Community:**
 - CFS, Somali workers in Health, Education, Employment, Immigrant Services, Police, community are trained in addiction
- **Youth Justice Addiction Intervention & Treatment**
 - Parent & Youth Counselling: Ontario MCSCS 1 year
 - Justice Canada: 3 years funded (2011-2013)
- **Integration With Existing Resources**
 - School Based Addiction Treatment; YJ Addiction Treatment (Probation); Employment and Employment Training; Culture, Recreation, Sports; Diversion



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Justice Canada Somali Youth Justice Addiction Outreach

- **Outreach at Court/Custody/Probation/Diversion:**
 - **Somali Youth:** Substance related Mental Health problems;
 - **Somali Parents/Family:** Substance Abuse related Mental Health – trauma, anxiety, depression, poverty, isolation, violence, PTSD.
- **Motivation, Treatment Counselling:** Substance Abuse Related Mental Health in Youth and Parents/Family – distress, trauma, anxiety, depression, poverty, social isolation, violence, PTSD.
- **Reintegration/Integration:** Meaningful social/cult activities:
 - School and School Based Addiction Treatment;
 - Employment Training (City of Ottawa, Youth Services Bureau);
 - Cultural/Social Programs (Somali Youth Basketball League).



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Three Overarching Objectives (6?)

- To reduce substance abuse, criminal behaviour and negative peer/gang involvement (3 objectives).
- To increase healthy choices and pro-social thinking, values and peer relationships.
- To reintegrate into school, employment preparation, cultural and recreation activity.



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Short Term Outcomes

- ↑ # Somali Youth in the justice system who receive drug abuse treatment.
- ↑ Engagement/integration of Somali Youth in community learning/earning opportunities.
- ↑ # Somali youth who complete the school year.
 - Rideauwood School Based Addiction & Mental Health Counsellors
- ↑ Grades and academic credit achievement of youth receiving school based treatment.
 - Rideauwood School Based Addiction & Mental Health Counsellors.

Medium Term Outcomes

- ↓ Substance use related problems among Somali youth.
- ↓ Drug use frequency, amounts, high risk use.
- ↓ # of Somali youth who reoffend and re-enter justice system.
- ↓ # Somali youth trials, incarcerations and probation orders.

Outputs and Targets

1. **Outreach Court/Custody/Diversion:** 50/year (4/month)
Of those 50 per year:
2. **Engaged in Treatment:** 33/yr
3. **Advocacy, Case Mgt, Reintegration:** 23/yr
School, Employment Prep, Culture/Recreation
4. **Improved School Performance:** 17/yr
(School Based Treatment)
5. **Parents provided support/guidance at Court:** 17/yr
6. **Parents receive Education/Counselling on Parenting**
in substance abuse: 17/yr

Potential Referrals

- ▶ **In any Court** for Parents: Farah Aw Osman, CFS
"Substance Abuse Related Mental Health"
- ▶ **In Custody at William Hay Centre for Youth:** CFS
Farah Aw Osman
- ▶ **In Youth Mental Health Court** - Rideauwood Staff:
Wendy Brown, Keith Bottaro
- ▶ **In Youth Court:** Referrals to Youth Mental Health Court
Addiction: Farah, Wendy, Keith
- ▶ **From Diversion, Police/SROs/Probation/Counsel**
/Crowns: Direct Referrals to Farah, Wendy, Keith for Youth
and Parents