A WORKSHOP ON YOUNG IRANIAN WOMEN IMMIGRANTS;
FACING RELATIONSHIP ISSUES

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of Master of Science in Counseling,
Marriage and Family Therapy

By

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ABSTRACT

YOUNG IRANIAN WOMEN IMMIGRANTS; FACING RELATIONSHIP ISSUES IN THE UNITED STATES

By

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Master of Science in Counseling,

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The purpose of this graduate project is to design a four-hour Workshop, which educates newly arrived Iranian women who immigrated to the United States on the challenges they could face in dating and relationship, and provide them with the resources and information. Along with the goal of achieving educational and professional ambitions, Iranian women in their twenties face the challenges of engaging successfully in westernized American society and developing intimate romantic relationships. While individuals in their twenties have developed integral elements of their personality and methods of interpersonal interaction, partially established based upon the cultural norms of their country of origin, immigrating to a foreign culture generates additional obstacles in their quest to finding the appropriate romantic match with corresponding cultural checkpoints.
As the Iranian culture maintains a traditional view of relationships and marriage, there is an adherence to arranging relationships within class and educational levels, as well as within the hometown. Considering these factors, the purpose of this study is to demonstrate the effects of these cultural factors on female Iranian Immigrants as they establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. From the relationship standpoint the Persian culture has a very set approach – fairly traditional – towards relationship and marriage. They believe in matching the class levels, education, and even family’s hometown, etc.

This study aims to design a workshop that proposes to educate Iranian women immigrants on engaging in successful interpersonal relationships within American culture. This workshop will be conducted over four-hour and will include psychoeducation that will develop participant’s skills required to engage in healthy interpersonal relationships, as well as cope with cultural conflicts that may manifest.
Chapter One

Introduction

Background of the Study

In the past thirty years, great numbers of Iranian citizens have immigrated to the United States, primarily to pursue freedom and have a better life. Many Iranians have immigrated to the United States since the revolution in 1979, mostly from the middle or upper-middle class. Immigrants live a difficult life as they adjust to new life styles, communities and new cultures on a daily basis. Some of these challenges could include learning the new language, culture, and value system. Furthermore, living in a foreign country has its own challenges to get acclimated to changes introduced in their lives; things like getting around town, shopping, socializing, etc.

Obviously one aspect of everyone’s life is a relationship, and how one goes about meeting the right people. Because this study/workshop focuses on young Iranian women immigrants who are interested in seeking to find their “Saul mate”, it is necessary to understand the conflicts which confront them. This is due to the fundamental difference between the Iranian family systems which emphasizes satisfying parents, versus the American emphasis on individualization and keeping the boundaries. It is especially difficult for women who feel they are between two cultures.

Iranian tradition, for example, dictates that an Iranian female should fulfill the obligation of being a “good” daughter by emulating her mother in becoming the best housewife/mother she can be. Upon arriving and setting in the United States women are
exposed to western attitudes, morals, traditions, actions, women’s rights, media, customs, and lifestyle.

**Purpose of Study/Project**

The Iranian revolution of 1979 compelled many Iranian families to immigrate to the United States. While some people had a choice in leaving their country others left in fear of persecution. A person’s religion, social, and economic status were factors influencing migration (Kerendi, 1998). Upon immigration to the United States, Iranians experienced extreme culture shock, alienation, frustration, and depression (Jalali, 2005). Many families had to deal with breaking ties with their family, losing their social positions and professions, and for many, migration meant breaking their strong ties with their homeland (Jalali, 2005).

Statistics indicate that 50% of Americans living in the United States are not married. This statistic may be unsettling to immigrants who seek to develop intimate relationships. Furthermore, immigrants tend to prefer to engage in relationships with those who are from similar cultures, religions, and even countries of origin. Such as Iranians (Persians) who exemplify this behavior.

A significant number of Iranians immigrate to the United States on a yearly basis. The U.S Census of 2010 shows a total population of Iranians living in Los Angeles County, California to be 92,088, of which 47.9% are female. This project will focus on Young Iranian Women who immigrate to the US and will consider the challenges that
emerge in pursuing relationships. In the process of attaining romantic relationships immigrants may encounter conflicts due to the differing cultural norms of eastern and western cultures.

This project aims to provide information that will educate female Iranian immigrants women to such role conflicts. It is expected that an increased awareness of this conflict will help educate participants in developing skills to engage in successful romantic relationships. One of the main challenges could be referred to as culture shock. Iranian women could face in the US a conflict between what their parent standards are and what the western world practices. Despite extensive literature on the Iranian culture, there is little or no reference to potential gender role conflicts that Iranian women face. Since tradition dictates that Iranian female should fulfill family role obligations, the purpose of this project then, is to increase such a awareness for Iranian women immigrants.

**Significance of the Study**

An extensive search indicates that there are no other studies that focus on acculturation conflicts and stress experienced by young Iranian women seeking to establish an intimate relationship. This study, then, aims to provide some data of Iranian women’s historical background, subculture values, and unique priorities, in order to provide the therapist with a sense Iranian family dynamics.

It is critical to explore the cultural conflicts that manifest for female Iranian immigrants as they establish interpersonal relationship. It is critical to note that this population lacks extensive study in this field in regards to issues of acculturation and
relational stress, thus initiating the suggested workshop may encourage further study of this population.

TERMINOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS

Immigration:

Immigration is defined as entering and settling in a country or region to which one is not native.

Culture:

The custom, values, and traditions that are learned from one’s environment. Also can be defended as, the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterize an institution, organization, or group.

Iranian Immigrants:

They are the people who migrate to the United State from Iran. This heterogeneous group includes those who immigrated voluntarily, students, refugees, for political reason, and exiles.

Sex-role System

The network of attitudes, feelings, and behaviors resulting from the persuasiveness of sociological stereotyping in a given culture.
**Intimate Relationships:**

An intimate relationship is a particularly close interpersonal relationship that involves physical or emotional intimacy. Physical intimacy is characterized by romantic or passionate love and attachment or sexual activity. The term is also sometimes used euphemistically for a sexual relationship.

**Intimacy:**

Enduring behavioral interdependence, repeated interactions, emotional attachment, and need fulfillment.

**Attachment Theory:**

Bowlby’s theory that once an infant was safely and securely attached, it would naturally explore and play, occasionally returning to the mother’s secure presence for comfort.

**Secure Attachment:**

A secure attachment was the result of the degree of maternal sensitivity and spirit of cooperation with the child's efforts toward having needs met, as opposed to interfering with those efforts (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

**Anxious/resistant attachment:**

An anxious/resistant attachment resulted from a mother who was, for a variety of reasons, many of them unintentional, inconsistent with her responses and level of sensitivity to her infant's needs (Ainsworth et al., 1978).
Anxious/avoidant attachment:

An anxious/avoidant attachment occurred as a result of a mother who was perceived by the infant as being unavailable, either emotionally or physically (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

Acculturation:

The product of culture, learning that occurs as a result of contact between the members of two or more culturally distinct groups.

Acculturation Stress:

A unique sort of stress that is accompanied by physiological discomfort as one moves across culture. This discomfort may manifest itself in a variety of psychological as well as physical problem.

Dating

Dating is a form of courtship consisting of social activities done by two persons with the aim of each assessing the other's suitability as a partner in an intimate relationship or as a spouse. The term usually refers to the act of meeting and engaging in some mutually agreed upon social activity in public, together, as a couple.
Bridge

In order to help Iranian women immigrants in relationships, it is necessary to review previous studies and research regarding Iranian women immigrant issues which will be presented in the following chapter.

My aim is to focus on the Iranian immigrant residing in the Los Angeles County area and through a four-hour workshop provide them with the information and resources needed to educate them about the conflicts they would face in the process of dating and relationships. There are many resources in the community that they may not be aware of and could help them through the challenges and struggles of dating and relationships in the new country.

To understand the complexities involved in these conflicts, I interviewed several Iranian women who were struggling with ‘living in two worlds’. Through these interviews the conflicts of traditional values and their adaptation to untraditional and westernize approach are visible.

I believe it is our responsibility as clinicians to aid our clients with conflicts they are facing through education, providing them with the right resources to help them be aware of challenges on the road. In this case it is to help Iranian women immigrants to be more educated and conscious about the decisions they make before getting into a relationship.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

Statistics shows that a total population of Iranians living in Los Angeles County, California to be 92,088, of which 47.9 % are female (United States Bureau of the Census 2010). Based on this number, almost half of the population is women. Most of these immigrant women already finished their undergraduate education in Iran and have established integral elements of their characters. Furthermore, in moving to the United States they encountered difficulties and conflicts between their gender role and belief system compared to women in western cultures.

Most of these immigrants have similar transitioning experiences and adjusting to a new culture. According to Kadkhoda (2001), voluntary migration may lead to personal growth while involuntary migration, which was not part of the immigrant’s plans, may lead to stress. According to Banafsheian (2003), “Involuntary immigrants struggle between wanting to recreate the past and simultaneously having to adjust to their present living conditions” (p. 3).

An essential characteristic of Iranian culture is that its citizens are deeply family-oriented. Family ties are strong and valued highly (Behnam, 1985; Touba, 1978). Especially when it comes to relationships, parents have a strong influence on their children’s decisions and family preservation is strongly emphasized (Behnam, 1985). Moreover, even after moving to the U.S and exploring the western culture children still struggling to keep their parents satisfied about decisions in their relationships. In contrast,
western culture encourages nuclear independence in their young adults, with identity formation involving bonding with new peer relationship as a way of separating from parents (Berndt, 1979; Blyth, Hill, & Thiel, 1982; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986).

In Iranian families, strong ties to one’s ethnic group and extended family (grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins) is an essential factor in their identity formation. Children spend a great deal of time with their extended family, and it is common for grandparents, in their old age, to move in with their children to be taken care of (Jalali, 1982). A central characteristic of Iranian families is that parents are more controlling and influential, with the traditional family unit being patriarchal. Iranian fathers support their families financially and are the main providers for the family. Children are expected to obey their father’s authority and, in return, fathers provide love and care for their children (Jalali, 1982).

The traditional attitudes towards women in Iran have had a great impact on female participation in society, as they lacked opportunities afforded to men. After moving to the United States, and exploring the impact of western ideas on the role of women and female participation in the work force, these women experience conflict between their gender role and traditional values and expectations.

**Dynamic of Iranian Culture and Families**

Iranian families are distinct from one another with regard to respective families’ socioeconomic backgrounds, their level of education, and their levels of exposure to westernize cultures (Hegland & Jalali, 1982). Iranian culture is collectivistic in nature as such it is based on close family ties. In traditional Iranian culture, family bounds are the
most important factors that take precedence over all other social relationships (Nessehi Behnana, 1985).

According to Jalali (1982), the father is the undisputed head of the family, and he demands respect and obedience from other members of the family – an expectation that is strongly reinforced (Jalali, 1982; Tashakkori & Mehryar, 1982; Arasteh, 1964). The traditional home structures in Iran were built to provide living spaces for extended families. It was normal to have sons and their wives living with their parents in the same house. Each nuclear family had its own sleeping area, while common areas were available for cooking and socializing. In these living situations, there were often inter-familial marriages, which were seen as a way to strengthen the family and the family ties (Mali, 2005).

Iranians are similar in their value system and behavior to other traditional societies. The Iranian society has a strong family orientation (Wilbur, 1981); it is close knit and very much extended. In the Iranian society, males are dominant and females are expected to be passive, submissive, and obedient. The inequality between the sexes and the rigidness of sex roles may be attributed to the Islamic background of the Iranian culture-98% of the inhabitants of Iran are Muslims (Wilbur, 1981).

**ROLE OF WOMEN IN IRAN**

With the notable exception of the Westernized and secularized upper and middle classes, Iranian society before the Revolution practiced public segregation of the sexes. Women generally practiced use of the chador (or veil) when in public or when males not related to them were in the house. In the traditional view, an ideal society was one in
which women were confined to the home, where they performed the various domestic
tasks associated with managing a household and rearing children. Men worked in the
public sphere, that is, in the fields, factories, bazaars, and offices. Deviations from this
ideal, especially in the case of women, tended to reflect adversely upon the reputation of
the family. The strength of these traditional attitudes was reflected in the public education
system, which maintained separate schools for boys and girls from the elementary
through the secondary levels.

Following the Revolution, the status of women changed. The main social group to
inherit political power--the traditional middle class--valued most highly the traditional
role of women in a segregated society. Accordingly, laws were enacted to restrict the role
of women in public life; these laws affected primarily women of the secularized middle
and upper classes. Hejab, or properly modest attire for women, became a major issue.
Although it was not mandated that women who had never worn a chador would have to
wear this garment, it was required that whenever women appeared in public they had to
have their hair and skin covered, except for the face and hands. The law has been
controversial among secularized women, although for the majority of women, who had
worn the chador even before the Revolution, the law probably has had only negligible
impact.

The wife’s power in the family unit was indirect and came about through the
subtle influences she had on the men in the home. Women were not allowed to disagree
with their husband; however, they typically expressed their desires and opinion by clever
manipulation and by recruiting other family members to champion their point of view.
Women were, and are expected to be highly devoted to their husbands and children and put up with conflicts and dissatisfactions of their marriage. Women are also the mediators who intervene and try to resolve conflicts that arise between fathers and children (Nyrop, 1978).

The Iranian mother has a different type of authority and power, one, which more astute and indirect, and her influence is evident in her relationship with her husband and children. Iranian mothers are in charge of teaching their children moral values and providing them with emotional support (Tashakkori & Mehryar, 1982) and, as such, they have strong bounds and attachments to their children (Jalali, 1982). The mother’s role includes fostering peace in the family as conflict arises amongst members (Arasteh, 1964). She also takes care of household chores and teaches her daughters the fine points of the domestic role (Tashakkori & Mehryar, 1982).

However, the father has authority over his wife and children, and no one challenges his decisions openly. A special relationship exists between mothers and their sons. Sons tend to have great affection for and devotion to their mothers. When a son marries, it is essential that the wife maintain a strong and devoted relationship with his mother. Unfortunately, problems often occur between mother and daughter-in-laws. When such conflicts emerge, the son typically attempts to mediate the conflict, which places him in an unsustainable position since both his wife expect his support. The wise son/husband learns to handle conflicts diplomatically without taking sides (Jalali, 2005).

The main strategy of traditional Iranian women in dealing with social, cultural and religious constraints was to accept society’s definition of their role, at least
outwardly, and to try to live up to expectations. Women were sensitive to critical evaluations of their industriousness and attempted to be good housekeepers and homemakers. They were careful to live up to the standards of modesty and piety of their own social group. Women accepted the expectation that their foremost duty and role was to be a mother, Erika Friedl (1981).

**Acculturation**

Acculturation is the process through which an individual adapts to a culture different from the one into which he or she was born or raised (Ghaffarian, 1987, 565; Melikian & De Karapetian, 1977). Acculturation is now generally accepted and defined as, multidimensional psycho-social phenomenon that is mirrored in psychological changes that occur in individuals as a result of their interaction with a new culture (Marin, 1992).

Immigration is a global phenomenon that produces complex interactions among individuals and groups. As immigrants face an array of disruptions including changes in climate, economics, religious contexts, values, beliefs, and behaviors, immigrants are confronted with a potentially overwhelming number of threats to their identity (Berry & Kim, 1988). How individuals manage such challenges is crucial to their adaptation to a new cultural context, and this is the focus of acculturation research (Smith, Bond & Kagitçibasi, 2006). Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) define acculturation as changes in cultural patterns of groups of individuals within different cultures that come into direct contact.
Many studies on immigrants of other origins reveal that they too often experience conflicts assimilating into the American culture. In order for one to have a better grasp of acculturation, one needs to have an understanding of various levels and modes of acculturation. Based on Jalali’s (1982) study there are three common modes of adaptation: The first consists of denigrating and disclaiming all ties with the old culture, and choosing to identify exclusively with the new culture (American culture). There are, in fact, Iranians who claim that they do not speak the Farsi language, even though they do.

The second mode or adaptation entails denying the new culture. This response is characterized by the absence or loss of interaction with the western culture. Characteristically, those Iranians have usually lived in the United States for the past ten to fifteen years, and they don’t speak English at all; in addition, they associate only with other Iranians.

The third type of response is described as Biculturation. It is defined by strong identification and involvement with both the Iranian and American cultures. According to Ghaffarian (1987), this mode of adaptation has had many positive results for such individuals.

**Moving to the U.S / Factors Involved In Acculturation for Women**

Migration has been a source of autonomy for the Iranian women, providing them with better opportunities for education, employment, personal freedom, and even divorce from difficult marriages. These women depend less on their husbands or family as they gain their own income, reduce or suspend obligations to their husband’s families, and
escape the patriarchal control of their own immediate families. As researchers have demonstrated (Kamalkhani, 1988; Bauer, 1991; Tohidi, 1993), migration to new lands has meant a breakdown of traditional norms for Iranian women. Despite their liberal attitudes, female Iranian immigrants have neither abandoned all their cultural values nor accepted all elements of the dominant value system governing gender relations in the United States.

Iranian Female Iranian immigrant have similar concerns about their roles within the family and the larger society as women in Western societies, however they are cautious and selective in their embrace of feminism as a model for readdressing gender inequality within the Iranian family. Many criticize the individualism of American women, believing that more sacrifice and dedication preserves a marriage, especially when there are children involved. All in all, while Iranian immigrant women are moving away from traditional understandings of gender roles and sexuality, they are developing their own unique synthesis of attributes and values representing the cultural realities of both their past and present. (Naficy, 1993; Mahdi, 1998).

These Iranian women have been exposed to the tension and pressures deciding whether to adopt the new culture or hold firm to their original cultural beliefs and custom. Ghaffarian (1987) believes that adoption of both the originating home culture’s values and the western culture’s values can be very healthy for the individual. Western cultures offer values that are very distinct from the Iranian’s values and norms, and Iranian can benefit by adapting to some of these values and norms.
The gender of immigrants is an important factor in their response to acculturation. Understandably the immigration of Iranian women to the United States has raised many conflicts between Iranian women and their family. According to Ghaffarian (1987), Iranian men acculturated more easily to American society than Iranian women, with men having adopted more of the culture and behavior than the women. One can assume that the reason is that Iranian males are granted authoritarian and dominant status, while women are more dependent, obedient, and submissive.

The Traditional Iranian Women as Compared to Westernized Women

The primary responsibility of traditional Iranian women centers around their social, cultural, and personal roles. They must adhere to society’s dictation of their roles, and try to fulfill these expectations. Generally, Iranian women’s attitudes and beliefs vary based on their socioeconomic background. According to Arasteh (1964), and Hegland (1982), most Iranian women are very traditional. Arasteh (1964) also states that women from upper socioeconomic background compose a small percentage of Iran’s total population.

Most Iranian women have accepted the cultural imperative of first and foremost, being a mother. However, westernized women marry at a later age and have fewer children; some have a dual role and, therefore, male-female conflicts are minimized. They often wish to enter a profession, and have a family of their own, as well. According to Friedl (1981), many women in Iran have not even liked children but they attempted to bare as many as possible to fulfill role of motherhood- the primary element of their status.
In the Iranian culture, traditional women have been responsible for maintaining social interaction with friends, relatives, and in-laws (Hegland, 1982). These interactions were readily achievable, due to the fact that women were at home, with plenty of spare time for active social interaction and mutuality. It is no surprise, then, that Iranian women now living in the United States are being exposed to new sex roles and opportunities that they were deprived of in Iran.

Westernized women experience more equality of the sexes, whereas Iranian women have just recently been introduced to the concept of equality. The expected sex-role in Iranian culture traditionally given authoritarian and dominant status to men, with the dependent, obedient, and yielding status associated with the feminine role (Ghaffarian, 1987). Traditionally, Iranian women have been responsible for the proper observance of life-cycle events such as marriage, pregnancy and birth. With this responsibility and participation, they have often led social lives quite independence of their husbands (Hegland, 1982). Therefore, it is understandable that they are occupied with what other women think of them, rather than with their relationship with men.

According to Hegland (1982), while Iranian women may be psychologically independent from their spouse, they are, nonetheless, economically dependent upon their men. Due to this financial dependence, traditional Iranian women are pressured to comply to and cooperate with the wishes of their spouses to a large degree, and achieve a good reputation by adapting to their spouses’ expectations (Hegland, 1982). It is clear, then, why traditional Iranian women tend to choose to deal with social, cultural, and personal oppression: they are often primarily concerned with maintaining their relationship with their spouse for financial support (Hegland, 1982).
Comparatively, women’s roles are more liberalized in the United States. The traditional norms of the American culture do not easily blend with traditional Iranian norms. American culture opens the gates of opportunities for women, and allows them to make choices regarding their plans. They have personal freedom, which can be stimulating. Their vision of the future and their professional goals is very different from the limited traditional Iranian domestic role (Goodenow & Espin, 1993).

Additionally there is a pressure for young Iranian women to marry and have children early involved in traditional sex role expectations. Conversely, in the United States women acknowledge that they might marry someday, but often want to make something of themselves and have a career in addition to getting married (Goodenow & Espin, 1993).

Interestingly, Iranian women are also legally entitled to equal education and could also seek employment outside the home; however, if their husband fined the situation disturbing, they can get a court order to force their wives to quit (Higgins, 1985). In contrast, the important factor in the equal-partner western pattern is a strong commitment to work on the parts of both spouses, generating income at near-equal levels. This pattern includes a greater extent of flexible roles with respect to bread-winning and domestic duties. (Vannoy-Hiller& Philliber, 1989).

**Women’s Rights in Iran Compared to the United States**

Women in Iran face widespread discrimination under the law. They are excluded from key areas of the state – they cannot, for example, be judges or stand for the presidency. They do not have equal rights with men in marriage, divorce, child custody
and inheritance. Criminal harm suffered by a woman is less severely punished than the same harm suffered by a man. Evidence given by women in court is worth half that given by a man. Although the legal age for marriage is under 18, fathers can apply for permission to arrange that their daughters are married at a younger age – and to men much older than their daughters. Men are allowed to practice polygamy, women are not. Men have an incontestable right in law to divorce their spouse. Women do not.

Under Iranian law, a man can engage in polygamy if his wife or wives give consent. But polygamy is not popular in mainstream Iranian society and frowned upon except in certain rural or tribal areas. The concept of male surrogate and guardianship of females is one of the main pillars of Islamic Fundamentalism in Iran. Iranian women are not free to choose or control various aspects of their lives. Evidence of such state-sponsor of violence against women is seen in Iran’s constitution.

Article 105 of the Civil Code "In the relationship between a man and a woman, the man is responsible as head of the family." The Council of Guardians, has decreed, A woman cannot leave her home without her husband's permission, even to attend her father's funeral. Article 1133 of the Civil Code states: A man can divorce his wife whenever he so chooses and does not have to give her advance notice. But in contrast American’s Council believe all men and women are created equal. Furthermore, equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

In comperecens in the United States in recent decades, significant steps have been taken to improve education, health, family life, economic opportunities and political
empowerment for women. The U.S. experience shows that, as the status of women advances, so does that of their families, their communities, their workplaces and their nation. American women have equal opportunity in the nation's economic and political spheres of life, as men.

**Women and Sexuality In Iran**

In Iran, women's sexual self-understandings are strongly determined by religious teaching. Young women in Iran live under the rubric of a fundamentalist, Islamist regime which restricts social freedoms such as premarital heterosexual contact, homosexual encounters, dancing, alcohol consumption and large group gatherings. Any relationships (particularly sexual ones) between men and women outside of marriage are socially, culturally, legally and religiously forbidden in Iran, and most Iranians consider it important that young people (especially females) abstain from any physical intimacy and sex until marriage.

Although regional and ethnic variations in marriage patterns and family formation are evident in Iran, Islamic values play a significant role in homogenizing Iranian society and are considered an important factor in marriage and family formation (Abbasi-Shavazi MJ and Sadeghi R, 2005). If these relationships do not lead to marriage, the psychological, emotional and social consequences tend to be greater for females than for males, because of the double standards regarding male and female sexuality and the importance of virginity for young women’s marriage prospects.

In Iran, the punishment for pre-marital or extra-marital sex is death by stoning; drinking and dancing call for jail accompanied by up to 70 lashes. An unmarried or
unrelated young man and woman if caught in the company of one another, even in a car or public park, might receive no less than 84 lashes each.

Since Iranian immigrant women have not had opportunities to learn and experience their sexuality, they face sexual and cultural confusion in intimate relationship after moving to the United States. Sexuality for them is a new subject which they have not learned much about either in elementary school, or in the family. Even, those who are university educated still are not familiar with their sexuality. Not knowing about it puts them in the situation which may make them depess in their new country.

In contrast to Iran, United States has opportunities for women to know, learn and experience their sexual life. In the education system they take course, and they learn about human sexuality and they talk about it very openly while in Iran talking about it is a taboo.

It is essential for Iranian immigrant women, to learn about human sexuality and get educated through out taking classes or workshops and reading books. I believe this is our responsibility as a therapist to help them to gain knowledge in this matter which effect their intimate relationships. Since studies shows that sex has an important roll in any intimate relationships and statistic shows that it has a big impact on divorce.

Women in Iran are not supposed to be seen in public with a man, otherwise they go to jail. That means no dinner dates, no walks in the park and no movie theatres. Because men and women cannot be seen in public, they skip the 'normal' procedures of a few dinner dates before intimacy. Therefore, boys and girls become intimate more quickly and often more carelessly. Additionally, young adults who are not yet engaged
(or who do not plan to be) do not have access to the information they need to make better informed decisions about their behaviors.

My personal experience as an Iranian women facing intimate relationship issues in the United States

As an Iranian woman who has been in the U.S for almost five years, I am very familiar with the challenges and struggles of relationships in a foreign country. I personally experienced it and also I have seen it in many cases in Los Angeles. Before I moved to the U.S I was under the assumption that as educated women I would not face many challenges finding a relationship, but that was not true.

Beside acculturation and fitting in to the culture, finding a relationship was one of my biggest struggles. At the first, as an Iranian immigrant believe that because there is a lot Iranian (Persian) in Los Angeles, so it would not be that hard for one to find soulmate. In the reality, the Persian community has a variety of community based on ethnicity, religious, and political views. I had discovered where I could go to meet single and it took me a long time to discover this. It took a great amount of time to discover where to meet.

Through my own experience, some of the challenges Immigrant women have faced when want to meet single man matched with their preferences at work or social settings are as follows:

1. As you come to the United States naturally you have to work harder to survive or fit in. Therefore, you have less time to meet and socialize with people.
2. At work, the chance of meeting someone from Iran for some of my friends has been close to zero.

3. Finding the Persian social settings took some time. Even when you think you found the right group they’re not always the right group. Even amongst Persians, sometimes they have very selective groups, e.g. some clubs are interested in religion.

4. Sometimes when you meet your “potential match” you come to realize that you will have a cultural conflict.

I believe there are two groups of young adult in the U.S.

1. Newly immigrated: are those who have been in the U.S less than a year usually in their twenties.

2. Iranian Americans, who grew up in a Persian family but are really American.
Chapter Three

Project Audience and Implementation

Introduction

The statistic show that almost half the marriages in this country end up in divorce, and unhappy relationships cause stress on couples and individuals. Relationship is more challenging and difficult for immigrant who moves to the new culture and country. Studies shows that the struggles and difficulties of immigrations are forcing many immigrants, in particular, the Iranian women immigrants to fall apart during the early stages of their immigration to the United States when it comes to relationship and dating.

There has been a lack of assistance and recourses for Iranian women immigrants who facing conflict between eastern culture and western culture. Gender conflict which put them in the position of confusion and stress and being scare in regards of relationship. These women not even have to deal with acculturation and getting fit to new culture but also they face conflict, confront, and challenges in the relationships.

Due to this reason and the upsurge of acculturation complications, I created a project that is designed to educate and increase awareness among Iranian women immigrants about possible relationships problem and conflict. I believe that it is through education and awareness that we can prevent Iranian women immigrants from having confusion and get to the wrong relationship. I am witnessing a lot of issues and confusion with my immigrant friends who came from Iran facing cultural shock and specifically when it comes to relationship.
This graduate project presents a workshop for young Iranian immigrant women; the literature has shown that there is a need for guidance, awareness, and intervention for Iranian Immigrants women when it comes to relationships.

This project was also created for the use of educators, clinicians, counselors, and the immigrant’s women themselves. This workshop will help young Iranian immigrants in working through and understanding their differences and conflict they may possibly face in to find and be in intimate relationships and help them to know about the conflicts first and then to find out what they are looking for in seeking in relationships.

Throughout the duration of this chapter I will be discussing my project in greater detail; giving guidelines on how to conduct the presentation, who the intended audience will be, and describe the knowledge needed of professionals who will be conducting the presentation.

**Development of Project**

For the past six years, I have personally experienced immigration acculturation issues specifically when it comes to relationships and dating. I have been grown up in Iran and I got my Bachelor’s degree in Iran. I moved to the United State at the age of twenty four which I have been formulating my identity as an Iranian women. I was thought as an educated immigrant women I would not have a difficult time to fit in the culture, but I faced a lot of difficulty and issues when it comes to relationship and dating. Personally I have been experiencing the challenges which women face after moving to the United States when it comes to the relationship and marriage. I have been living and working in the Iranian community in Los Angeles County for the past six years. I have
observed many of the Iranian immigrant’s women even in my practice or my friend’s everyday relationships challenges and their struggles for finding the “right match “in the United States. I have been working with Iranian immigrant clients, include individual and couples who in many cases report their problems with their cultural Identity and gender roll, relationships, and acculturation. Also all the challenges and barriers led them to depression and anxiety an sometimes be disappointed of finding the right person.

After personally having to deal with challenges of relationship in the foreign country and personally face a lot of confusion between two culture and also working as an trainee with immigrants women, I have decide to create an workshop that will educate newly arrival immigrants women to be aware of the conflicts, challenges, struggles and realities of differences between two culture, that possibly may face in the intimate relationships. Through out the education help those to have awareness and have more knowledge about differences and also to have a better understanding about themselves and what they are looking for in the relationships.

I have always been fascinated by the subject of relationship and dating. Throughout the Marriage and Family Therapy Program, I gave considerable thought as to what I could research and create that would benefit many people and professionals of that would address numerous concerns for others. In taking several courses such as multicultural, family therapy and specially couples therapy course, I gained a greater interest in addressing the challenging factors of immigration and relationship among the Iranian immigrants women in the United States.
After doing the great deal of research and literature on the relationship experience of Iranian immigrants. I needed to design a workshop that would advise and educate the woman’s immigrants of the effects of immigrations on relationship and dating, and resources available in the community. I thought of ways to deliver the information on the relationship experience to immigrants and found the most effective way to relay the information is through a curriculum which would be carried out in seminars, psycho-educational groups, and psychotherapeutic settings, involving an educational presentation an a follow-up feedback survey.

The purpose of the survey is to evaluate the level of audience satisfaction with the quality of the workshop and the effective presentational skills of the presenter. The workshop provides a four hour informative power point presentation, education the Iranian women’s immigrants with the facts of immigration and relationships challenges. The presentation provides answers to the immigrants’ questions about immigration, relationship, dating and resources. Each audience will be provided with a handout of the presentation’s slides in which they can take notes. After the presentation, the audience will be given a feedback survey.

**Intended Audience**

The target population for my workshop is to be Iranian immigrant women who have immigrated to the United States in the past two years. However, with few modifications, the workshop is useful for all Iranian in the United States regardless of their gender. It is beneficial for Iranian men to know the challenges and conflict women go through the acculturation and relationship so they can have a better awareness and
understanding of Iranian women immigrants. Also those women who have been in the
United States for a long period time still can get benefit from it either have a better
understanding of their marriage if they have already in relationship or if they are not in
relationship help them to find their mach because in many cases when women moved to
the United States, they get very busy in working and fit to the new culture, so either they
do not have time to gain knowledge about this matter or in community there has not been
this help. Also the project is beneficial for parents too, to know and understand their
children, so they can be more educational and supportive. The audience can be of any
gender and immigration status (student, asylums, exile, etc…) and any marital status
(single, married, divorce).

This workshop can also be useful for clinicians, educators, and advisors.

Gender can be male or female. However, the intended audience includes adult Iranian
immigrant’s women of twenty two and over. The workshop is in English with Farsi
translation. The project can be altered for anyone who can benefit from the information
being provided.

**Personal Qualification**

The presenter of this workshop has to be a license psychologist or a licensed
marriage and family therapist who have specialized in working with Iranian immigrants
women with knowledge of relationships issues and preferably living in both countries.
The presenter has to have knowledge of power point and basic computer skills. These
therapists or psychologists are professionals that are qualified to facilitate a workshop for
Iranian immigrants.
Environment and Equipment

The workshop is designed to be offered in counseling centers, community centers, Universities, and colleges; however; other facilities are appropriate as long as the equipment necessary for the presentation is available. The workshop is preferably designed for a presentation designed room that has access to a computer and can operate the power point program. Also, the room needs a projector for the slide show, which connects to the computer. The room should contain chairs for the audience so they can sit, watch and listen to the presentation. Also, there should be enough pen and small hand book for those who want to make a note.

Project Outline

Curriculum

This project will educate Iranian immigrants with information on immigration and relationship in the community. The curriculum is designed to increase knowledge and awareness among Iranian immigrants specifically women about the potential challenges and struggle of relationship experience in the United States. It is also designed to provide resources to the newly arrived Iranian immigrant’s women, to assist them first to get to know their struggles and also assist them through their relationships and dating.

Goals

1. To deliver information about Iranian women’s immigrant and relationships issues to Iranian immigrants.
2. To educate Iranian immigrant’s women with challenges and conflict associated with immigration in terms of gender role.

3. To provide with the information about differences between two cultures when it comes to relationship.

4. To provide the immigrants with readily available resources and support systems in the community.

Material

1. Computer: power point software; the four hour presentation is given via power point. The presentation will consist of facts, terminology, information about issues and conflict of Iranian immigrant’s women in the United States and resources in the community.

2. Projector: connects to a computer to project the slide show.

3. A feedback survey: will include questions about the quality of the program and the presenters. The survey will be provided at the end of the presentation to the audience in order to determine what they have thought about the workshop and to give their feedbacks and suggestions to improve the quality of future workshops and program.
CHAPTER FOUR

Summary and Conclusion

Summary

The information reported in this study can provide the therapist with necessary background data regarding immigrant Iranian women in terms of intimate relationship in the United States. The interviewees with Iranian women immigrants revealed that they did not simply bend into the cultural prescriptions but struggled to carve out a self-identity.

As stated earlier, Iranian come from a family-oriented culture in which strong family ties exit and value highly (Behnam, 1985). Counselors and counselor-trainees working with this population should be mindful that the cultural modification and adjustments has been particularly difficult for Iranians, due to the many differences between the Iranian culture and those of United States citizens.

Since this study focuses primarily on young Iranian women who are interested in seeking a relationship, it is necessary for counselors to be aware of the traditional family hierarchy, gender roles, power structure, and roles of the different members of the family. It is essential for counselors and counselor-trainees to be aware of acculturation stage of the individuals, so that they do not unwittingly label or take stands according to the general norms of the western culture. Furthermore it is important for counselors and counselor-trainees to help their clients come up with their own comfortable degrees of acculturation. Counselors and counselor-trainees can help them in their struggles to
understand themselves in terms of their own culture, the western culture, and the oppressive relationship between the two cultures.

DISCUSSION

My aim is to examine the acculturation experience among Iranian immigrants from a therapist’s perspective. Specifically, evaluate the educational needs of Iranian immigrants that would help them through their experience in the United States. My primary goal of this project was to incorporate the research I found, into a curriculum, which will educate and promote awareness of differences between the two cultures. The program is very educational and I believe it will be effective in reducing the Iranian women immigrants stress in relationship. Iranian women immigrants face many struggles from the moment they arrive and many of them don’t have any support system or resources to begin their new life.

FUTURE WORK AND RESEARCH

This program can be used in many different setting and facilities such as school, churches, mucks, community centers, non-profit organizations, and many more facilities. Additional information and resources can be integrated to the, depending on the audience and intent of use. As a Marriage and Family Therapist, I counsel individuals, couple and families based on my research and more importantly, my life experience. Relationship plays a large role in the issues that families and couples are facing everyday. Learning and becoming more aware about Iranian immigrants has given me the opportunity to research out to the immigrants as well as the ability to educate them with knowledge I have acquired.
My work hopefully contributes to a better understanding of Iranian women and their journey of seeking intimate relationship. I recommend further research to be done with wider segments of the Iranian population, Iranian from different socioeconomic backgrounds and differences religions. I recommend for counselor and therapist working with Iranian women to have knowledge of Iranian culture, an awareness of the views, attitudes, and values. Based on (Sue, 1981), consoler’s and therapist should be able to see and accept, in a nonjudgmental manner, the objectivity of alternative ways to view the world. Furthermore, one should keep in mind that a treatment approach that is effective for one ethnic group may be harmful and/or conflicting for another.
REFERENCES


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Appendix

A WORKSHOP ON YOUNG IRANIAN WOMEN IMMIGRANTS; FACING RELATIONSHIP ISSUES
YOUNG IRANIAN WOMEN IMMIGRANTS; FACING RELATIONSHIP ISSUES

Presentation Created by:

Hajar. P. Dargah

For Educational Use

Table of Contents

- Introduction
- Purpose of the presentation
- Terminology
- Research & Statistics
- Resource
- Conclusion Future Work & Workshops
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**Introduction**

- In the past thirty years, great numbers of Iranian citizens have immigrated to the United States, primarily to pursue freedom and have a better life. Many Iranians have immigrated to the United States since the revolution in 1979, mostly from the middle or upper-middle class.

- Immigrants live a difficult life as they adjust to new life styles, communities and new cultures on a daily basis. Some of these challenges could include learning the new language, culture, and value system. Furthermore, living in a foreign country has its own challenges to get acclimated to changes introduced in their lives; things like getting around town, shopping, socializing, etc.

- Obviously one aspect of everyone’s life is a relationship, and how one goes about meeting the right people. Because this study/workshop focuses on young Iranian women immigrants who are interested in seeking to find their “Saul mate”, it is necessary to understand the conflicts which confront them.

- This is due to the fundamental difference between the Iranian family systems which emphasizes satisfying parents, versus the American emphasis on individualization and keeping the boundaries. It is especially difficult for women who feel they are between two cultures.
Iranian tradition, for example, dictates that an Iranian female should fulfill the obligation of being a “good” daughter by emulating her mother in becoming the best housewife/mother she can be. Upon arriving and setting in the United States women are exposed to western attitudes, morals, traditions, actions, women’s rights, media, customs, and lifestyle.

Upon immigration to the United States, Iranians experienced extreme culture shock, alienation, frustration, and depression (Jalali, 2005). Many families had to deal with breaking ties with their family, losing their social positions and professions, and for many, migration meant breaking their strong ties with their homeland (Jalali, 2005).

It is critical to explore the cultural conflicts that manifest for female Iranian immigrants as they establish interpersonal relationship. It is critical to note that this population lacks extensive study in this field in regards to issues of acculturation and relational stress, thus initiating the suggested workshop may encourage further study of this population.
**Purpose of this presentation**

- This project aims to provide information that will educate female Iranian immigrants women to such role conflicts. It is expected that an increased awareness of this conflict will help educate participants in developing skills to engage in successful romantic relationships.

**Other use of this presentation**

- By learning the important facts, clinicians and educators can have a better basis on how to help their clients with the struggles and issues of acculturation and relationship.

- This project was also created for the use of educators, clinicians, counselors, and the immigrant’s women themselves. This workshop will help young Iranian immigrants in working through and understanding their differences and conflict they may possibly face in to find and be in intimate relationships and help them to know about the conflicts first and then to find out what they are looking for in seeking in relationships.
**Terminology**

- **Immigration:**

  Immigration is defined as entering and settling in a country or region to which one is not native.

- **Culture:**

  The custom, values, and traditions that are learned from one’s environment. Also can be defended as, the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterize an institution, organization, or group.

- **Iranian Immigrants:**

  They are the people who migrate to the United State from Iran. This heterogeneous group includes those who immigrated voluntarily, students, refugees, for political reason, and exiles.

- **Sex-role System:**

  The network of attitudes, feelings, and behaviors resulting from the persuasiveness of sociological stereotyping in a given culture.

- **Intimate Relationships:**

  An intimate relationship is a particularly close interpersonal relationship that involves physical or emotional intimacy. Physical intimacy is characterized by romantic or passionate love and attachment or sexual activity. The term is also sometimes used euphemistically for a sexual relationship.
Terminology Cont…

- **Intimacy:**

  Enduring behavioral interdependence, repeated interactions, emotional attachment, and need fulfillment.

- **Attachment Theory:**

  Bowlby’s theory that once an infant was safely and securely attached, it would naturally explore and play, occasionally returning to the mother’s secure presence for comfort.

- **Secure Attachment:**

  A secure attachment was the result of the degree of maternal sensitivity and spirit of cooperation with the child’s efforts toward having needs met, as opposed to interfering with those efforts (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

- **Anxious/resistant attachment:**

  An anxious/resistant attachment resulted from a mother who was, for a variety of reasons, many of them unintentional, inconsistent with her responses and level of sensitivity to her infant's needs (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

- **Anxious/avoidant attachment:**

  An anxious/avoidant attachment occurred as a result of a mother who was perceived by the infant as being unavailable, either emotionally or physically (Ainsworth et al., 1978).
Terminology Cont…

- **Acculturation:**
  
  The product of culture, learning that occurs as a result of contact between the members of two or more culturally distinct groups.

- **Acculturation Stress:**
  
  A unique sort of stress that is accompanied by physiological discomfort as one moves across culture. This discomfort may manifest itself in a variety of psychological as well as physical problems.

- **Dating:**
  
  Dating is a form of courtship consisting of social activities done by two persons with the aim of each assessing the other’s suitability as a partner in an intimate relationship or as a spouse. The term usually refers to the act of meeting and engaging in some mutually agreed upon social activity in public, together, as a couple.
**Acculturation and Immigration**

- Acculturation is the process through which an individual adapts to a culture different from the one into which he or she was born or raised.

- Immigration is a global phenomenon that produces complex interactions among individuals and groups. As immigrants face an array of disruptions including changes in climate, economics, religious contexts, values, beliefs, and behaviors, immigrants are confronted with a potentially overwhelming number of threats to their identity.

- Many studies on immigrants of other origins reveal that they too often experience conflicts assimilating into the American culture. In order for one to have a better grasp of acculturation, one needs to have an understanding of various levels and modes of acculturation.
ROLE OF WOMEN IN IRAN

- Women in Iran were, and are expected to be, highly devoted to their husbands and children and put up with conflicts and dissatisfactions of their marriage. Women are also the mediators who intervene and try to resolve conflicts that arise between fathers and children.

- The main strategy of traditional Iranian women in dealing with social, cultural and religious constraints was to accept society’s definition of their role, at least outwardly, and to try to live up to expectations.

- They were careful to live up to the standards of modesty and piety of their own social group. Women accepted the expectation that their foremost duty and role was to be a mother, Erika Friedl (1981).

Moving to the U.S / Factors Involved In Acculturation for Women

- Migration has been a source of autonomy for the Iranian women, providing them with better opportunities for education, employment, personal freedom, and even divorce from difficult marriages.

- These women depend less on their husbands or family as they gain their own income, reduce or suspend obligations to their husband’s
families, and escape the patriarchal control of their own immediate families. As researchers have demonstrated, migration to new lands has meant a breakdown of traditional norms for Iranian women.

- Iranian women have been exposed to the tension and pressures deciding whether to adopt the new culture or hold firm to their original cultural beliefs and custom.

- Adoption of both the originating home culture’s values and the western culture’s values can be very healthy for the individual. Western cultures offer values that are very distinct from the Iranian’s values and norms, and Iranian can benefit by adapting to some of these values and norms.

- The gender of immigrants is an important factor in their response to acculturation. Understandably the immigration of Iranian women to the United States has raised many conflicts between Iranian women and their family.

- According to Ghaffarian (1987), Iranian men acculturated more easily to American society than Iranian women, with men having adopted more of the culture and behavior than the women. One can assume that the reason is that Iranian males are granted authoritarian and dominant status, while women are more dependent, obedient, and submissive.
The Traditional Iranian Women as Compared to Westernized Women

- The primary responsibility of traditional Iranian women centers around their social, cultural, and personal roles. They must adhere to society’s dictation of their roles, and try to fulfill these expectations. Generally, Iranian women’s attitudes and beliefs vary based on their socioeconomic background.

- Most Iranian women have accepted the cultural imperative of first and foremost, being a mother. However, westernized women marry at a later age and have fewer children; some have a dual role and, therefore, male-female conflicts are minimized.

- Westernized women experience more equality of the sexes, whereas Iranian women have just recently been introduced to the concept of equality. The expected sex-role in Iranian culture traditionally given authoritarian and dominant status to men, with the dependent, obedient, and yielding status associated with the feminine role.

- Comparatively, women’s roles are more liberalized in the United States. The traditional norms of the American culture do not easily blend with traditional Iranian norms. American culture opens the gates of opportunities for women, and allows them to make choices regarding their plans. They have personal freedom, which can be stimulating. Their vision of the future and their professional goals is very different from the limited traditional Iranian domestic role.
Additionally there is a pressure for young Iranian women to marry and have children early involved in traditional sex role expectations. Conversely, in the United States women acknowledge that they might marry someday, but often want to make something of themselves and have a career in addition to getting married.

Statistics

According to the United States Census, California has the highest concentration of Iranian-Americans in the United States.

A significant number of Iranians immigrate to the United States on a yearly basis. The U.S Census of 2010 shows a total population of Iranians living in Los Angeles County, California to be 92,088, of which 47.9% are female. Based on this number, almost half of the population is women. Most of these immigrant women already finished their undergraduate education in Iran and have established integral elements of their characters. Furthermore, in moving to the United States they encountered difficulties and conflicts between their gender role and belief system compared to women in western cultures.

This project will focus on Young Iranian Women who immigrate to the US and will consider the challenges that emerge in pursuing relationships. In the process of attaining romantic relationships
immigrants may encounter conflicts due to the differing cultural norms of eastern and western cultures.

Women’s Rights in Iran as Compared in the United States

- Women in Iran face widespread discrimination under the law. They are excluded from key areas of the state – they cannot, for example, be judges or stand for the presidency. They do not have equal rights with men in marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance.

- Criminal harm suffered by a woman is less severely punished than the same harm suffered by a man. Iranian women are not free to choose or control various aspects of their lives. Evidence of such state-sponsor of violence against women is seen in Iran’s constitution.

- The Council of Guardians, has decreed, A woman cannot leave her home without her husband's permission, even to attend her father's funeral. Article 1133 of the Civil Code states: A man can divorce his wife whenever he so chooses and does not have to give her advance notice. But in contrast American’s Council believe all men and women are created equal. Furthermore, equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.
Despite or In comparison in the United States in recent decades, significant steps have been taken to improve education, health, family life, economic opportunities and political empowerment for women. The U.S. experience shows that, as the status of women advances, so does that of their families, their communities, their workplaces and their nation. American women have equal opportunity in the nation's economic and political spheres of life, as men.

Women and Sexuality In Iran

In Iran, women's sexual self-understandings are strongly determined by religious teaching. Young women in Iran live under the rubric of a fundamentalist, Islamist regime which restricts social freedoms such as premarital heterosexual contact, homosexual encounters, dancing, alcohol consumption and large group gatherings. Women in Iran are not supposed to be seen in public with a man, otherwise they go to jail. That means no dinner dates, no walks in the park and no movie theatres. Since Iranian immigrant women have not had opportunities to learn and experience their sexuality, they face sexual and cultural confusion in intimate relationship after moving to the United States. Sexuality for them is a new subject which they have not learned much about either in elementary school, or in the family. Even, those who are university educated still are not familiar with their sexuality. Not knowing about it puts them in the situation which may make them depress in their new country.
In contrast to Iran, United States has opportunities for women to know, learn and experience their sexual life. In the education system they take course, and they learn about human sexuality and they talk about it very openly while in Iran talking about it is a taboo.

**Iranian Community Resources**

- The most concentration of Iranian immigrants live in the California.
  
  There are many resources available in the Iranian-American community for the Iranian immigrants. These resources are under the same three categories of Socialization, Education, Community & Family.

- Some of these Organizations include:

  - **FARHANG**: It is a non-religious, non-political, non-profit foundation celebrating Iranian art and culture in Southern California. Farhang organization provides and introduces the community to the Iranian culture and heritage. Anything from music, art, crafts, and cultural programs are offered to the community by Farhang Organization. [http://www.farhang.org](http://www.farhang.org)

  - **IMAN**: It is a religious organization which offers many educational and social programs to the Iranian community. [http://iman.org/testiman/Home.aspx](http://iman.org/testiman/Home.aspx)
NIPOC: It is the Network of Iranian-American Professionals of Orange County. NIPOC offers many resources, programs, activities, and much more to the Iranian community. [http://www.nipoc.org](http://www.nipoc.org)

NIAS: It is the Network of Iranian-American Society which offers many social activities and programs to the Iranian community. [http://www.niasnet.org](http://www.niasnet.org)

SHABE JOME: It is a networking organization for the purpose of young Iranian singles getting together for socializing and networking. Other than the social oriented organizations, there are also many other educational and business related programs and seminars which are offered to the Iranian community everyday. Some of them include:

Educational Seminars: on psychology related issues by Dr. Holakouee,

BHIAD (Beverly Hills Iranian-American Doctors)

**FUTURE WORK AND RESEARCH**

- This program can be used in many different setting and facilities such as school, churches, mucks, community centers, non-profit organizations, and many more facilities. Additional information and resources can be integrated to the, depending on the audience and intent of use.

- I recommend further research to be done with wider segments of the Iranian population, Iranian from different socioeconomic backgrounds and
differences religions. I recommend for counselor and therapist working with Iranian women to have knowledge of Iranian culture, an awareness of the views, attitudes, and values.

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