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| **Title of Research Presentation** (Sentence case) Self-Help Groups for Young Men: Assessing the Impact on Health and Well-Being through Critical Ethnography. |
| **Maximum 2500 characters (including spaces but excluding title)****Background/Objectives**Evidence suggests that many young men are facing intense difficulties adjusting to adulthood. For example, boys are performing significantly worse than girls at school, with much higher drop-out rates. Likewise, men now make up over 60% of people ‘Not in Education, Employment nor Training’. This has been linked to elevated rates of suicide, anti-social behaviour and substance abuse in men. Worryingly, men tend to under-utilize health services. Instead, evidence suggests that some men prefer self-help and peer support groups. As such, this study was propelled by three objectives, to (i) understand why men join such groups; (ii) document group discussion and activities; and (iii) assess impact on health and well-being.**Methods**We conducted a one-year ethnography of a young men’s self-help group. This involved (i) attending regular group meetings; (ii) in-depth qualitative interviews with 32 group members, followed by ethnographic ‘go-along’ walkabouts; (iii) observation of the group’s social media pages. Data was analysed using thematic analysis.**Results**The majority of men were under 25 and first-generation immigrants. They stated that they had difficulties adapting to life in Canada, as well as adulthood per se. Some stated that they suffered from anxiety, awkwardness or extreme shyness. As such, they joined the group to help address perceived psychosocial deficits. Most men were regular participants. Much group activity and discussion focused on health-related self-help, with an emphasis on self-improvement of (i) physical health through exercise, healthy eating and abstinence; (ii) mental health through positive thinking, goal-setting and skill-acquisition; (iii) generic well-being through social skill development, better dress, and balanced relations with women. Most stated that the group had an overwhelmingly positive impact on mental health and well-being, with men finding much needed solace, advice and peer support in the group.**Discussion**The group provided a positive space for the exchange of information and support. Health-promoting activities such as exercise, abstinence and positive thinking were discussed, modelled and practiced within and outside the group setting. This suggests that men’s self-help groups may be useful alternatives to conventional approaches for the promotion of men’s physical and mental health.**Keywords:** Men’s Mental Health, Gender, Self-Help. |