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BEST PRACTICES IN PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH OF IMMIGRANTS

– a literature review



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PARHAAT KÄYTÄNNÖT MAAHANMUUTTAJIEN MIELENTERVEYDEN EDISTÄMISESSÄ

- kirjallisuuskatsaus

Opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli tutkia ja koota yhteen saatavilla olevaa kirjallisuutta koskien parhaita käytäntöjä maahanmuuttajien mielenterveyden edistämiseksi. Tavoitteena oli tarjota hyödyllistä tietoa maahanmuuttajien kanssa työskenteleville ammattilaisille. Opinnäytetyö selvitti kirjallisuuden perusteella, mitkä ovat tämänhetkiset parhaat käytännöt maahanmuuttajien mielenterveyden edistämiseksi ja millainen konsensus niistä vallitsee.

Tutkimusmenetelmänä käytettiin narratiivista kirjallisuuskatsausta. Katsaukseen löytyi kolme suomalaista lähdettä tietokantahakujen avulla ja kolme kansainvälistä lähdettä löytyi eurooppalaisten sekä kanadalaisten järjestöjen ja valtiollisten toimijoiden verkkosivujen kautta. Löytynyt kirjallisuus analysoitiin sisällönanalyysillä.

Tutkimuksen perusteella tämänhetkiset parhaat käytännöt maahanmuuttajien mielenterveyden edistämiseksi ovat viestintä, yhteisöllinen lähestymistapa, maahanmuuttajan sosiaaliset ja henkilökohtaiset resurssit, rakenteelliset käytännöt sekä ammatillinen kompetenssi ja tietämys. Kirjallisuuden perusteella käytännöistä vallitsee konsensus ja kaikissa lähteissä on käytäntöjä jokaisesta sisällönanalyysin alakategoriasta.

Opinnäytetyö tarjoaa tietoa sekä kansallisista että kansainvälisistä parhaista käytännöistä. Terveystieteiden ammattilaiset, päättäjät sekä muut yhteisön jäsenet voivat käyttää tietoa hyväkseen maahanmuuttajien mielenterveyden edistämiseksi. Jatkotutkimuksen kohteena voisi olla käytäntöjen vaikuttavuus sekä se, kuinka koordinoitua ja systemaattista parhaiden käytäntöjen käyttö on palveluissa ja toteutuuko tässä tasa-arvoinen palveluntarjonta kaikille yhteisön jäsenille. Opinnäytetyö on osa Euroopan unionin rahoittamaa YOUNG- projektia.

ASIASANAT:

mielenterveys, maahanmuuttaja, kotoutuminen, mielenterveyden edistäminen, parhaat käytännöt

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BEST PRACTICES IN PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH OF IMMIGRANTS

- a literature review

The purpose of this thesis was to explore and summarize the literature available on best practices in promoting mental health of immigrants. The aim of this thesis was to provide useful information for professionals working with immigrants. The thesis examined what the current best practices in promoting mental health of immigrants are according to literature and what kind of a consensus there is about the best practices.

The study was conducted using narrative literature review. Three Finnish sources were found through database searches and three international sources were found from a search through webpages of European and Canadian organizational and governmental operators. This literature was analysed by content analysis.

Based on this study, the current best practices in promoting mental health of immigrants are communication, community approach, social and personal resources of immigrant, infrastructural practices, and professional competence and knowledge. There is a consensus about the best practices in the literature and all sources contain practices from each subcategory of the content analysis.

This thesis provides information about best practices in both national and international best practice guidance. Health care professionals, decision-makers and other members of community can use this information to promote immigrant mental health. Further research is needed to study the effectiveness of practices and to determine the level of coordination and systematic use of best practice guidelines in the service system in order to ensure equal service provision for all members of the community. This thesis is a part of the YOUME-project funded by European Union.

KEYWORDS:

mental health, immigrant, integration, mental health promotion, best practices

CONTENT

1 INTRODUCTION	6
2 BACKGROUND	7
2.1 Mental health and immigration	7
2.2 Integration and mental health	8
2.3 Immigration in Finland	9
2.4 Mental health of immigrants in Finland	11
2.5 Mental health promotion and best practices	12
3 PURPOSE, AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	14
4 METHODOLOGY	15
4.1 The literature search	15
4.2 Content analysis	18
5 RESULTS	19
5.1 Current best practices in promoting mental health of immigrants	19
5.1.1 Communication	19
5.1.2 Community approach	20
5.1.3 Social and personal resources of immigrant	20
5.1.4 Infrastructural practices	21
5.1.5 Professional competence and knowledge	22
5.2 Consensus	22
6 DISCUSSION	24
7 CONCLUSION	27
REFERENCES	28

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Literature chosen for the content analysis from literature search
Appendix 2. Literature chosen for the content analysis from targeted search
Appendix 3. Example of content analysis results

FIGURES

Figure 1. Current best practices in promoting mental health of immigrants	23
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TABLES

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria	16
Table 2. Literature search results	16

1 INTRODUCTION

Migration as a process can be stressful and immigrants can face many challenges before socially integrating into their host country (WHO 2018, 1). Immigrants are more susceptible to mental health issues, yet they use mental health services less than the general population (THL 2019). Cultural differences in attitudes and explanatory models of mental health issues, language barriers and lack of information can make accessing services difficult (WHO 2018, 2).

Finland receives approximately 30 000 immigrants each year (Väestöliitto 2019). In 2018 there were almost 258 000 foreign nationals living in Finland which is 4,7 % of Finland's population (Tilastokeskus 2019). In Finland, many professionals working with immigrants feel that they need to attain more skills and knowledge about culturally sensitive work and mental health problems among immigrants (Castaneda et al. 2018, 27). The topic of this thesis is therefore relevant.

Research has been done on mental health and well-being of immigrants for example in the Maamu study (Terveystien ja hyvinvoinnin laitos 2017). The UTH study (Terveystien ja hyvinvoinnin laitos 2019) has surveyed well-being, working ability and living conditions of immigrants. Eronen et al. (2014) have studied employment of immigrants and related issues. There is not much literature available about current best practices in promoting mental health of immigrants. The PALOMA handbook by Castaneda et al. stands out as a comprehensive work on the topic.

This thesis is a part of YOUNE-project. The project aims to support participation and integration of immigrants by promoting mental health and early access to care. Trained volunteers with immigration background work in their communities as ambassadors of mental well-being to improve immigrants' knowledge about mental health and related issues. Project is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) of the European Union. (Turun ammattikorkeakoulu 2019.)

Developing the promotion of immigrant mental health is important for the sake of immigrant well-being itself. There is a need for more information on the topic among professionals. This thesis aims to provide useful information on the best practices of this promotion work.

2 BACKGROUND

The key concepts of this thesis are mental health, immigrant, integration, mental health promotion and best practices.

2.1 Mental health and immigration

World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community" (WHO 2018). Mental health work encompasses the promotion of mental health, prevention of mental health problems and treatment of mental health illnesses. Mental health work can be done on individual, group, community or society level. (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö 2004, 19.)

According to the United Nations (UN), an international immigrant is someone who changes his or her country of usual residence, irrespective of the reason for migration or legal status (UN 2019). Immigrants are therefore not a homogenous group and this definition incorporates for example exchange students, people migrating for work opportunities, refugees of all ages and people migrating in order to reunite with family members. Refugees are defined by the United Nations as "persons who are outside their country of origin for reasons of feared persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order, and, as a result, require international protection" (UN 2019). This thesis considers immigrants according to UN's definition of international immigrant although they are addressed in the thesis as immigrants or clients.

Immigration process in its various stages can cause stress and impose a risk for the mental wellbeing of immigrants but there are differences in exposure between and within different migrant groups (WHO 2018). Immigrants from certain areas and especially refugees are more susceptible to mental health issues, yet they are using mental health services to their benefit less than the general population. Also, people from different cultural backgrounds have different perceptions, attitudes and beliefs about mental

health issues and even symptoms of mental health illnesses can vary based on cultural or religious background. Methods used in Western health care might not be suitable for recognizing mental health problems and risk factors for well-being among people coming from a different cultural background. (THL 2019.) Language barrier, stigma, lack of information and fear of being deported can also become major obstacles for immigrants in need of mental health services (WHO 2018).

Factors influencing immigrant mental health include absence of social support, socio-economic status, barriers in accessing mental health services (such as language barrier and cultural differences) and especially in the case of refugees, traumatic life experiences and health care coverage. Possible protective factors of immigrant mental health include social support and activity, family cohesion, access to community services and networks, volunteer work, resilience and adaptability, education, general health and occupational success. (CAMH 2012, 23-29.) According to THL (2019), mental health problems are connected with other problems in health and wellbeing and this is why mental health services for immigrants should be invested in.

2.2 Integration and mental health

Integration can be seen as the process by which immigrants as individuals or as a group become accepted into society. Immigrants themselves affect the integration process with their adaptation efforts and characteristics, but the receiving society, represented by its government, institutions and communities, has an even greater influence on the outcome. (Penninx 2003.)

Successful integration usually refers to actions taken by the receiving society to help immigrants resettle. For the immigrant, integration is also an intrinsic process which she or he goes through after facing sometimes significant changes in external environment. Integration as a personal and psychological process is unique for each immigrant. It is affected by personal history and social determinants, circumstances surrounding the migration and the similarities or differences between the old and new countries of residence. Integration process and the discovery of a new balance and functionality can take years and for some it can be more laborious than to others. It is important for people

working with immigrants to have the skills needed to offer help in this process. (Haavikko & Bremer 2009, 15-16.)

There is an association between higher prevalence of mental disorders in long-term refugees and lack of social integration and unemployment (Bogic, Njoku & Priebe 2015). WHO states that ensuring migrants' social integration is "potentially the most influential prevention strategy for mental disorders on a public health level" (WHO 2018, 22).

2.3 Immigration in Finland

The number of immigrants coming to Finland has been on the rise for the past few decades with the emphasis changing from work based immigration to refugees and family reunifications. Currently Finland receives approximately 30 000 immigrants each year. (Väestöliitto 2019.) In 2018 there were almost 258 000 foreign nationals living in Finland which is 4,7 % of Finland's population. The majority of immigrants come to Finland from Estonia and Russia. (Tilastokeskus 2019.)

Government objectives, EU policies and international agreements drive Finnish migration policies and the drafting of new legislation or changes to existing legislation. There are a number of laws and regulations that govern migration related issues in Finland and secure the rights of immigrants. These laws also place responsibilities for immigrants, municipalities and the government. (Sisäministeriö 2019.) Some of the most relevant legislation include the following:

- Aliens Act 301/2004. "The purpose of this Act is to implement and promote good governance and legal protection in matters concerning aliens. In addition, the purpose of the Act is to promote managed immigration and provision of international protection with respect for human rights and basic rights and in consideration of international agreements binding on Finland." (Sisäministeriö.)
- Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration 1386/2010. "The purpose of this Act is to support and promote integration and make it easier for immigrants to play an active role in Finnish society. The purpose of the Act is also to promote

gender equality and non-discrimination and positive interaction between different population groups.” (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2014.)

- Non-discrimination Act 1325/2014. ”The purpose of this Act is to promote equality and prevent discrimination as well as to enhance the protection provided by law to those who have been discriminated against.” (Oikeusministeriö 2015.)

The key international treaties concerning migration are the Geneva Refugee Convention, the European Convention on Human Rights, the United Nations Convention against Torture and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Sisäministeriö 2019).

Multiple different ministries and agencies are working with matters concerning migration and immigrants. Of the governmental operators, The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is the one responsible for the promotion of health and wellbeing of immigrants. Education and training of immigrants and matters such as sport, culture and religion are responsibilities of The Ministry of Education and Culture. Developing labour migration and integrating immigrants fall under the duties of The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. The Ministry of the Interior is responsible of Finland’s migration policy and drafting of legislation. (Sisäministeriö 2019.)

The Finnish government’s current immigration policy aims to secure Finland’s growth and address issues of weakening dependency ratio as well as labor shortage by increasing labor migration and improving the employment rate of immigrants already living in Finland (Valtioneuvosto 2018, abstract).

In 2014 the employment rate of immigrants was ten procent lower than the employment rate of Finnish people. However, according to research, the employment rate of male immigrants is only a few procent lower than that of Finnish men with the same level of education. Employment situation is more difficult for female immigrants, many of them having formed a family at a younger age than Finnish women. Women’s unemployment rate helps to explain the difference in employment rate of immigrants and Finnish people. Refugees in general and immigrants from African and Middle Eastern countries have the most difficult employment situation, yet every other person from these groups is employed after staying in Finland for ten years. (Nieminen et al. 2015, 71-80.)

In Finnish society, employment is considered to guarantee immigrants integration into the society. According to research, immigrants themselves seem to share this attitude about the importance of employment in integration. (Eronen et al. 2014, 9.)

2.4 Mental health of immigrants in Finland

According to Finnish institute for health and welfare (THL), immigrants who most commonly suffer from mental health problems in Finland are refugees and asylum seekers, elderly immigrants, unemployed immigrants and those with a low level of education. Poor Finnish or Swedish language skills or poor financial situation also make immigrants in Finland more susceptible to mental health problems. (THL 2019.) Possible traumatizing experiences in the country of origin or the challenges of initial integration process do not explain the prevalence of mental health problems among immigrants who have already lived in Finland for several years. Discrimination, difficulties in accessing appropriate services and challenges in social integration are some of the factors behind these problems. (Castaneda et al. 2018, 26-27.)

THL has carried out a Migrant Health and Wellbeing Study (Maamu) to gather information about the wellbeing, health, living conditions and service use of immigrants of Somali and Kurdish origin and Russian-speaking immigrants (THL 2017). Together with Statistics Finland and the Finnish institute of Occupational Health, THL has also conducted Survey on work and well-being among people of foreign origin (UTH- study) which focuses on health, work ability, employment and other issues related to immigrants (THL 2019).

Based on these studies, immigrants from Middle-Eastern origin have more symptoms of anxiety and depression than the population in general. There is a higher prevalence of these symptoms also among Russian-speaking women. (THL 2019.)

There is no congruent policy in Finland for the provision of mental health services for refugees and other people with a similar background. Instead, significant regional differences exist for example in services promoting mental health and in consideration of the special needs and characteristics of this work. (Castaneda et al. 2018, 26-27.) THL emphasizes the importance of developing accessibility, availability and cultural sensitivity of mental health services (THL 2019). Many professionals feel that they need more skills in working with immigrants as well as more knowledge about culturally

sensitive work and mental health problems among immigrants (Castaneda et al. 2018, 27).

2.5 Mental health promotion and best practices

Mental health promotion can be described as a sociocultural and interdisciplinary effort. It strives to create the kind of individual, social, communal and environmental circumstances that promote well-being. (Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö 2004, 20.) According to WHO, mental health promotion involves actions that improve psychological well-being. In its list of specific ways to promote mental health, WHO mentions anti-discrimination laws, and campaigns and programmes targeted at vulnerable people such as migrants. (WHO 2018.) Everyone who in their profession meet immigrant clients or patients can promote immigrant mental health and by so doing prevent mental health problems among immigrants.

Promotion of mental health aims at increasing resilience, strengths, resources and skills. Strengthening protective factors of mental health, improving quality of life and creating supportive living conditions are emphasized in promotion work. (Castaneda et al. 2018, 34.)

Best practices are procedures that have been shown by research and experience to produce optimal results. They have been proposed or established as a standard suitable for widespread adoption. (Merriam-Webster 2019.) Good practices, in the form of interventions, processes, procedures and ways of working, make work more beneficial and sensible. They have proven to be functional and effective through elaborate evaluation and assessment. Good practices are also ethical and they have the approval of the beneficiary. (THL 2018.)

Kerkkänen & Säävälä (2015, 56) have found that there is not much evidence on the effectiveness of immigrant mental health promotion interventions based on randomised controlled trials. Birman et al. (2008, 130) discuss the problem of applying evidence-based practices derived from research on “largely homogeneous individuals” to much more diverse groups such as refugees. They suggest that practice-based evidence, meaning knowledge from studying existing practices, should be preferred. Although it is not considered scientific, practice-based evidence is “reflective of “practice””.

Professionals working with immigrants in Finland already possess plenty of knowledge, skills and networks needed in promotion of immigrant mental health, but there is not enough coordination to ensure that this know-how is shared with all professionals (Castaneda et al. 2018, 14).

3 PURPOSE, AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this thesis is to explore and summarize the literature available on best practices in promoting mental health of immigrants. The aim is to provide useful information for professionals working with immigrants.

The research questions of the thesis are:

1. What are the current best practices in promoting mental health of immigrants according to literature?
2. What kind of a consensus is there about the best practices?

4 METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted using narrative literature review. A literature review collects, evaluates and presents available knowledge on a given topic. The aim of a narrative literature review is to identify, analyse, assess and interpret this body of knowledge. The breadth and depth of literature included in the review varies according to the context of the study. (Coughlan et al. 2013,15.) The data produced by this review is analysed by using a qualitative content analysis. Although the study method used is narrative literature review, study results will also be presented in a tabular form.

4.1 The literature search

The literature search was conducted through Melinda, PubMed, Cinahl Complete and Medline (Ovid) databases and the databases are listed here in the retrieval order. The search was limited to articles written between years 2008-2019 and only articles written in English or Finnish were included. Search term used in the search was "immigr* AND mental health" and the Finnish equivalent "maahanmuut* AND mielenerv*".

After performing the search, review material was further narrowed down by scanning the titles and abstracts to include only the literature which focus on the promotion of mental health and which address best practices in mental health promotion of immigrants or refugees. Many practices developed for work with refugees address issues that are universal to all immigrants and therefore the inclusion of literature on these practices is justifiable.

Keeping in mind the purpose of this review and the definition of best practices, articles about scientific studies conducted to test the outcomes of a single procedure with a more defined target group were not included in the review. In addition, practices meant to address specific needs of a certain immigrant group (e.g. Chinese elderly men) were not included. Literature about factors protecting or threatening mental health, about the treatment of mental health illnesses or about the prevention of specific mental health problems was also excluded. Inclusion and exclusion criteria of articles can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Literature written in English or Finnish	Literature written in other languages
Literature published between 1/2008 and 3/2019	Literature published before 1/2008
Literature available in its entirety	Literature not available in its entirety
Literature on best practices	Literature on treatment methods, prevention of specific mental health problems or protective/risk factors
Literature concerning immigrants and refugees as a group	Literature concerning other than immigrants and refugees or a very specific group within immigrants or refugees
Literature that compiles best practices	Literature that focuses on one procedure

The literature for the analysis was chosen by skimming the available literature that was still considered possibly relevant for the review after the scanning. Literature not available in its entirety was excluded at this stage.

The search results are presented in table 2. The literature chosen for skimming in the scanning phase is only listed in the table once even if other databases would have yielded the same result.

Table 2. Literature search results.

Data-base	immigr* AND mental health	Chosen for skimming	Chosen for analysis	maahanmuut* AND mielenterv*	Chosen for skimming	Chosen for analysis
Melinda	66	2	0	112	15	3
PubMed	2906	13	0	1	1	0
CINAHL	1480	15	0	0	0	0
Medline	2130	14	0	0	0	0
Total	6582	44	0	113	16	3

The literature search through the selected databases provided only Finnish literature to be included in this thesis. This literature was published by Finnish Association of Mental Health, Finnish institute for health and welfare and Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland. All of these are written in Finnish and they were found through Melinda database. Melinda is a joint database of Finnish universities and it includes also other literature than scientific articles. Table 1 in appendix 1 presents the Finnish literature chosen for the analysis.

Additional and more restricted searches were done to make sure the search results were accurate. Adding search words "best practice" and "promotion" yielded less search results and this literature was already included in the primary search results.

Based on the literature search results, literature compiling best practices in mental health promotion of immigrants is often written by governmental or organizational operators, in the language of the publishing operator. This kind of literature is likely not to be found through purely academic literature databases. However, the thesis is not intended to focus solely on best practices in Finnish mental health promotion work. Particularly for the purposis of answering the second research question about the consensus on best practices on a wider scale, further search was conducted for international literature.

Based on the literature search, research literature written in English about mental health of immigrants has been abundantly published in Canadian, American and European studies. This was a promising result considering the possibility of finding best practice guidelines published by reliable operators working in these areas. The immigration situation in the United States of America is a very complex one and this is why American literature on the review topic was chosen to be excluded to ensure validity of results with regard to the second research question on consensus.

A more targeted search of literature was conducted by mapping the governmental and organizational operators in Europe and Canada. Additional literature suitable for the purposes of this review and written in English was then searched from publications of Canadian Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, National Health Service of England and World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe with the search words "mental health" and "guidance". Table 2 in appendix 2 presents the additional literature found for the analysis through this targeted search.

4.2 Content analysis

The data acquired from the literature search was analyzed by using qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is a research method in which a large amount of text can be systematically organized to help describe even complex phenomena. In content analysis, raw data is condensed to form categories which summarize the key results while preserving the core meaning of the data. It is important not to let one's own opinions and assumptions influence the process or the results of the analysis. Still one should utilize their previous knowledge in gaining a deeper understanding of the analyzed data. (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz 2017.)

The literature chosen for the analysis was read and divided into meaning units while keeping in mind the research questions. Condensed meaning units were formed from the meaning units and then further abstraction into subcategories and into main category was done.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Current best practices in promoting mental health of immigrants

Best practices in promoting mental health of immigrants are communication, community approach, social and personal resources of immigrant, infrastructural practices, and professional competence and knowledge.

An example of the content analysis results is presented in table 3 in appendix 3. Due to the amount of best practices in the analyzed material, only a part of the condensed meaning units have been gathered for this illustrative table.

5.1.1 Communication

The importance of effective, confidential and culturally sensitive dialogical communication is emphasized in almost all of the chosen literature. Practices aim to bring down language barriers and to ensure information is correctly transmitted. Kerkkänen and Säävälä (2015, 58) mention in their text the importance of taking immigrant's language background into consideration. Other texts have collected best practices especially for the use of interpreters. Practices in the literature underline that interpreters should preferably be formal, unbiased and professional interpreters who are familiar with the relevant terminology and also culturally informed. Professionals should have the skills to work with an interpreter, briefing them about their assignment beforehand, reserving enough time for the appointment and making sure the immigrant client understands the meaning of professional confidentiality also with regard to the interpreter. Face-to-face interpreting is usually preferable, but sometimes confidentiality is best achieved through telephone interpreting.

The literature compiles practices that aim to ensure all immigrants are reached and understood. Technology offers diverse methods of communication and professionals should be able to utilize technology and different kinds of materials in conveying information. Important materials should be written in client's native language. Creating trust and securing confidential transfer of client information between units and service providers is essential for a confidential client relationship. Culturally sensitive communication takes into consideration the fact that people coming from different

cultural backgrounds express matters concerning mental health issues in different ways. Professionals should have the possibility to use cultural mediators and experts by experience to aid culturally sensitive communication.

5.1.2 Community approach

All texts chosen for this thesis acknowledge the significance of community- and family-centered interventions and the different role of community in cultures. In their work Haavikko and Bremer (2009) have an emphasis on personal meetings with immigrants but also take family- and community-centered view into consideration. Other texts have compiled a number of practices which underline a community approach. In community approach the community of the immigrant is seen as a resource. The community is also seen as an expert on the needs of an immigrant community and on the solutions for these needs. Interventions and services are planned, carried out and assessed in collaboration with immigrant communities.

Immigrant members of communities can work as trained peer support, as advocates or as a link between the community and service providers. Both immigrants and community members of host population can work as volunteers helping new immigrants find their place in the new country. Community events can be used to provide social support and inclusion and also to educate people about mental health and reduce stigma. Community-based organizations should be supported and long-lasting partnerships should be built with these organizations and other community resources such as religious groups. Initiatives and services should benefit all community members and their impact on communities should be carefully assessed.

5.1.3 Social and personal resources of immigrant

Many practices in the texts focus on strengthening the resources of the immigrant. The basic needs of immigrants should be secured and immigrants should get support in managing everyday life and in finding a rhythm in their lives as well as meaningful activities. Immigrants need both information about entitlements and practical support for documents and filling forms.

Practices also include interventions that aim at building a successful future for the immigrants as members of the society. These are interventions such as promoting education, social inclusion, employment and self-efficacy in the service system. Practices support immigrants in obtaining skills, such as language skills and individual resilience, or support the ability to utilize skills that they already have for example by converting professional qualifications. Kerkkänen and Säävälä (2015, 30) mention building positive images of the future and validating past life as ways to promote mental health of immigrants. Castaneda et al. (2018, 112) recommend enabling the participation of the immigrant client in decision making.

5.1.4 Infrastructural practices

Most practices mentioned in the literature require actions from decision-makers, administration and management in order to be realised. However, there are many practices that are specifically targeted at the operators who are responsible for building the infrastructure that enables the promotion of mental health of immigrants. Every text includes this aspect of mental health promotion.

Decision-makers need to acknowledge the challenges, needs and resources of immigrants and immigrant communities as well as the requirements of mental health work with immigrants. Adequate training and resources need to be allocated for professionals responsible in their profession for promoting mental health of immigrants. For example Castaneda et al. (2018, 108-115) recommend practices according to which organizational strategies should support mental health work and nondiscrimination should be maintained in work communities. Also professionals working in different sectors, such as police, teachers and interpreters should receive awareness training on mental health issues. Mental health promotion should be multiprofessional and utilize operators on all sectors.

There are many practices regarding service system development in the literature. They aim at reaching all members of the communities and making sure that immigrant clients have flexible access to low threshold services that encompass mental, physical and social health care. For example alternate pathways for referral and making mainstream services culturally sensitive are best practices mentioned by Fassil and Burnett (2015, 18-32). Castaneda et al. (2018, 128) recommend a joint service counselling of different service providers.

Practices and their effectiveness should be assessed with long-term studies. Good practices and evaluative studies on mental health promotion should be made available for others. For example, WHO (2018, 24) suggests a shared international repository of case studies and services to guide adaptation of good practices to local contexts and characteristics of a new migrant group.

5.1.5 Professional competence and knowledge

Literature chosen for the thesis contain practices for professionals on building a client relationship with an immigrant and on specific skills that professionals should have when working with immigrants or on projects involving immigrants.

Cultural competence and cultural sensitivity are mentioned in some form in all texts. Client relationships should be based on equality and collaboration. The immigrants are the experts of their own situation and culture. Professionals working with immigrants should be aware of their own cultural background and be able to self-reflect. They should understand the diversity of immigrants even within groups with the same cultural background.

Support for the immigrants should be holistic and individualized. For example Haavikko & Bremer (2009, 16) mention the importance of understanding migration as a psychological process.

5.2 Consensus

There are differences in target audiences of the best practice guidelines offered in the chosen literature. Haavikko & Bremer (2009) have an emphasis on the relationship between an immigrant client and a professional. Castaneda et al. (2018) have included this viewpoint in their work but they have also compiled practices for decision-makers and managerial professionals. Fassil and Burnett (2015) have targeted their work for commissioners and WHO (2018) for policy-makers. CAMH (2012) target their practices for health and social service providers. Kerkkänen & Säävälä (2015) have provided practices for decision-making, development work and project planning.

These different target audiences naturally affect the kinds of practices that are compiled in the texts. However, no matter who the practices are meant for, all texts stress the

importance of collaboration, cultural sensitivity, community involvement or family-centered view and the expertise of immigrants on matters concerning their own cultures, situations and needs. All texts contain practices from each of the subcategories formed in the synthesis. Main category and the subcategories are presented in figure 1.



Figure 1. Current best practices in promoting mental health of immigrants

6 DISCUSSION

This literature review was conducted to study what the current best practices are in promoting mental health of immigrants according to literature. In addition, the review was done to examine what kind of a consensus there is about the best practices.

The thesis is a part of the YOUME-project funded by European Union. The project aims to support participation and integration of immigrants by promoting mental health and early access to care. Trained volunteers with immigration background work in their communities as ambassadors of mental well-being and improve immigrants' knowledge about mental health and related issues. (Turun ammattikorkeakoulu 2019.)

At the moment there is no congruent policy on the provision of mental health services for immigrants in Finland and professionals working with immigrants have experienced that they do not have adequate skills and knowledge in this field (Castaneda et al. 2018, 27). Tailored services need to be provided for immigrants and special attention has to be paid to promotion of immigrant mental health. Guidance and information in the form of best practice guidelines for decision-makers and other professionals are needed to make this possible. The purpose of this review was to explore and summarize the literature available on these practices.

This thesis provides information about best practices mentioned both in national and international best practice guidances. Most registered nurses, practical nurses and public health nurses meet immigrants at some point during their career. Nurses can apply these practices in their work to promote the well-being of their immigrant client or patient. This information can be used to promote immigrant mental health not just by health care professionals but also by decision-makers and all members of community.

The thesis found a consensus among operators about best practices and the basic principles and values underlying them. Still not all texts contain the same individual best practices so it would be beneficial to be able to share knowledge about the topic. This information can encourage formation of the international repository of information on best practices suggested in WHO's Technical guidance (2018, 24).

The guidelines of Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK 2012) and good scientific practice were followed in making this thesis. Only references published by reliable sources were used. None of the referenced works exposed any personal

information about individuals so information security was not jeopardized. Credit was given to the authors and publishers by appropriately referencing works used in the thesis. Meticulous notes were kept on the process and methods of the thesis work to make sure the results are accurate and no information gets lost during the long process.

Literature about best practices in promoting mental health of immigrants was difficult to find. The scope of this review is undoubtedly narrow and a lot more literature on the topic surely exists. The initial search results were few but additional search was conducted to add to the analysis material and increase the validity of the review. Thesis was done by only one student but more time was used to write the thesis to compensate for this. The number of individual practices found was high and this caused some challenges for the content analysis. Even though the results were presented as objectively as possible, the categorizing of practices inevitably involves a degree of subjectivity.

The literature gives numerous examples of projects and information services that have used some of the best practices of immigrant mental health promotion in their implementation. In most of the literature, knowledge acquired through experience has been used in compiling the practices. For some practices there is also information about how the practice's effectiveness has been evaluated during the course of projects. There are many practices on which there is no information given about whether or not there has been any long-term research on their effectiveness and if the practices have been used by service providers in a systematic way or perhaps only in individual projects without evaluation of effectiveness. There is however research information about immigrants' needs and challenges to support establishing and including these practices in the guidelines.

Based on the literature chosen for this review, practice-based evidence is much used in compiling best practices for mental health promotion of immigrants. Castaneda et al. (2018, 14) mention in their work that there is not enough coordination of the skills, knowledge and networks that professionals in Finland have already acquired. They note that coordination is needed to make sure that this know-how is distributed to all professionals and equal service provision is achieved.

There is further long-term research to be done to study the effectiveness of practices and the service-user view should be in the center of this research. Perhaps there should be comparative research to determine if scientific studies and evidence derived from practice give similar results and whether scientific evidence is at all descriptive of the

effectiveness of practices in this context. Research should also be done to determine the level of coordination and systematic use of best practice guidelines in the service system to ensure equal service provision for all members of the community.

7 CONCLUSION

This review found that the current best practices in promoting mental health of immigrants according to literature are communication, community approach, social and personal resources of immigrant, infrastructural practices, and professional competence and knowledge.

This review also found that based on literature, there is a consensus about the best practices in promotion of immigrant mental health. In spite of different emphasis due to differences in the target audience, every work chosen for this thesis acknowledged the need for tailored services for immigrants and the challenges that immigrants face in their new country and in the service system. It can be said that the spirit of the guidance literature is similar in all works and there are no marked differences in their underlying messages.

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Table 1. Literature chosen for the content analysis from literature search

Literature	Purpose and target audience	Methods used	Results
Haavikko & Bremer 2009. Ulkoisesti erilaisia, sisäisesti samanlaisia. Opas mielenterveystyöhön yli kulttuurirajojen. Suomen Mielenterveysseura.	Guidance for professionals who meet immigrant clients in their profession.	Guidance compiled by utilizing expertise of professionals through experience from over 20 years of work with immigrant clients in the Finnish Association for Mental Health.	Guidance on building a confidential client relationship with immigrant clients and on using interpreters. Information about migration as a psychological process.
Castaneda et al 2018. Pakolaisten mielenterveyden tukeminen Suomessa: PALOMA-käsikirja. Terveiden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos.	Guidance for professionals who meet refugees in their profession, for decision-makers, administrative professionals, supervisors and educational organizations as well as citizens irrespective of profession.	Information gathered from Finnish and international research and practical development work, seminars, workshops, conferences and consultations. Interviewing more than 100 expert professionals and target group representatives.	Information about refugees' resources and risk factors for mental health. Recommendations, tools and methods for promoting mental health of refugees and preventing, identifying and treating problems. Includes examples of interventions that utilize these practices.
Kerckänen & Säävälä 2015. Maahanmuuttajien psyykkistä hyvinvointia ja mielenterveyttä edistävät tekijät ja palvelut. Systemaattinen tutkimuskatsaus. Työ- ja elinkeino-ministeriö.	Provides research information for decision-making, development work and project planning. The aim is to improve effectiveness of work promoting integration and mental well-being of immigrants.	Systematic literature review which included 88 Finnish and international research articles about effectiveness of an intervention or service on mental well-being.	Practices for mental health promotion and information about the effectiveness of remedial interventions. Children and adolescents and immigrants who have experienced torture are addressed as their own groups.

Table 2. Literature chosen for the content analysis from targeted search

Literature	Purpose and target audience	Methods	Results
World Health Organization 2018. Mental health promotion and mental health care in refugees and migrants. Technical guidance.	Summarizes recommendations and research evidence on mental health promotion and care of immigrants and refugees. Provides considerations for policy-makers on promotion of mental health and provision of mental health care.	Narrative synthesis of evidence collected, prioritizing high-quality and recently updated systematic reviews on prevalence of mental disorders and interventions. Complementing literature searches and case studies.	Eight key priority action areas identified and interventions offered for those areas. Case studies presented of projects in which similar interventions have been used.
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health 2012. Best practice guidelines for mental health promotion programs: Refugees. Joint project of CAMH, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto and Toronto Public Health.	Guidelines for all mental health promotion service providers working with refugees. Aim is to promote implementation of ideal mental health promotion practices in initiatives and programs directed towards refugees.	A literature review of European, American, Australian and Canadian articles published since 1997. Examples of best practice in Canada searched from websites and reports. Information from expert interviews incorporated.	Evidence-based approaches on 13 different areas of mental health promotion for refugees. Examples of mental health initiatives and programs that incorporate good practice are presented.
Fassil & Burnett 2015. Commissioning mental health services for vulnerable adult migrants. Guidance for commissioners. Mind. NHS England.	Guidance for Health and Social Care commissioners. Aim is to improve service provision for migrants and to achieve culturally and linguistically sensitive mental health services for migrants.	Research and compiling methods are not mentioned. Service users, providers and commissioners views and feedback have been used in creating the guidance.	Guidance for planning, commissioning, monitoring and evaluating services for vulnerable migrants.

Table 3. Example of content analysis results

Condensed meaning units	Subcategory	Main category
dialogical interaction, culturally sensitive communication, courage to address mental health issues, verify mutual understanding, culturally informed interpreters, secure information transfer between service providers, relatable examples in materials, awareness and knowledge of information security legislation	Communication	Best practices in promoting mental health of immigrants
community collaborative approach, family-centered projects, peer support, consider impact of policies on communities, identify resources among communities, low-intensity mental health support by trained peers, working with communities to ensure quality of materials and services, mental health education through non-explicit services such as creative groups, sports, social events, examine quality of existing networks	Community approach	
promoting client's functional abilities, culture as a resource, language training, support in building a new cultural identity, increase participation, promote factors advancing social inclusion,	Social and personal resources of immigrant	

person-centred assessment of skills and needs, promote individual resilience, promote education		
adequate resources, effective monitoring of outcomes, map operators in the area and their tasks, long term initiatives, integration of mental, physical and social care, enabling training of staff, flexible access low threshold services, tailored out-reach services for immigrant groups, joint service counselling of different providers, involve multiple stakeholders	Infrastructural practices	
culturally sensitive work, cultural competence, flexible way of working, understanding migration as a process, reduce stigma, professionals participating in training and professional guidance, understanding and making visible the local culture, taking client's social factors into account, case manager-type service counselling, acknowledging diversity of immigrants	Professional competence and knowledge	