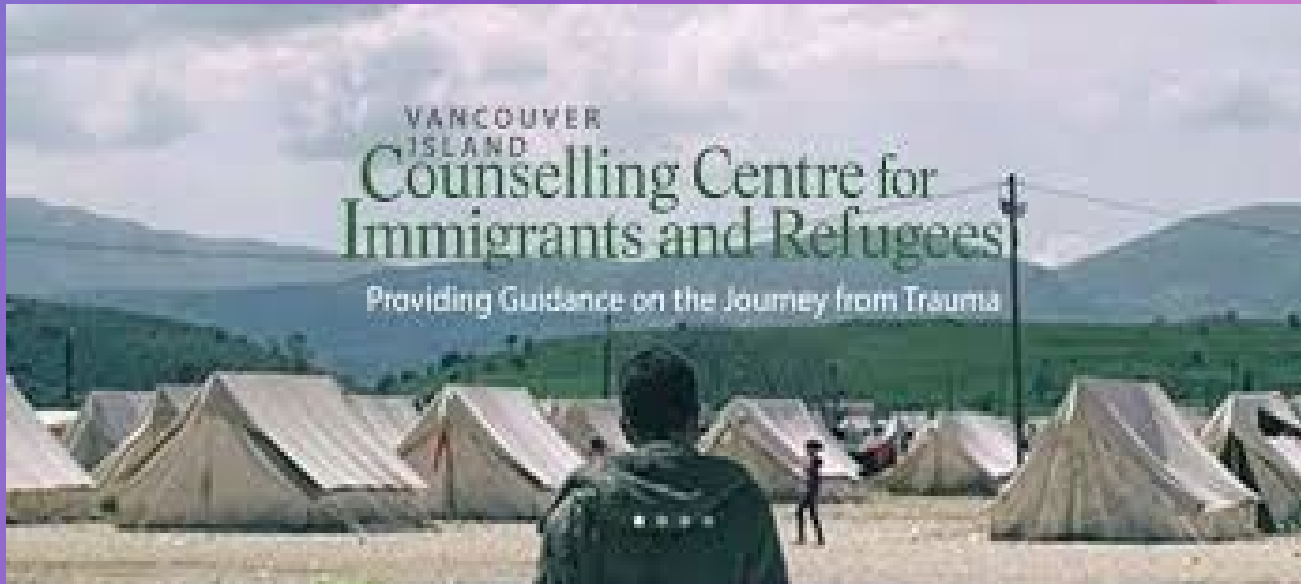


Lessons learned in setting up a unique Mental Health Model of Care and Advocacy for Refugees and Immigrants



PATHWAYS FOR PROSPERITY **March 8, 2022**

Ana Maria Pavon Marin, RCC, MAPsych, MM, LLB.



Outline of the Session

- Who we are?
- An organic model of care adapting and evolving
- Case scenario 1
- Social Package and volunteer work
- The role of the interpreter



Who are we?

“A heart of many
colors”





- . VICCIR Mission
- . Our Values
- . Our Services
- . Referral process



VICCIR's mission is caring and supporting mental health of immigrants and refugees, the resilience of individuals, families and the community. Health is a holistic concept. Our clients experience the debilitating symptoms of trauma, depression, anxiety, relationships problems, grief and losses of loved ones just to mention some situations. As a result, physical, mental, spiritual, and overall health will be affected, and we cannot fragmentate health.

Also, a community is like the human body, **if one part is suffering and in pain the rest of the body suffers**. From this perspective, promoting mental health is creating opportunities to heal and enhance wellbeing, individually and collectively and is a measure of progress in society.

VALUES

- A spirit of service and inclusiveness at the core
- Eliminating barriers for accessing help
- A commitment with advocacy, social justice and peace building
- Teamwork / Cooperation and Collaboration / Partnership
- Respect for the personal, religious and cultural diversity of our clients
- Quality of Service



Our Services

- **Counselling** Services for individuals, couples, families, youth and children.
Unique aspect that we can provide therapy to all **family** members
- **Support Groups, Parenting Education groups, Therapy Groups**
- **Social Services** Worker can assist therapists and clients with all practical issues
- Group of **volunteers** assist with English language, creating friendships, tutoring, etc.
- **Community** Support: connection with physicians, teachers, support groups and other referral agents
- **Trainings, supervision** and consultation provided for organizations, settlement workers, support groups, clinicians, teachers, social workers.

We cannot do that without addressing issues that are intrinsically connected with our clients' social circumstances. This entails eliminating barriers accessing health and other resources and working on reducing the stigma associated with mental health.

What are some of these barriers?

- Language and cultural aspects

- Stigma around mental health

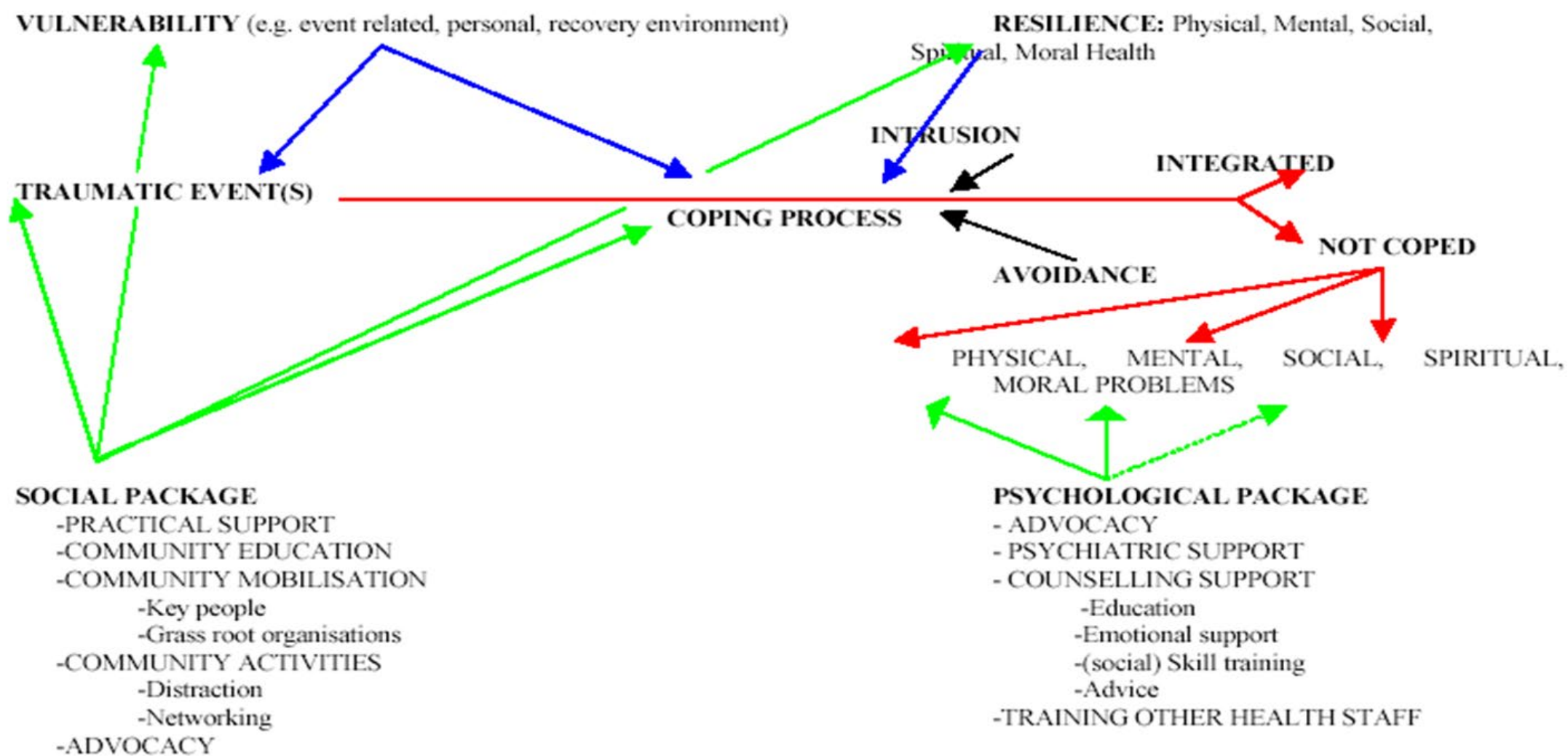
- Lack of information or access to resources

Effects of the pandemic:

- Shattering the meaning of safety

Ground for feelings of isolation | disrupting family and individual dynamics, hindering | Financial support for family members | increasing cases of gender violence

- Racism, prejudice and discrimination



Case Scenario 1: Laxmi and her children, surviving IPV

Canada's Assaulted Women's Helpline fielded 20,334 calls between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31, 2020, compared to 12,352 over the same period the previous year.

Who can you call when you do not speak the language and are feeling trapped in a country with an alien system to navigate? IPV has been identified as a “pandemic within the pandemic.” (1)

Violence against women – particularly intimate partner violence and sexual violence – is a major public health problem and a violation of women's human rights (WHO-March 9, 2021) (2).

Providing the opportunity to share in her own language and finding reliable sources of information and resources.

Professionals involved: Counselor/ Interpreter/SW/ Police/CYMH/ Lawyers/ Doctors/ Psychiatric consultant/ School system/Housing/ VICCIR volunteers





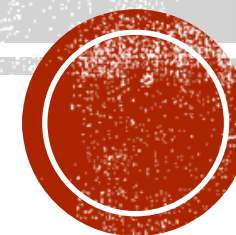
VICCIR
VANCOUVER ISLAND COUNSELLING CENTRE
FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

SOCIAL WORK SERVICES & VOLUNTEERS IN VICCIR

Abeer Smadi

Social worker & Volunteer coordinator

Mar 2022

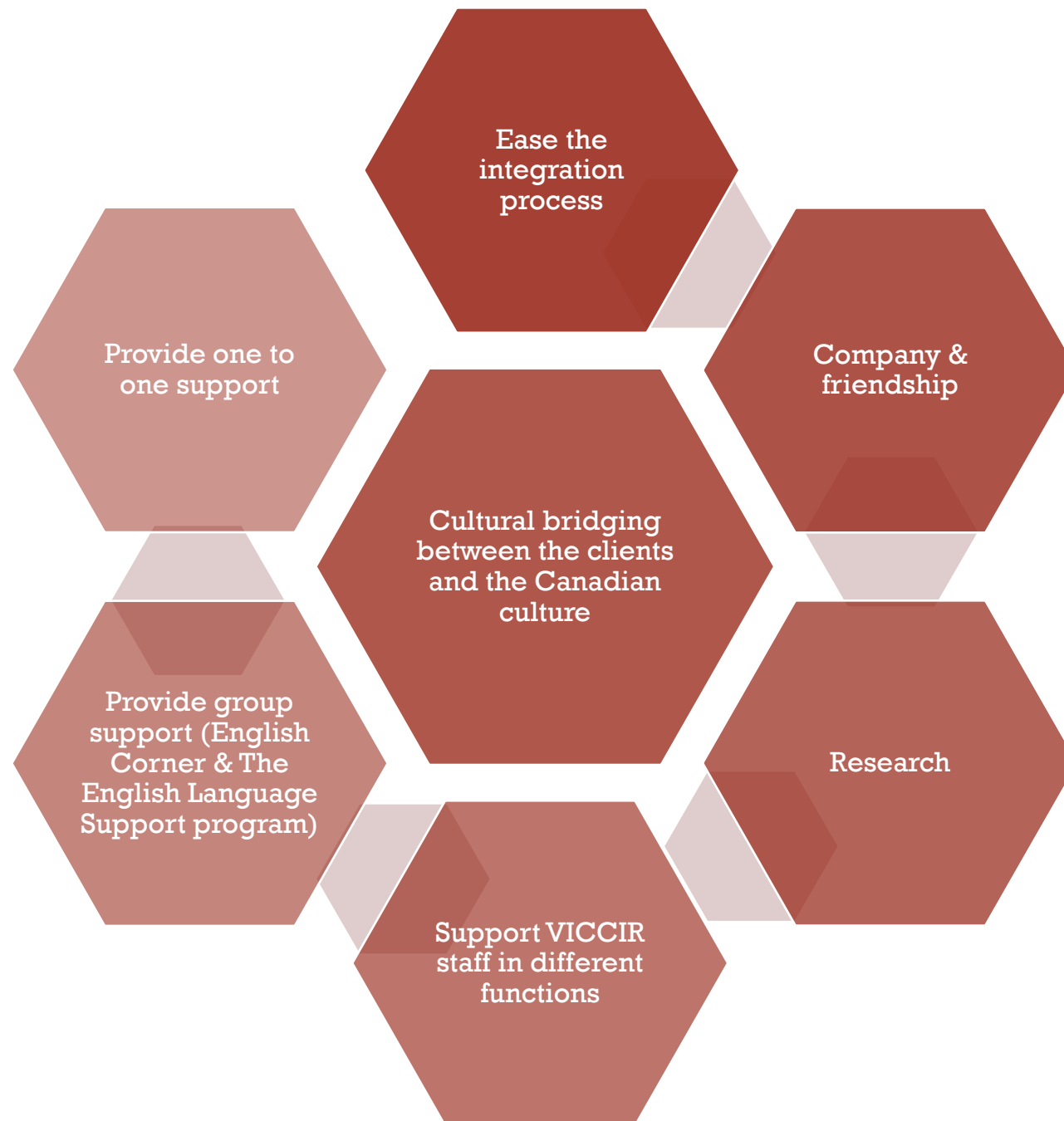


“Usually, the social services package come before the counseling package, but in VICCIR, we started the counseling first followed by the social worker services”
Adrienne Carter – VICCIR’s Director of Services



SOCIAL WORK SERVICES





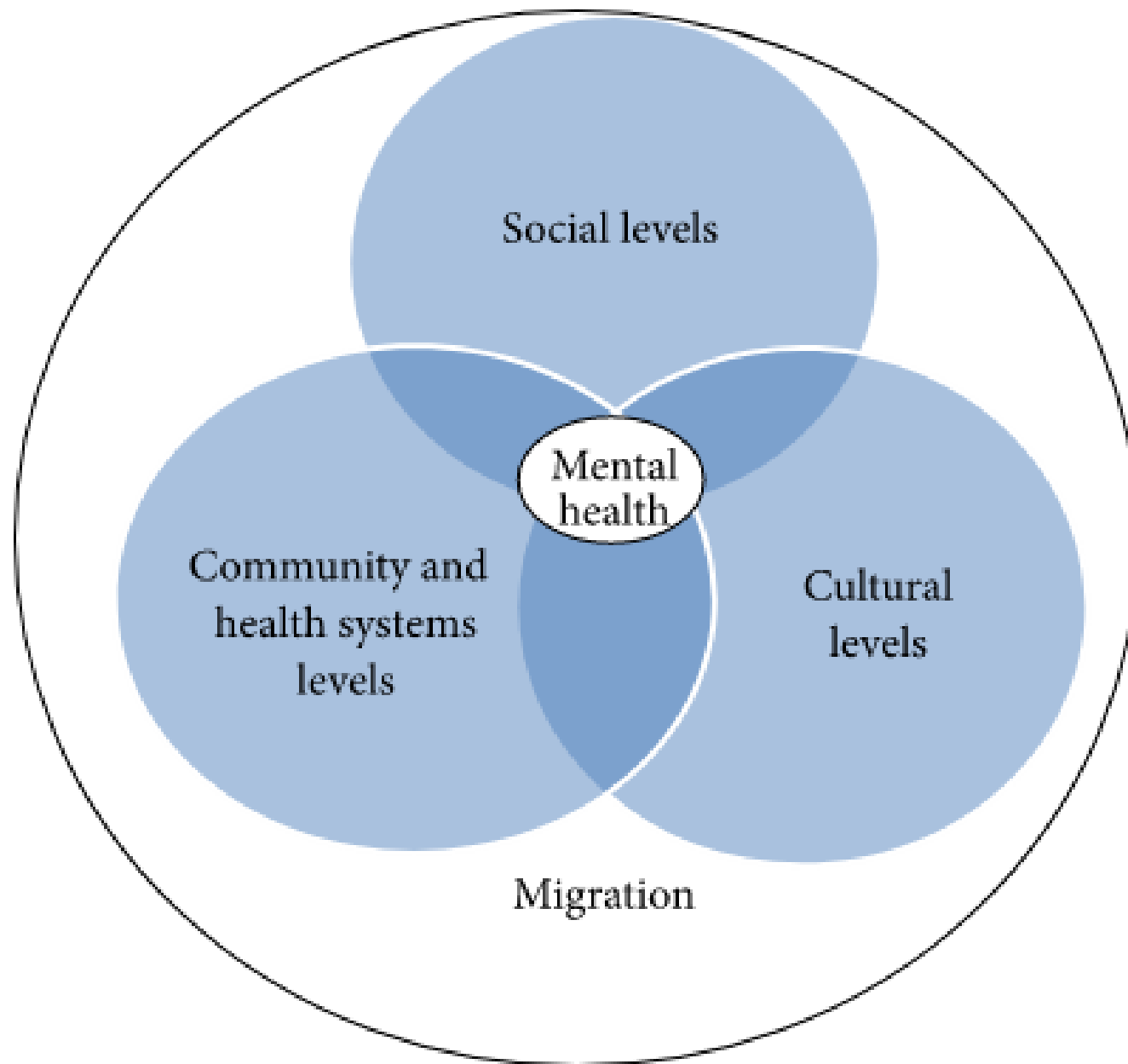
VICCIR'S VOLUNTEERS



- In 2020, we served 35 clients
- In 2021, we served 20 clients
- 42 partners up to date
- We have a total of 34 volunteers
- Our volunteers' backgrounds and experiences are very diverse.
- Coming from different courtiers and cultures.
- Rang from very experienced individuals to current students
- We have medical doctors, lawyers, marketing professionals, teachers, psychology students, Child & youth care students
- Currently, we are serving 15 clients

TRACKING OUR SERVICES & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT





Interpreters at VICCIR

Latifa Elaoui

Clinical Interpreter

Role of interpreters at VICCIR

- As a member of the team the interpreter is a key in the process of counseling between counselor and client.
- Counsellors provide their services to clients from different cultural backgrounds and countries.
- The need for a team of interpreters from different languages is essential to accomplish this process.



Interpreters at VICCIR are qualified and trained

- The success of the interpretation services offered at VICCIR is based on 3 key aspects:
 1. Assignment of the same interpreter for the same client from the first session until the end of therapy.
 2. Providing briefing and debriefing after sessions between counselor and interpreters create a good understanding of the cultural background of the clients, which eases the counselor's work.
 3. Providing monthly supervision to the interpreters keeps them updated for any situation or challenges that could arise during their work.

VICCIR is a team

- Our aim is that our clients get the best quality of services.
- For that purpose, we work as a team with the counsellors, helping clients overcome the barrier of language.
- What does it look like this relationship during a counselling session?
- Other benefits: reducing stigma, contributing to safety and inspiring clients.



- (1) Evans ML, Lindauer M, Farrell ME. A Pandemic within a Pandemic - Intimate Partner Violence during Covid-19. N Engl J Med. 2020 Dec 10;383(24):2302-2304. doi: 10.1056/NEJMp2024046. Epub 2020 Sep 16. PMID: 32937063.
- (2) [Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Peacebuilding | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)
- (3) <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>
- (4) Racism in Greater Victoria: A Community Report. Presented by the Greater Victoria Local immigration Partnership and the Inter-cultural Association of Greater Victoria.