

Faculty of Health Sciences

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Re: 2021 REACH Award for Excellence in Research Partnerships

To Whom It May Concern:

Dear REACH Nomination Committee,

It is a pleasure for me to support Dr. Nancy Clark, Assistant Professor in the School of Nursing, University of Victoria who is currently being nominated for the 2021 REACH Award for Excellence in Research Partnerships. I have had the honour to work alongside Dr. Clark in several of her research, education, policy and community engagement efforts to support mental health of immigrant and refugee communities.

In 2017, Dr. Clark and I co-developed a community-engaged deliberative dialogue symposium with refugee Syrian women in BC, held at SFU 'Supporting emotional well-being and access to health care of Syrian mothers: A collaboration amongst community' (MSFHR, Community Partnership grant). This collaboration also included extensive convening and partnership building across health and settlement sectors. We used the symposium to develop a research project 'Using Community Action Research to Support Syrian Refugee Mothers in the Resettlement Period' a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funded project. From this work, Dr. Clark developed a novel peer-led training course for Syrian mothers on principles of community-engaged research in Canada. This training workshop has also provided Syrian women with leadership skills and built literacy for navigating employment and health systems. Dr. Clark will be applying her peer-led training course in a recently submitted Insight Development Grant 'Exploring Syrian Men's Mental Health and Participation in Labour Employment: A Community Participatory Arts-Based Project.'

In addition, Dr. Clark and I also had the chance to co-supervise a graduate student in 2020 at the Faculty of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University working on a literature review and environmental scan related to mental health service gaps for refugee women. Her support and mentorship throughout the capstone course was instrumental in ensuring that the scan would have real-life impact at the community level.

Currently, Dr. Clark and I are working in collaboration as co-investigators on "Art on the Go-Road Safety newcomer youth project" that aims to engage newcomer youth in Surrey to co-design a walking tour to enhance community connection,

Faculty of Health Sciences

resilience and promote mental wellbeing, in addition to enhancing skills on road safety. This project is a collaboration with the City of Surrey, Vision Zero team and Fraser Health Authority, as well as Surrey School District and the settlement sector. Dr. Clark's relationships with the settlement sector have proved to be critical in building trust and collaboration with this sector to both recruit newcomer youth to participate, but will also be critical during the knowledge dissemination aspects.

Over the many years I have worked with Dr. Clark, I have seen how her scholarship has continued to advance her passion for immigrant and refugee mental health, in particular with the partner institution Options BC, a non -for -profit with excellent credibility in the settlement sector. Dr Clark's long-term relationships with the settlement sector in BC and across Canada, have contributed to ensuring that the research has a positive impact on the community. She is a strong advocate for health equity and has deep relationships in community to support her work. I give my strong recommendation for Dr Clark and hope you consider her application.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information.

Best regards,

Paola Ardiles



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