



PURPLE HEARTS

**Families in cultural transition- FICT
domestic and family violence project**



NSW Service for the Treatment
and Rehabilitation of Torture
and Trauma Survivors

Evaluation Report

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1. Introduction

The NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) is a not-for-profit Affiliated Health Organisation which has been providing services to survivors of torture and refugee trauma in NSW for over 30 years. It provides culturally appropriate services to help people recover from torture and refugee trauma, foster their empowerment and self-determination, and rebuild their lives in Australia. STARTTS also fosters a positive, effective and culturally sensitive recovery environment through the delivery of training to services that work with refugee populations, advocacy and policy work.

The Families in Cultural Transition -FICT Purple Hearts is a program that promote growth, equality, healthy relationships, safety and wellbeing. It is delivered under the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) - Domestic and Family Violence Project of the Commonwealth Department of Social Services (DSS) and co-funded by the Department of Home Affairs and STARTTS.

This evaluation report aims to explore the outcomes of program to inform funding body and future program implementation. The report uses mixed methods and an exploratory approach to identify the program outcomes. This report is comprised of the program description, evaluation methodology, findings, and a general conclusion.

2. Program description

The 6 week program consists of weekly 3 hour face-to-face sessions, for women migrant and from refugee backgrounds. The program promotes safety, growth and equality, and educates participants on healthy and unhealthy relationships and domestic violence.

The objectives of the FICT Purple Hearts program are:

- Increase awareness of DFV among women in migrant and refugee communities
- Reduce social isolation of women in migrant and refugee communities who may have limited networks and little family support in Australia
- Increase the confidence of women to understand their rights
- Increase the confidence of women to know where and how to access support for DFV related matters
- Increase confidence in managing their own money and where to seek financial support
- Increase knowledge of how to supporting family and friends who may be subjected to DFV
- Promote the growth, safety and wellbeing of migrant and refugee women

The program sessions include an overview of the program and an introduction to domestic violence, human rights and self-care strategies. It also covers sessions on the role of the police, the impact of Domestic and Family Violence (DFV), support and services available, and financial abuse and finance management. A wellness activity, which is designed in consultation with participants, is also part of the program.

FICT Purple Hearts program is based on the existing FICT model and is designed to be delivered by two trained STARTTS bicultural facilitators who speak the community language. The program is also supported by guest speakers with specialist knowledge. The program delivered in 2022 had 10 bicultural facilitators (2 per group) who received comprehensive training. The facilitators received three days training about domestic violence, half day of accidental counselling training, one day training on the FICT purple hearts program, and a 2 to 3 hours training session with the NSW police.

Like all FICT programs, the Purple Hearts is an experiential and reflective program designed to draw on the experiences and knowledge of participants. It is also supported by a STARTTS Project Officer and Team Leader.

The program is based on the following frameworks:

- Human Rights approach
- Strengths-based
- Trauma-informed
- Rights-based
- Person-centred
- STARTTS Systemic Approach pertaining to the challenges of refugee settlement

The Principles that guide the program are:

- All people have the right to live free from violence.
- All forms of violence and abuse are unacceptable.
- There is no excuse for violence – having a traumatic migration experience is no excuse for violence.
- Safety of all participants is paramount (of victim survivors, their children and facilitators).
- Victim-survivors of DFV need to be believed, supported and empowered to make their own decisions
- Children, as the most vulnerable members of society, need to be valued and protected at all costs
- People who use violence should be held accountable for their actions.

Partnership for 2022 program delivery

The FICT Purple Hearts program worked with other organisations to increase the success of the program delivery. For example, STARTTS established partnership with the NSW Police Multicultural Community Liaison Officers and the Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV) to deliver workshops to bicultural facilitators and staff about the role of NSW Police and increase awareness and understanding of FDV.

STARTTS also worked internally with other teams to deliver some of the program activities. With the support of Communities in Cultural Transition (CiCT), STARTTS delivered interventions to community and groups to promote women's economics and social inclusion. The team provided information sessions to different community groups on topics related to domestic violence and leadership. It also support classes for women in different areas such as yoga, swimming and English language skills.

3. Evaluation methodology

This evaluation comprises 6 sessions over 6 weeks, delivered to 5 different women's groups during the second trimester of 2022. This evaluation uses mixed methods to explore the outcomes of the program and its possible benefits on refugee and migrant women from diverse cultural backgrounds. It utilises the World Health Organisation Well-Being Index (WHO-5) tool, semi-structured interview and focus group techniques for data collection:

- **The World Health Organisation Well-Being Index- WHO-5.** Pre and post forms were administered to participants at the beginning and end of the program to determine changes in respondents' wellbeing as a result of participating in the Purple Hearts program. The WHO-5 (World Health Organisation, 1998) is a short self-reported measure which indicates current mental wellbeing. Respondents rate five symptoms on a six-point scale ranging from 0-5 with 5 being the best score. Questions ask if respondents felt:
 - ✓ cheerful and in good spirits
 - ✓ calm and relaxed
 - ✓ active and vigorous
 - ✓ fresh and rested
 - ✓ daily life is fulfilled with things that interest them

The questionnaire has been used to assess the quality of life in a number of psychiatric diagnosis groups, and has well-supported validity and sensitivity to change (Topp, Østergaard, Søndergaard, & Bech, 2015). The scale has also been used to assess overall treatment effects in the field of psychiatry and in trials with trauma-affected refugees (Buhmann, Mortensen, Nordentoft, Ryberg, & Ekstrom, 2015). The WHO-5 has been found to have adequate validity in screening for depression and in measuring outcomes in clinical trials.

- **A Focus group** was conducted to 10 participants of one group with the assistance of an interpreter. Participants were asked about their understanding of domestic violence and its impact, their capacity to recognise unhealthy relationships, awareness of services available, and confidence seeking support and managing finances. They were also asked about their understanding of their rights and importance of self-care strategies.
- **Semi- structured individual Interviews** were also conducted to 16 program participants from different groups, some of them with the assistance of an interpreter. Same question of focus groups were used to guide the interviews. A STARTTS staff was also interviewed to gather more information regarding the program background and description.
- **Document review** was conducted to STARTTS Domestic and Family Violence – DFV Facilitator Manual and Resource Kit, the program work plan and program intake forms.

4. Findings

4.1. Sociodemographic information of participants

A total 50 women from different cultures backgrounds participated in FICT Purple Hearts Program (See Table 1). Participants come from the following NSW LGAs Cumberland, Blacktown, City of Fairfield, City of Liverpool and Northern Beaches.

Table 1. Group Names and number of participants

Group name	Number of participants registered
Uyghur speaking Women's group	8
Tibetan speaking Women's group	13
Urdu speaking Women's group	11
Dari speaking Women's group	9
Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaean)	9
Total participants	50

Source: Intake forms and group attendance list

- **Age of participants**

Analysis shows that women from different ages attended to program. On average, the age of women who participated in the programs was 52 years old. A total of 98% were older than 31 years old and 3% were young adults.

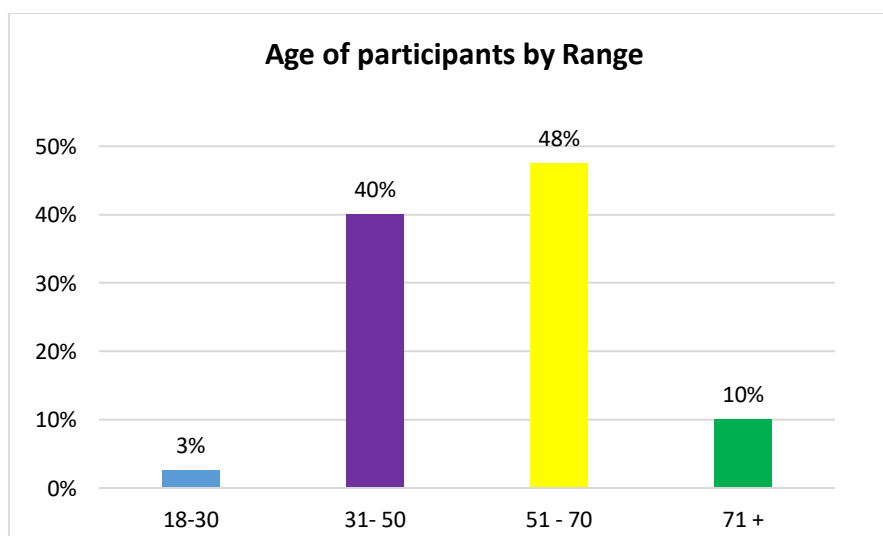


Figure 1: Age of Program participants by range

4.2. Findings from WHO-5

The analysis of the WHO-5 Pre and Post data (n= 28) indicates a 15 points difference in percentage score which represents an overall increase of 23% between pre and post scores of subjective wellbeing that are measured on the WHO-5 index. Each item of the WHO-5 index was added to consolidate a meaningful score for baseline score mean (65) and the post score mean (80) (See figure 2).

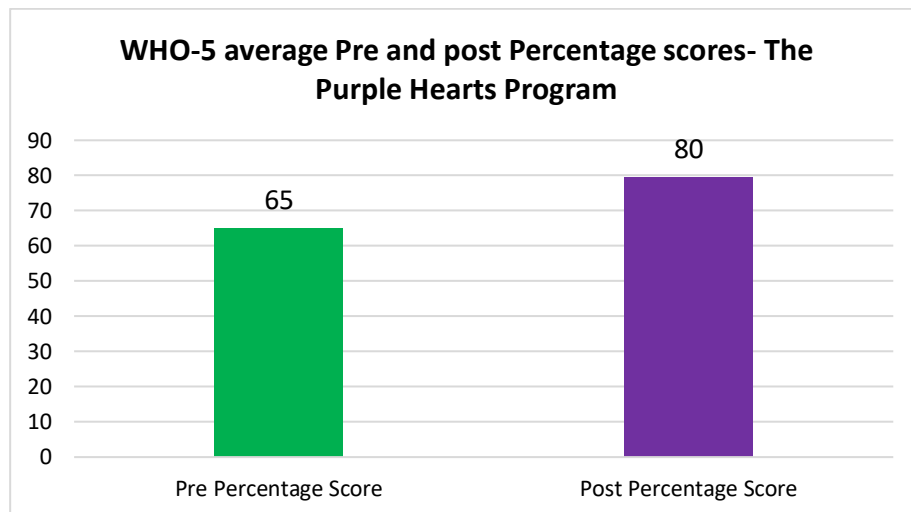


Figure 2. Average score of subjective wellbeing before and after the program

When analysing individual scores, 25% of participants scored ≤ 50 in the baseline of WHO-5 index. However, by the end of the sessions, only 7% of participants scored below ≤ 50 and a total of 93% of participants scored ≥ 50 which indicated an overall increase of their level of subjective wellbeing in areas assessed.

Comparing the differences on individual percentage scores between pre and post WHO-5, 64% of participants scored more than 10 positive point difference which suggest a clinically significant change. Further screen for depression and interventions is suggested for 36% of respondents who scored below 10 points. These low scores may be explained by different factors associated with the short term intervention of the program and the focus of the program on increasing knowledge, awareness and confidence of respondents rather than being a proper therapeutic setting.

4.3. Findings from interviews

- **Increased understanding of Domestic and Family Violence (DFV)**

Participants reported increased knowledge and awareness of Domestic and Family Violence (DFV). They learned what DFV means and the different types of abusive and violent behaviors. For example, respondents mentioned physical, financial, religious, emotional, and psychological abuse.

"I did not have idea about this before the course. Now I understand. I understand what domestic violence is, which behaviours are normal and which not. Now I understand if I need to call someone to ask for help" **Dari speaking Women's group**

There are some things, many things that i did not know about. Domestic Violence, I know now after participating in the program. **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaeen)**

"A lot of things I learnt, domestic violence I knew nothing, but now I learn more about Domestic Violence. **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaeen)**

"Yes, everything was well explained, I know what to do in case of domestic violence. I got a lot of information, all types of abuse. Everything was explained in detail." **Urdu speaking Women's group**

"Yes, absolutely. Previously my understanding about family violence is that it is physical abusing. But after this course, this group discussion, my knowledge about the others, the financial, religious, emotional. It is a wider concept. I feel really lucky after doing this course because there are so many supports for women and children, and even men" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

"Yes, I saw many scenarios, many examples. I learnt different types of abuse. It is really important" **Urdu speaking Women's group**

"I understand that if someone takes my account for himself, he forces you and he doesn't help you and keeps all the money for himself, that is financial abuse. I didn't know about that before" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

Participants also expanded their understanding of who can experience FDV. They mentioned that men, women and children can be exposed to it.

"Now I understand what D V is. It is not only against women there is DV against men as well and children." **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaeen)**

"We remember, that in terms of domestic violence, it can happen to men as well" **Tibetan speaking Women's group**

"Yeah, I understand it could be the wife and husband relationship, it could be the friendship, it could be mother and kids. It is abuse" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

Yes, talking about Domestic Violence, that there is domestic violence between men and women just in general, with children and financial. **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaeen)**

In addition, participants increased awareness of the importance of boundaries and how to set them. They also learnt about mechanisms of protection such as the Apprehended Violence Order (AVO), how to seek support and how to support others.

"I understand a lot from this course. Domestic violence is abuse, financial abuse, and psychological abuse. It surprised me; I didn't know before about that. We learnt where to call. Even if it is not happening to us, but happening to others, we know how to talk to them and tell them there is support there is help" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

"I learnt new things that I needed to learn for myself and a few things I needed to tell someone. I did not know enough before the course. When I came in this group, I learnt a lot about many things, like to build my boundaries and limits." **Urdu speaking Women's group**

"I couldn't really understand too much before about domestic violence. But after this course I understand what it is. There is physical, financial and psychological abuse. That it can happen in the family, with the woman, there can be issues that maybe you should contact the police about. You must save yourself, your family. I understand now what the AVO is" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

"I also know about the AVO, and how to call the police." **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaean)**

Some participants gave specific examples of their understanding of DFV, and used expressions to describe it, such as "freedom is taken away", "when you say No, and someone force on you..."

"Domestic violence is when your freedom is taken away, such as how you want to dress, who you want to go out with, how you want to spend your money. If that is taken away, that is domestic violence. That is what I learnt from this program." **Tibetan speaking Women's group**

"Any couple, whether you are married or not, or you are sharing a place together and when someone force something on you, that is domestic violence, especially in terms of relationships when you say No, and someone force on you, that is domestic violence." **Tibetan speaking Women's group**

"We learned everything about Domestic Violence in general, that it's not just physical. It's verbal, or the husband, he is stingy financially." **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaean)**

Some respondents were also confronted by the difference in understanding of DFV in Australia compared to other countries.

"I recently came from India, and I learnt there is a difference what is domestic violence here and what is in India. What I learnt is, the most important is the law, in how they take care of the woman, the differences between Indian law and Australian law, so right now I have more confidence if it happens, I know where to go, that is what I learnt from this workshop." **Tibetan speaking Women's group**

"Yes, I got a lot of information here. Every woman needs to know about this topic. It is a very good workshop. It gave us a lot of information. It is very interesting because every country has different rules, they are very different. It is very good to know about new rules, the police, how everything is ruled in Australia. I am very happy for that." **Dari speaking Women's group**

- **Increased understanding of DFV impact**

When asked about their understanding of the impact of DVF, respondents highlighted its impact on confidence, mental health and family unity.

“The family is like a chain, domestic violence breaks the unity” **Tibetan speaking Women’s group**

“Yes, I learnt about emotional abuse and how you lose your confidence, your power. I learnt that there is always someone to talk about this and I also learnt how to stay safe. I know I can call the police” **Dari speaking Women’s group**

“It has mental health impacts” **Tibetan speaking Women’s group**

Participants commonly commented on the impact of DFV on children and family. It was commonly mentioned the impact of DFV on children behaviors, self-expression, and confidence, as well their ability to connect and interact with others and on their general wellbeing. Impact of FDV on relationships between family members was also mentioned by participants.

“Children who witness domestic violence, it may become normalized” **Tibetan speaking Women’s group**

“Yes, especially to the children, psychologically, they become aggressive. They become like not talking, not talkative, keeping everything inside. A personality change and their character can change. And their whole life, their future life is impacted by domestic violence” **Uyghur speaking Women’s group**

“Yes, for example, if the mother and father are fighting each other, it impacts the kids. The kids are scared and maybe sometimes sick and won’t eat. If the husband and woman relationship is not good she is psychologically abused and she is angry and stressed to her children” **Uyghur speaking Women’s group**

“Yes, if the husband and wife don’t have a good relationship it will affect the kids. They will not feel confident or be happy. They may not socialise, they may isolate. That is not good for their future” **Uyghur speaking Women’s group**

“Yes, now I will help first to my daughters. Both are too young. I want to help them in all their environment, because they are going to grow in this environment. I want to tell them all this” **Urdu speaking Women’s group**

“It will impact on the children, the whole family. For example, the husband maybe comes with a present. There could be a separation, between the husband and the wife it will affect the children themselves, like the sons could be like their father. The daughters, they will be like their mothers. The children may go and live with another family, through DOCS.” **Arabic speaking Women’s group (Mandaean)**

“That is really important. If the family have a kid, I think firstly that is not good for the kid’s health, for their psychology, for their growing. And also, for the victims health” **Uyghur speaking Women’s group**

“The relationship between parents has an impact on the children and extended family” **Tibetan speaking Women’s group**

- **Increased understanding of rights**

Respondents reported a better understanding of their rights after their participation in the program, not only in their personal or private lives, but as members of Australian society. As the following

quotes show, respondents used different expressions and words to describe their understanding of their rights such “freedom”, “here everyone is equal”, “there are a lot of rights for women in Australia”, “It is equal to have a job opportunity” “here it is different..., [women work/rights] are recognised by society”, “Now I know my rights”, “a man cannot take my property or my money”, “I can call the police”, “equality about money”.

“The culture I grew up with is that men have more rights. Women do the household work and do not really participate in the running of the society or the country. But here it is different. Even if we are at home, doing household work, it is recognised by society, because you are raising children, someone for the future and educating them” **Uyghur speaking Women’s group**

“yes, you should have freedom to go out wherever you want” **Tibetan speaking Women’s group**

“Yes, I understand my rights” **Urdu speaking Women’s group**

“Now I know my rights and how to achieve them” **Dari speaking Women’s group**

“Yes, now I understand what is right for me to be happy and for my family. What I can do. What my rights are.” **Dari speaking Women’s group**

“Yes, I know now. Even though I am alone, I will not have a man, I know my rights and a man cannot take my property or my money.” **Arabic speaking Women’s group (Mandaean)**

“ I know more about my rights; I can call the police. About equality about my money.” **Arabic speaking Women’s group (Mandaean)**

“It is different from men. Financially If I have my salary or a benefit, my husband can’t say anything about that. I have freedom.” **Arabic speaking Women’s group (Mandaean)**

“We should have a lot of rights. Like financially and about jobs. It is equal to have a job opportunity. In our country it is not like that. If you know someone with a high position they can help get you a job but here everyone is equal if you have the ability to do the job you can do the job” **Uyghur speaking Women’s group**

- **Increased recognition of healthy and unhealthy relationships**

Participants reported increased capacity to recognise and differentiate healthy and unhealthy relationships in their everyday life.

“Yes, now I can recognise signs and symptoms of an unhealthy relationship. Now it is easy to know for me” **Urdu speaking Women’s group**

“Yes, and we know now how to go out of an unhealthy relationship” **Urdu speaking Women’s group**

“Yes, Always I hear something about the people that don’t have a healthy relationship. I feel so upset. I feel why they do like this. There is a lot of things in Australia. A lot of families like this, fighting. I think it is not good for the kids. Why are they married? Why do they do that?” **Dari speaking Women’s group**

"I now recognise an unhealthy relationship, for example, bullying, financial, and selfish and everything" **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaeen)**

Respondents were able to provide specific examples of unhealthy relationships which included words such as 'jealousy', 'punish' 'forcing', 'controlling behaviors', 'verbal abuse' .

"Some examples of what unhealthy is: "Jealousy, no trust, something that hurts your feelings, something undignified, not being honest to the partner" **Tibetan speaking Women's group**

"An unhealthy relationship is say in the family, your husband forces you to do something. Someone is pushing you, forcing you to do this or that and that is not healthy" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

"Yes, I understood everything about jealous, about a man and control, how he wants to control everything money, the relationship, about the behaviour, about his behaviour. Controlling what you do outside. Going to your family or friends controlling all these things." **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaeen)**

"Yes, I can recognise an unhealthy relationship. if husband might not want me to visit friends and all these things. Yes, I can recognise these things." **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaeen)**

"Yes for example if we don't contact our friend and they ghost us, they ignore us. And if the husband and wife are at home and they ignore each other. You can have verbal abuse, emotional too" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

Data also shows that some participants were able to reflect on their personal life and their understanding of healthy relationships as a result of their participation in the program.

"Yes, like my previous understanding was very traditional. Now I have more details of the unhealthy relationship. Not just between wife and husband, but parents and children, or neighbours or in the community, friendships" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

"Yes, the same thing I do. In few matters I need to improve myself, in few matters maybe with my husband. With some toxic people I need to put my boundaries. The course gave me key points. I need to take it and make my own boundaries" **Urdu speaking Women's group**

- **Increased understanding of financial rights and better management of finances**

The program increased participants' awareness about their financial rights and provided practical information and examples of how to better manage their everyday expenses and finances.

"If your partner or husband is not giving you the money or has taken away the card, you can talk to Centrelink, they might help us, or we can separate our card from our partner. I didn't know this one, I didn't know about financial abuse" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

"..my family comes together, we have a mortgage, the entire family are all working, and what we do is individually pitch in, but at the end of the month we use that money for saving, family fun time and paying the mortgage." **Tibetan speaking Women's group**

" It was very good. We talked about this yesterday, about how to manage expenses, how to cut down what you want, what to do, how to prioritise. But still, I need to do by my own, according to my situation, my circumstances. It was good. We got key points." **Urdu Group**

"I learnt how to make a budget. I understand it is important to have my money and don't give everything to my husband" **Dari speaking Women's group**

"It is also a good information. Now I understand what I can do. The rules are very important for me. One think is a wish, and the other one is the needs. The first this is to give a plan on what is needed for my family, for my house. Also, I understand that it is good to save some money for some emergencies" **Dari speaking Women's group**

"When I get my money the rent is the most important thing to be paid first and then my medication and then for the other things. Like, clothes and water and all these things. **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaean)**

"I know now, how to a budget now, to divide the money. For the rent, electricity bill, money for emergencies." **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaean)**

- **Increased awareness of services available**

As a result of their involvement in the Purple Heart program, participants are more aware of services available to support people who are experiencing FDV, and the availability of interpreters if needed.

"I feel more confident now. When I was pregnant the Doctor gave me the support line if I needed any help and I also watched the news from the SBS about how the victims get abuse. But now I know more about specific support and legal aid, police" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

"We are aware of the services, like 000 or domestic violence helpline." **Tibetan speaking Women's group**

"If we need help, we can contact legal aid, or 1800 RESPECT and another one is 131450 and they can help. You can call police and Centrelink and also the workers at STARTTS" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

"Yes, she gave me a few numbers. For example, If I don't understand English, then I can ask to get translation. But I think I don't need this service now. In relation to domestic violence, I am not in that situation, so I don't need it. So, I could need that service one day." **Urdu speaking Women's group**

"Yes, I got a lot of information about this. I recorded all the services." **Urdu speaking Women's group**

"Yes, I got information about the services I can get from Police, STARTTS and calling to 000." **Dari group**

"Yes, they gave us a lots of contacts numbers, about the Police, about everything." **Dari speaking Women's group**

"At the beginning [the program] "No" but [The facilitator] gave out all these brochures for different organisations." **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaean)**

Yes, it is hard to remember them off the top of your head. Anglicare, Centrelink, Salvation Army. **Mandaean group**

"If it is an emergency though then we have to contact the police on triple 0. And there is 131450 you can call for a translator" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

"I did learn that if you get domestic violence, you can call and get shelter somewhere, there is somewhere you can stay. You don't have to stay and be abused. You can go somewhere" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

Some participants highlighted the need for bilingual support workers that speak the community language so they can feel more comfortable and confident talking to someone.

"For us who do not speak the language, it is important to talk to someone who speaks our language". **Tibetan speaking Women's group**

"Yes, I got all information about support services. A lot of information. I know now that I can talk in my own language. That makes me feel more confident" **Urdu speaking Women's group**

Participants also commented on the importance of seeking support when needed.

"Yes, I learnt it is good to get help, to ask for help." **Urdu speaking Women's group**

"I know if I have problems, I can go to the community centre to get someone to help me. Also, I learnt that sometimes I could try to solve problems first by myself with the family. If it is not good, it is ok to go to somebody that understand and have a positive thinking about me to help me." **Dari speaking Women's group**

"You have to do something with yourself first, sometimes is very dangerous for you not to do something, sometimes it is important not to be quiet, not silence, you have to say something, because it is too much pressure on our body. I think it is very important looking for help, it is better." **Dari speaking Women's group**

- **Increased confidence seeking support from police**

The workshops on the role of the NSW police reinforced participants' confidence to seek support from them. The workshops also reduced negative perceptions of the NSW police in some cases. Participants commented on negative past experiences with police overseas, and found the involvement of NSW police in the project useful. They were able to see the NSW police in a different light and feel more comfortable and confident contacting them for support. They saw police as another service that could help people in situations of vulnerability, such as the case of FDV.

"Back in Tibet it is a very different situation, the Police won't let you speak, even if you are right you are branded like you a wrong, because you are not following what they are saying. In Australia, especially after meeting the MCLC (Multicultural Community Liaison Officer), they feel that they can literally share anything with them. She made us feel comfortable and not to hesitate sharing whatever pain you are going through. That gives you more confidence, and if someone else is facing the issue you have that courage to let the Police know." **Tibetan speaking Women's group**

"I was surprised to understand that you don't need to be scared to call the police. That they are here to help, they are not scary people. But here as long as you don't do illegal things, you don't need to be scared" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

"I feel very comfortable. I learnt I can get help from the Police." **Dari speaking Women's group**

"If I need some help from police, I can call 000 or if I need some translation for me, I have a different number" **Dari speaking Women's group**

"I feel more comfortable to approach the police for support." **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaean)**

"If I need to, then yes, I would go to the police first time. Now I am comfortable because I have done the course. I have more knowledge" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

Some participants still have some resistance in approaching police, as they still feel scared.

"Ah, no (nervous laugh). Because I am scared of them." **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaean)**

"I know the police number, but she is scared." **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaean)**

- **Increased confidence and motivation to support their community and other in situation of FDV**

Findings show that as a result of participation in the program, a number of participants feel more confident and motivated to share what they have learnt and to support other people in the community who may be experiencing FDV.

"Yes, my knowledge increased a lot. I feel powerful now because... you know, Knowledge is power" **Urdu speaking Women's group**

"Before I did this course I always stayed at home. I came to Australia twelve years ago and I stay home and look after my kids. I had no knowledge. Now I have learnt more knowledge. Now I am looking for a job for the first time. There are a lot of rights for women in Australia I think. If we need any help we can contact the domestic violence line" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

"I don't need it for myself, but I always support people. You should help people. I give a lot of information to people. And I talk about this when I get home. I share with my daughter, and she understand" **Dari speaking Women's group**

"For me that I endured domestic violence from my first husband, I know how it feels when someone controls your financial matters and takes that freedom away from you and now, after arriving in Australia, i feels that she is living a completely different life and i can freely practice whatever I feel like and especially attending this. I have a better understanding of when someone controls your money, that is domestic violence. I will try her best to spread the word that even controlling your money is domestic violence." **Tibetan speaking Women's group**

"Although, I haven't endured any domestic violence in my life, these workshops have given me an insight what is domestic violence and how we can assist others who are facing such a crisis" **Tibetan speaking Women's group**

"The information I got from the program. I can talk with my friends and neighbours. I can transfer all this information to them and raise their awareness of DV." **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaean)**

"I have called [the police] when was single and something happened to my neighbour, and I called my friend and she said to call the police. I did and they came and solved the problem...and now from this course I am even more confident, to give the right support to someone else or maybe it is for yourself" **Uyghur speaking Women's group**

- **Improved self-care strategies**

The following quotes indicate that program participants were able to learn about the importance of self-care as a way to look after their physical and mental health and general wellbeing:

"Yes. I want to share something. From my deep heart, in the first two classes, I was feeling crying in this course. I was feeling safe to talk about my personal life. The course was really helpful for me. My tears were just coming out from my eyes. Really, the first two lessons. It is all about the knowledge that got from here, it helped with a few things I was going through. First classes, the facilitator made the question What did you feel when you came to Australia? For me, it is just three years ago I came. So, I didn't even think about it. Two weeks ago, I was at home, and I could think about myself. It was really helpful in this scenario. Who am I? Why am I here? When do I feel happy? When do I miss my family? What is inside me? What is the suffocation inside me? I realised about myself that I am not only a mother, I am a mother, but I am not only the mother. It was helpful. The course helped me to think about all these things." **Urdu speaking Women's group**

"I learnt that it is important to take care of yourself first, then you can take care of others. I am trying to apply this" **Urdu speaking Women's group**

"I learnt that to take care of myself is very important. I learnt I need to be first; I need to be safe, comfortable and feel happy." **Dari speaking Women's group**

"If I am happy, if I am healthy, if I am well, I can help another, I can help my family. If I am not, I can't help another person. And this is the first thing to be happy: taking care of myself. It is about food, exercise, emotions. Changing the country was very stressful for me because I did not know about the rules, about anything. It is very important first to take care of myself. If I don't take care of myself, I can't help another person, especially my family." **Dari speaking Women's group**

"I know now how to take care of myself, I will do everything for herself, not for my husband. husband says, "You are beautiful because I am your husband". NO, I will do it for myself." **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaean)**

Respondents learned practical self-care strategies, and shared other strategies they were already practicing. Some practical examples of self-care strategies brought up by participants are related to visiting and interacting with friends, physical and recreational activities, hobbies, and relaxation activities that give time to themselves.

In the following quotes, participants mentioned activities such as 'walking, dancing, having a bath, massage', 'see my friend and listen to my favourite singers', facial mask, '[wear a] beautiful dresses', 'going shopping', 'I do yoga', have regular skin care and have a coffee', '15 min just for myself', 'excursion with a group', 'exercise and sport'.

"Sharing your pain with others" **Tibetan speaking Women's group**

“We learnt a lot, especially that day we did the masks for ourselves! We talked about how to release stress at home, with walking, dancing, having a bath, massage. We got ideas. It’s really helpful. We talked to each other here, we learnt from each other by talking. We exchanged ideas” **Uyghur speaking Women’s group**

“More time to give to myself now. Being happy and go and see my friend and listen to my favourite singers. Drink tea and have conversations, go out. Here we did the facial mask here – it was very good! Last week we came in beautiful dresses it is feeling confident and better” **Uyghur speaking Women’s group**

“I like going shopping, if I’m not happy, I relax when I go shopping. I can do massage or a bath. I know more now from the course. Women have to self-care cause we have kids and are busy” **Uyghur speaking Women’s group**

“The other day we were discussing about this and sharing how we do self-care at home. Mine was my massage chair I bought. The others all want to come to my place! I do yoga. Others do dancing, listening to music and I thought I would try that. Some go for a drive and leave everything behind. I am thinking to have regular skin care and have a coffee” **Uyghur speaking Women’s group**

“Yes, in one session the facilitator asked me to tell one thing you did yesterday for yourself. And I was really thinking... is there anything I did for myself? So, now I want to do it every day. Maybe it is just a cup of coffee, maybe it is just a shower, so I want to give a few times, maybe 15 min just for myself. It is good. A second important thing is that this is not wrong. If I am taking a cup of coffee, it is not wrong. If I am taking a 15 min shower it is not wrong. That’s ok. No guilt feelings” **Urdu speaking Women’s group**

“When sometimes I am stressed, I go to the yoga class, I do some movements, walking, talking, I get a positive energy from another person like my friends.” **Dari speaking Women’s group**

“The health is important. If you are not healthy, you can’t do anything. Yoga for example. Yoga is giving me life. Now I am happy, I am active, I am healthy. I lost my husband and then I lost my mum. When I started Yoga, yoga gave me life.” **Dari speaking Women’s group**

‘I went on an excursion with a group, so I participate with other groups, all the time. Last time I went to Moree.’ **Arabic speaking Women’s group (Mandaean)**

“Exercise and sport. I want to do yoga, not online, face to face. I want the program to continue, you are all good faces. Happy smiling, and I get out of the house. **Arabic speaking Women’s group (Mandaean)**

“Now I take care of myself. Like going outside and doing some exercise and yoga and healthy food.” **Arabic speaking Women’s group (Mandaean)**

- **Feedback about the Program**

Some participants provided general feedback about the program and thanked STARTTS for facilitating it. They used expressions such as ‘*This course is very good, fantastic*’, ‘*STARTTS helped me a lot*’, ‘*We learnt a lot in the course*’, ‘*I am so glad that I attended to this course...*’, ‘*The course was very helpful*’, ‘*I feel really lucky after doing this course...*’, ‘*my knowledge increased a lot*’.

*“STARTTS helped me a lot. This course is very good, fantastic. Specially for people that is coming new. I know how they feel. When I came to Australia, I didn’t know anything.” **Dari speaking Women’s group***

*“We learnt a lot in the course, and we learnt a lot from others. We learnt what to do in some situations, how to deal with them, we learnt how to help others. We enjoyed a lot the course, it was very attractive.” **Urdu speaking Women’s group***

*“I am so glad that I attended to this course because, I learnt so much. Before I did not realise that some scenarios are domestic violence. Now I know. During the course, we got many resources, we discuss many scenarios and learnt a lot of strategies to act in a domestic violence case. The course was very helpful. Now I know how to act and how to help in a safe way.” **Urdu speaking Women’s group***

*“Thank you very much for this program, it is very good. I want to continue with this program, and I want to provide for other women to raise their awareness for domestic violence” **Arabic speaking Women’s group (Mandaeen)***

Participants also valued the connection with other women and felt supported through the program. The Urdu speaking Women’s group highlighted the importance of the program being delivered in their community language, and the provision of food and child care for their kids while they were in the sessions:

“When you talk to the people, you feel at that point... Oh, she is also doing the same thing, she is also going through the same. It was good for me. Sharing stories, same culture, same language”

“It was really good this course was done in our own language. I really appreciate this”

“The food was very good and, it was very important also that we got the childcare, because otherwise we couldn’t come to attend the course. It is good you provided all this. Thanks a lot, to all coordinators that made this possible. The course was really helpful.”

“Yes, we got lots of information. It was important that we are the same culture, and the course was in our own language.”

- **Suggestions for future implementation of the program**

Some participants also provided feedback about how the program could be improved in the future. They emphasised that a longer program with more sessions would allow them to go deeper into some topics and learn more. Others would like the program to continue, and to include other topics such as how to handle FDV situations at home before asking for outside help; how to deal with teenagers at home; how to protect themselves in a violent situation, and; how to find jobs and how to reduce social isolation.

*“The course is great. I would like if it could be a little bit deeper. Maybe instead of 6 weeks the course could be ten or twelve weeks long” **Urdu speaking Women’s group***

*"I hope this program will continue, it is very good, and, I have got a lot of information from this program. **Arabic speaking Women's group (Mandaean)***

*"This course could improve if it includes more information for new migrants, because they don't know about anything. It is good that people come and listen about the rules, about the different type of topics." **Dari speaking Women's group***

*"The course was very good. I would like to have more time to discuss some topics more in detail. For example, it would be really good if we do one module in two days." **Urdu speaking Women's group***

*"I would like that the course gives more information about what to do before looking for help, I mean before go to call the phone numbers we got here. I would like to know more how to handle the situation at home first, before asking help outside" **Urdu speaking Women's group***

*"I would like to attend more courses to talk more, to share more. There are many women who don't know about this. Personally, I would like to learn how to deal with teenagers at home" **Urdu speaking Women's group***

*"The course was wonderful. I learnt a lot. I changed a lot. I would like to go deeper in one topic, in how to protect ourselves in a violent situation." **Dari speaking Women's group***

*"I would like to know more about how to find jobs and how to escape from isolation." **Urdu speaking Women's group***

One participant recommended the program include one-to-one support:

*"Also, it would be great if, after the course, someone could help in one-to-one situations. Maybe a lot of people like me want to talk more about personal aspects" **Urdu speaking Women's group***

5. Conclusion

Overall, the evaluation results show positive outcomes for the FICT Purple Hearts program. A total of 50 women from different cultures backgrounds participated in the 6 week program during the second trimester of 2022.

Participants learned about Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) and its impact on the health and general wellbeing of the people subjected to it, including family members, and especially children. Additionally, participants increased their awareness of the importance of boundaries and how to set them, and learned about some mechanisms of protection, such as the Apprehended Violence Order (AVO).

Respondents reported a better understanding of their rights after participation in the program and showed a better understanding and recognition of healthy and unhealthy relationships. This encouraged some participants to reflect on their own personal life and relationships. Furthermore, participants were able to learn about the importance of self-care as a way to look after their physical and mental health and wellbeing, and had the opportunity to learn and share practical self-care strategies with each other.

As a result of the involvement in the Purple Heart program, participants are more aware of services available to support people who are experiencing FDV, and the importance of seeking support when needed. They also increased their awareness of their financial rights and how to manage their everyday expenses and finances better.

The workshops on NSW police increased participants' confidence to seek support from them, and reduced negative perceptions of police gained from past experiences with police overseas. Findings also show that despite the project efforts, some participants still reported some resistant to approach the police. This may indicates that further work is needed to increase the confidence of migrants and refugee women to seek support from the police.

The evaluation findings also show that participants feel confident and motivated to share what they have learnt in the program with others. They also feel more confident in supporting other people in the community who are experiencing FDV. Additionally, participants valued the connection with other women, the delivery of the program in their own community language and the provision of food and child care for their kids while they were in the sessions. Some common comments about the program were *'This course is very good, fantastic'*, *'STARTTS helped me a lot'*, *'We learnt a lot in the course'*, *'I am so glad that I attended to this course...'*, *'The course was very helpful'*, *'I feel really lucky after doing this course...'*, *'my knowledge increased a lot'*.

When analysing the WHO-5, findings show overall positive progress in the general wellbeing of respondents as a result of their participation in FICT Purple Hearts program. It indicates a 15 point difference in percentage scores, which represents a clinically significant change. There was also an overall increase of 25% between pre and post scores of subjective wellbeing. This increase suggests an overall improvement in sleep patterns, reduction of stress levels and positive changes in mood of respondents, as they feel more active, energetic and positive.

Scores below 10 suggest low or poor wellbeing and further screening for depression and intervention. Consequently it is suggested for 36% of respondents based on comparison of individual percentage scores for pre and post WHO-5. Low scores may be explained by different factors associated with the

short term intervention of the program and the focus of the program on increasing knowledge, awareness and confidence of respondents about FDV rather than aiming to be a therapeutic setting.

Finally, the program received some suggestions for future improvement. Participants emphasised that a longer program with more sessions would allow them to go deeper into some topics and learn more. Some participants specified they would like the program to continue, and include topics such as: how to handle FDV situation at home before asking for outside help; how to deal with teenagers at home; how to protect themselves in a violent situation; how to find jobs, and; how reduce social isolation. A participant also recommended including one-to-one support as part of the program objectives.

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