

## Suicide Prevention Among Culturally Varied Populations

In 2015, the Greater Boston Regional Suicide Prevention Coalition (GBRSPC) and the Connection Lab teamed up with several organizations and agencies in the Boston area, including Riverside Trauma Center, to conduct focus group research with various cultural groups. The goals were to: 1) learn more about the perceptions of suicide across different cultural groups, 2) learn more about the cultural supports available in communities, 3) better understand the prevention needs of particular communities, 4) learn about the similarities/differences across cultures in terms of help-seeking, and 5) learn how to better serve diverse communities.

Six focus groups were conducted with community members from and professionals serving **Asian** (including both Asian-born and Asian-American), **Haitian** (including both Haitian-born and Haitian-American), and **Latino** (born in Spanish-speaking countries or identifying as Latino or Hispanic) communities. Focus group findings that were common across the three cultural groups include:

- The need to normalize mental health concerns and create safe spaces to discuss these concerns
- The need for information about mental health treatments and how they work
- The level of respect or understanding that immigrants feel for their children's experiences with depression or suicide can be shaped by their own difficult experiences in their country of origin
- Being marginalized linguistically and culturally can cause significant challenges in accessing quality care

Riverside Trauma Center is actively involved with the GBRSPC. We have held these focus groups so far in 2016: one with the Muslim community and one with the Brazilian community, which has experienced a significant number of recent suicides. Joanna Bridger, LICSW, our Clinical Services Director, along with other members of the coalition, co-presented the 2015 findings and the preliminary findings from 2016 at the 2016 Massachusetts Department of Public Health Suicide Prevention Conference in April.

Reports on the GBRSPC focus group findings are available from the Massachusetts Coalition for Suicide Prevention website <http://www.masspreventsuicide.org/greater-boston/>.