

# Integrating Immigrants into Canadian Society: Psychological and Cultural Considerations

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# Importance of Evidence-Based Practice



# Importance of Evidence-Based Practice



# Psychological Considerations



# Psychological Considerations: Difficult Questions

- Is it ethical for us to directly ask children about their experiences of war?
- What about their parents?
- Would we be creating a scenario where either children or parents would re-experience their trauma?
- If yes, how do we balance the goal of understanding the influence of trauma on development while simultaneously protecting our participants?

# Psychological Considerations: So much “change” ...



- Likely to result in behavioural problems (short-term)
- Some children will adjust more quickly than others
- What can we do to help?
- Introduce “change” slowly
- One of the benefits of the H.appi camp

# Psychological Considerations: Behavioural Problems

- Impact of trauma is likely to manifest as behavioural problems ranging from inattention, dissociation, temper tantrums, etc.
- What can we do to help?
- Preparation and patience!
- Appeal to cognitive and behavioural therapies
- Reinforcement learning

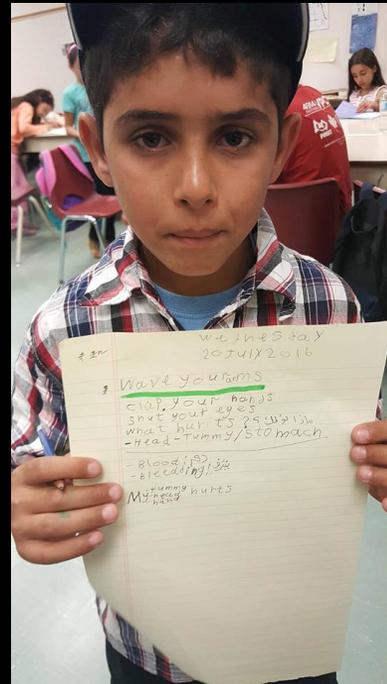
# Diversity in Values and Norms

- Values and cultural norms of immigrants differ from Canadian society
- Appreciation of this diversity is a key factor in promoting healthy communities
- Embrace and emphasize similarities
- Concept of diversity AND unity



# Cultural Considerations: Communication with Families

- Language was a barrier
- Had Arabic speaking camp counsellors
- **BUT one of the goals of the camp was to promote English Language and Literacy skills**



# Cultural Considerations: Difficult Questions

- Some parents don't want research assistants to ask their daughters any questions.
- Some of our questions were supposed to be directed at the mothers (re pregnancy), but fathers often answered the questions on their behalf.
- How do we "handle" that situation?
- Initially, the boys and girls in the camp were reluctant to interact with one another.
- What do we do about that?

# Cultural Considerations: Dealing with Parents

- Obtaining informed consent!
- **Discussing** cultural differences **directly but tactfully** with both parents
- Preparing them for the fact that their children and families will face cultural variation from what they have been accustomed to
- Emphasizing the importance of adjustment while ***maintaining*** their cultural values

# Cultural Considerations: Dealing with Children at the Camp

- Administered workshops to discuss:
  1. Gender equality
  2. Racial equality
  3. Respect and tolerance
  4. Conflict Resolution
  5. Bullying
  6. Building friendships and making connections



# Thank you!!

