

Barriers and Facilitators to Accessing Community Mental Health Services for Immigrant Youth

A dark blue diagonal graphic element that starts from the bottom left corner and extends towards the top right corner, creating a triangular shape on the right side of the slide.

Introduction

Community – University Partnership

2011

Pathways to Prosperity Funding

Healthy Welcoming Communities Created by Immigrant Youth

- Meetings with families and youth
- Lori-Ann Brown, Michaela Burgeos, MA Theses

2013

UWO Innovation in Graduate Education Funding

Perspectives on Cross Cultural Counselling

- Projects for cross-cultural counselling: 1) mental health, 2) bullying
- Reports, proposals and agency presentations

Community – University Partnership

2016

Cultural Identity for Adolescent Muslim Immigrants

- Sharlini Yogasingam, MA Thesis

2017

Hello Neighbour Evaluation

Settlement Experiences of Syrian Refugees

- *Neighborhood-based community development to enhance housing support for Syrian Refugees (P2P conference)*
- Jennifer Perkins, MA Thesis

2018

- Sheffy Bayhee, Needs and Challenges of Female Syrian Refugees

Current Project

2019

Pathways to Prosperity Funding

Barriers and facilitators to community mental health services for immigrant youth

- Charlotte Carrie, RA, MA Thesis

Introduction: Statistics

Mental Health

- 1 in every 2 Canadians have, or have had, a mental illness
- 70% have onset in childhood/adolescence

Immigration

- 250,000 new immigrants annually

Introduction: Trends

Immigrants and Refugees: Similarities and Differences Regarding Health and Wellness

- Both face particular challenges which risk their mental health
- Both face increasing rates of mental health problems & psychotic disorders
- Refugees have lower levels of health & wellness = more likely to suffer from mental illness

The Numbers

- Most coming as economic immigrants, followed by sponsored immigrants and then refugees

Mid-Sized Central Canadian City

- 22% of London population are immigrants
- 20.6% have a non-official mother tongue
- Majority live in Southwest region

Why is it Important That Immigrants Have Access to Mental Health Services?

- Same reasons as everyone else
- Unique experience of immigrating

Literature Review

- Mental health vs mental illness
- Issues affecting the mental health of immigrant youth
- Mental health services for youth
- Who is accessing mental health services
- Barriers to immigrant youth accessing mental health services

Justification for Project

Question:

What are the barriers and facilitators that immigrant youth face in accessing mental health services?

Gap:

- Current
- Local
- Mixed method approach
- Multiple Viewpoints

Research Questions:

Youth Questions:

1. What are the mental health stressors you face?
2. What are the mental health supports you have?
3. What would stop you from talking to someone about mental health stress?
4. What would make it easier to talk to someone about mental health stress?

South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre

South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre



Serving the Residents of South London, Ontario through a wide-range of programs and services for all ages

Newcomer Settlement Services

Information & Orientation:

- Intake/Needs Assessment/ Referral Services
- Orientation to Ontario (O2O)
- Orientation to Canada (O2C)


Welcoming Communities:


- Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)
- Library Settlement Partnership (LSP)
Citizenship Information Sessions with CNC services
- Adult Community Connections
- Youth Community Connections
- Youth Mentorship

Welcome to Canada
What you should know

www.cic.gc.ca



 Citizenship and Immigration Canada / Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada

Canada 



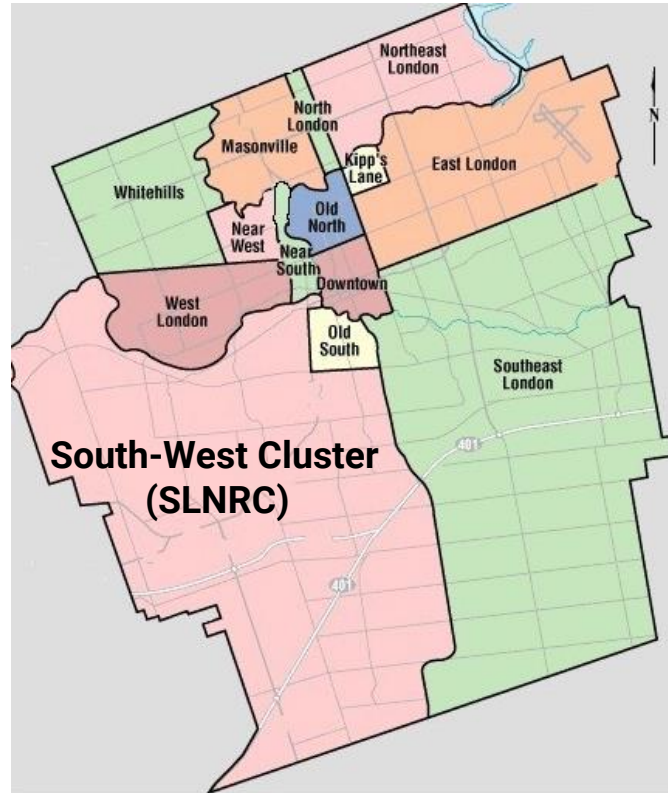
Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

SWIS – London Cluster MAP

SWIS Program
9 SWIS Workers

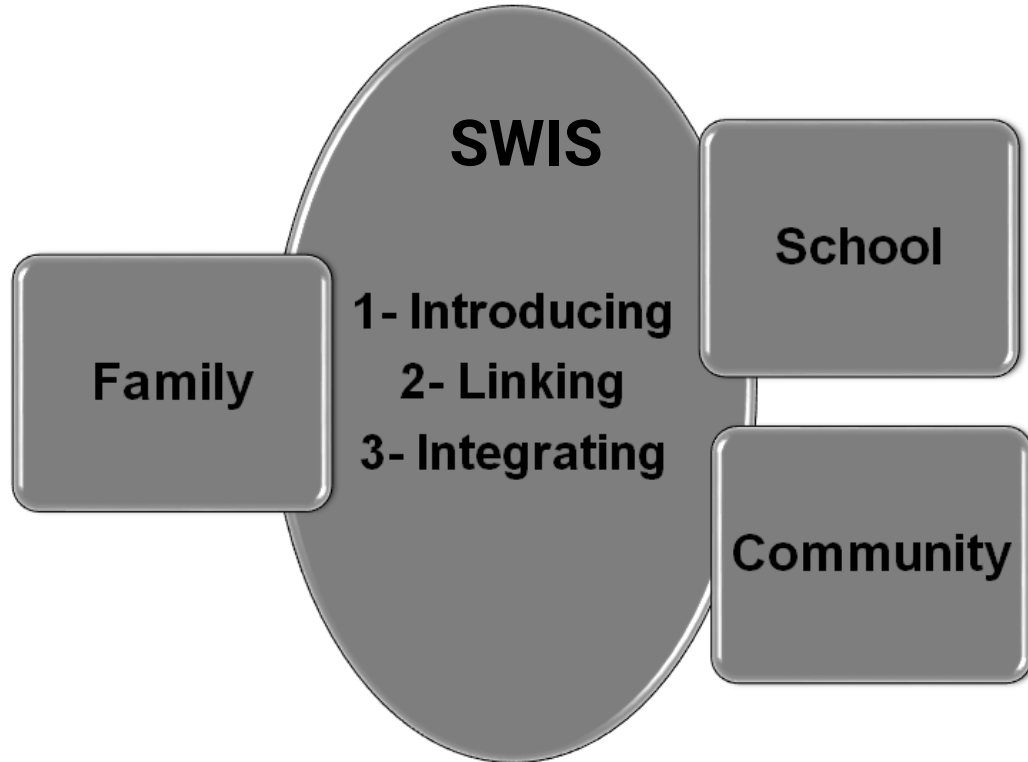
TVDSB & LDCSB
27 Schools
16 TVDSB
11 LDCSB



Settlement Worker in Schools (SWIS)

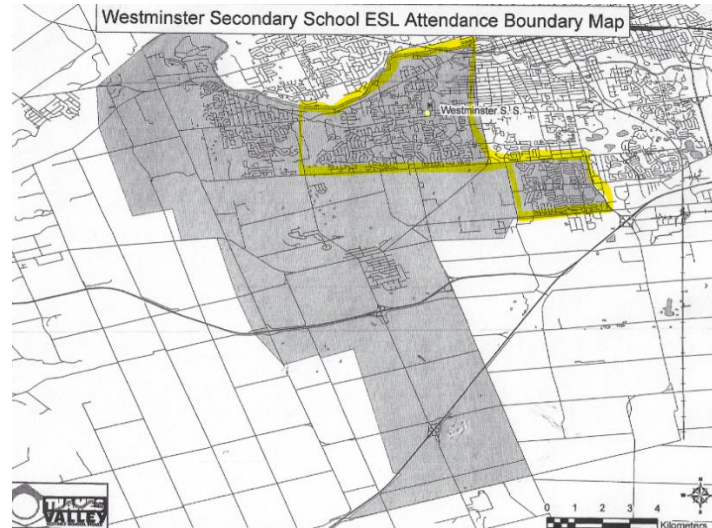
- Provide Needs Assessment & Orientation
- Provide Information & Referral
- Facilitate group information sessions
- Collaborate with school staff
- Facilitate constructive and culturally-sensitive communication
- Support newcomer families in the integration process
- Provide leadership opportunities
- Provide Newcomers with help to establish Social and Professional Networks (so they are ENGAGED & FEEL WELCOMED)

Settlement Worker in Schools (SWIS)



Westminster Secondary School

A magnet school for newcomer youth



- Westminster S.S. is not a neighbourhood school in the traditional sense
- Youth ages 15-24 account for 11.7% of South London population (2016 Census)

Westminster's changing Demographics

2009-2010

Student population: 868

ESL : 102 (11.75%)

ELD population: NA

2019-2020

Student population: 692

ESL : 134 (19.4%)

ELD population: 77 (11%)

ESL: English as a Second Language

ELD: English Language Development

Youth refugees unique experience

- Families displaced for prolonged periods
- Formal schooling has been disrupted
- May have limited literacy & numeracy skills in their first language
- Many have been working to support family
- Some experienced Trauma or display PTSD
- Many Lack certain social skills that can support a smooth transition
- Group dynamics (Collective vs Individualistic)

Challenges observed

- Difficulty concentrating and staying focused
- Difficulty sitting for prolonged periods of time
- Difficulty following instructions/classroom routines
- Difficulty abiding by the rules
- Lack of Self-control & self-regulation (impulsive)
- Experience physical symptoms (headaches/ low energy...)
- Inflict Self harm
- conflicts/altercations

Signs & symptoms of trauma specific to youth refugees

- Withdrawal and lack of interest in usual activities
- Decreased attention and concentration
- Decline in school performance
- Irritability
- Aggressive and diminished impulse control
- Lack of trust
- Substance use
- Sleep disturbances
- Suicidal thoughts

Determinants of Mental Health

Examples of risk & protective factors that affect refugees

RISK FACTORS

- Pre-existing mental health problems
- Low socio-economic status
- Social isolation
- Language Proficiency
- Experiences of discrimination

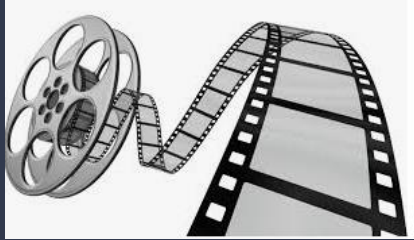
PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Economic Security
- Access to support services
- Educational opportunities
- Supportive Family
- Participation in community groups

Addressing social & emotional needs of Immigrant Youth

- Establish relationship/ personal connections
- Provide a safe space to share concerns
- Eliminate barriers to participation
- Provide leadership opportunities
- Promote social inclusion/ community engagement
- Address changes in Behavior/Engage parents
- Help youth develop social-emotional skills:
 - Relational Skills
 - Emotional self-regulation
 - Self-concept

Youth perspective on Mental Health



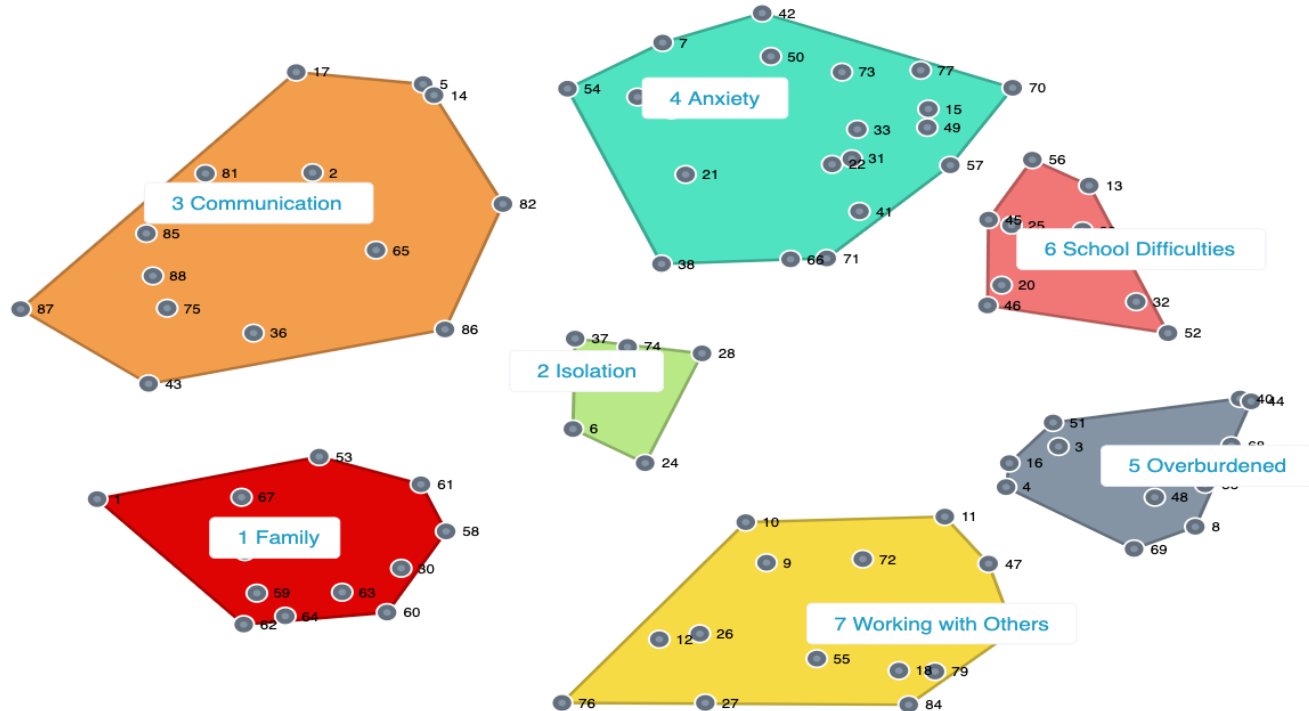
Activity

Discussion

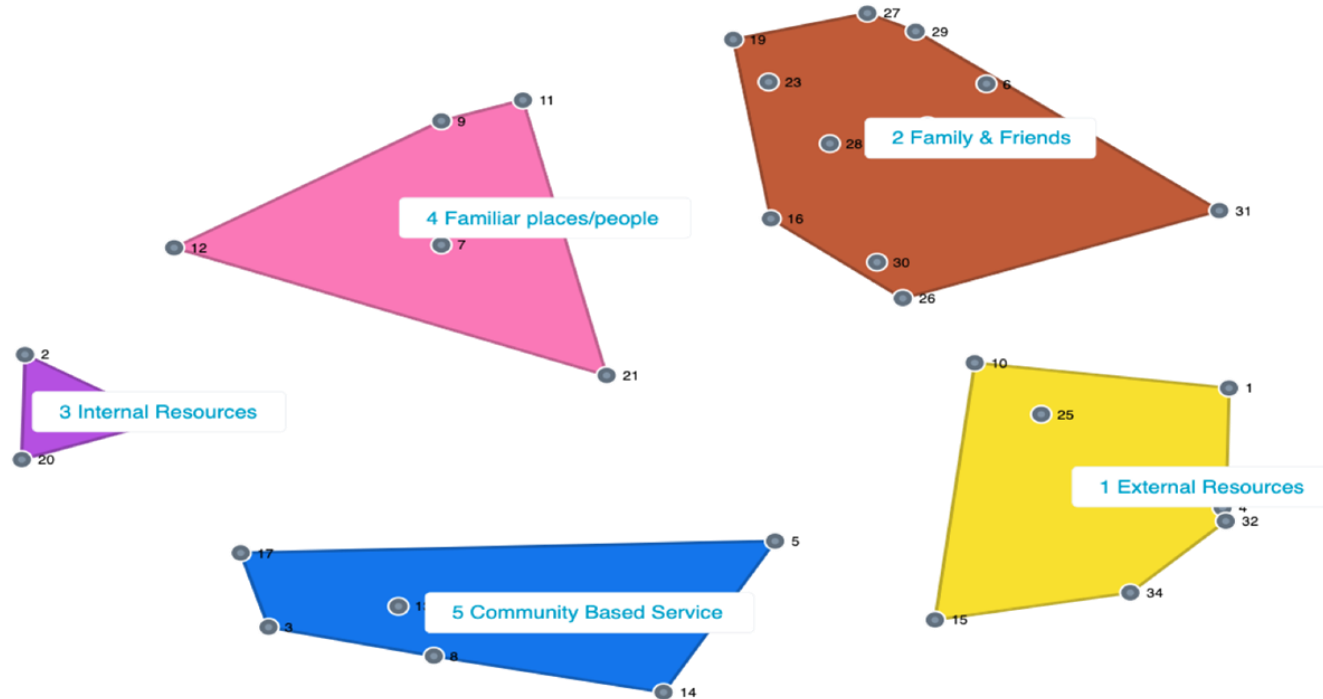
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2. What are the mental health supports immigrant youth have?
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4. What would make it easier for youth to talk to someone about mental health stress?

Results & Comparison

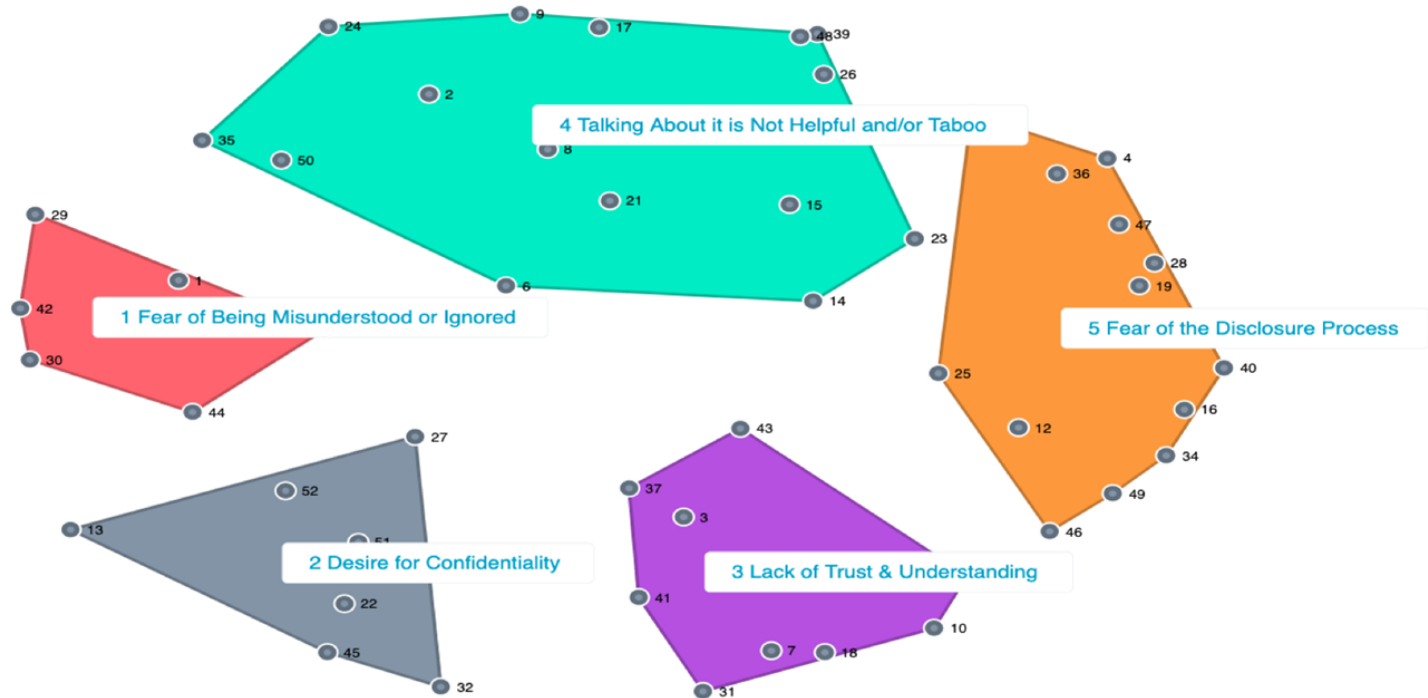
Map 1: What are the mental health stressors you face?



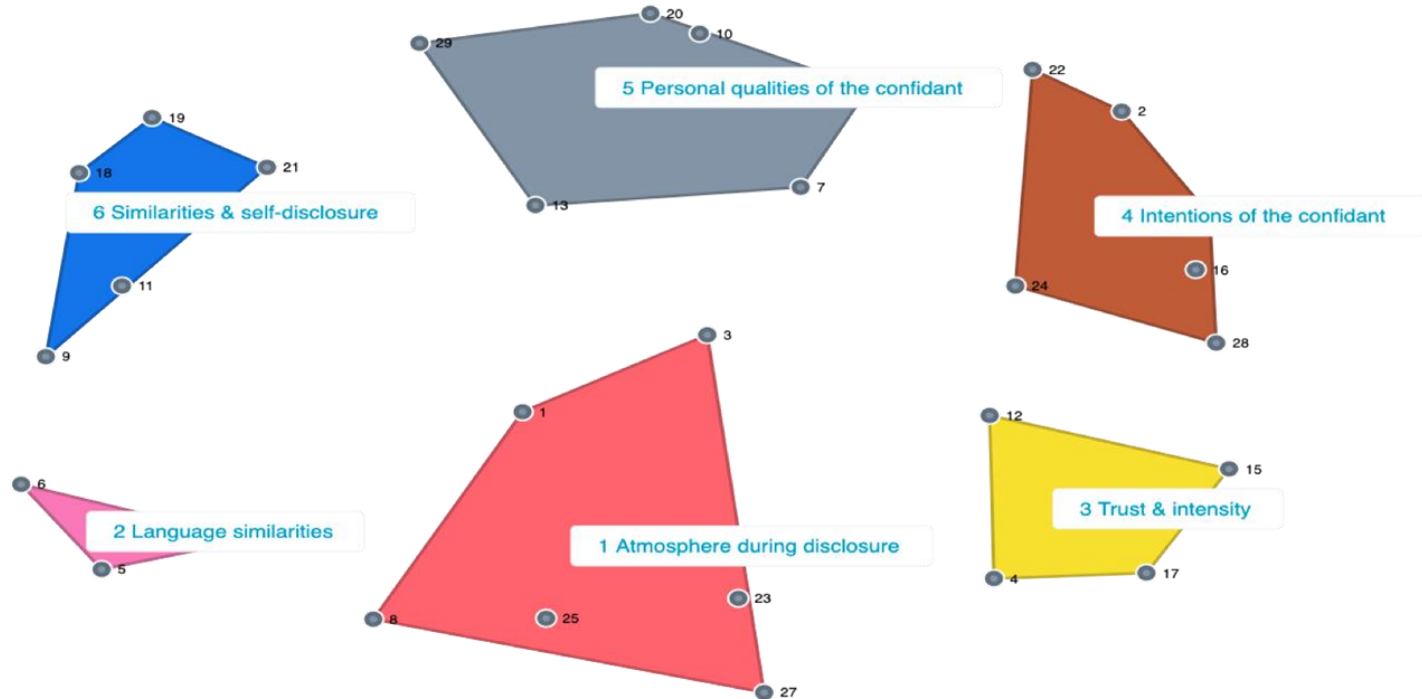
Map 2: What are the mental health supports you have?



Map 3: What would stop you from talking to someone about mental health stress?



Map 4: What would make it easier to talk to someone about mental health stress?



Discussion

Implications:

What can be done to address & improve the gap in mental health services for immigrant youth?
(e.g. access, competency of services etc.)

Questions?
Comments?