



Bridging Barriers to Newcomer Mental Health



Programs:

- Settlement Services
- LINC/ESL Classes
- Care for Newcomer Children
- Job Search & Skills Training
- Community Connections
 - Adult, Seniors, Mentorship & Youth Services
- Robertson Hall Banquet Facilities
- Annual Niagara Folk Arts Festival

A background image showing a person's hand pointing at a screen. The person is wearing a white button-down shirt. The image is partially obscured by a white and blue graphic overlay in the bottom right corner.

NFAMC

Niagara Folk Arts
Multicultural Centre

Overview

1. Project Background and Model
2. Defining Anti-Stigma
3. Project Results (Environmental Scan & Program Data)
4. Next Steps and Recommendations



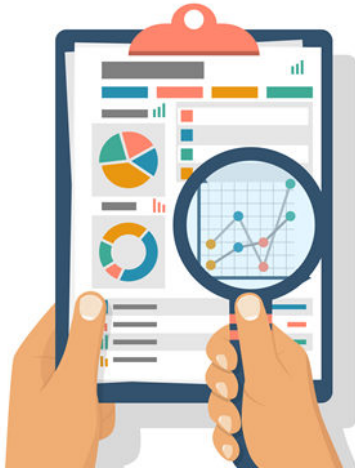
Project Background

- **Provincially funded 1 year pilot project**
- **Purpose:** provide initial mental health support for newcomers in Niagara region that experience language and other social barriers to accessing services. Our aim was to bridge the cultural gaps that currently exist in health services within the region and provide a gateway for clients to access long-term or medical mental health attention if needed
- **Challenges :** reports of extremely low rates of mental health service utilization/ access by newcomer population
- **Plan and Execution:** strategically formed evaluation plan to allow for identification of needs, systematic gaps, barriers and outline requirements/ methodology for best practice



Project Model

Emphasis on Research



Private Counselling



Educational Programs



Social Support Activities



Defining Anti-Stigma

- “As people become more educated, stigma will decrease” common sense?
- **Behaviour** is what needs to change (not attitudes)
 - “Rolling horizon” approach
 - Targeted specific messaging
 - Rethinking, reworking, myth busting
 - Part on-going work



Anti-Stigma Campaign

WHAT IS STIGMA?

SURVEYS → MISCONCEPTIONS

MENTAL HEALTH



VOCABULARY

RESILIENCE

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES



Environmental Scan

Needs Identified by the Agencies



Training for staff specific to newcomer services



Introduced /improved cultural sensitivity training



Multilingual staff/Multilingual Programs



Resources available specific to the newcomer population

Barriers as Identified by Niagara-based Agencies



Barriers:



Funding



Language



Housing



Limited social
groups



Translation
services



Accessibility



Fear

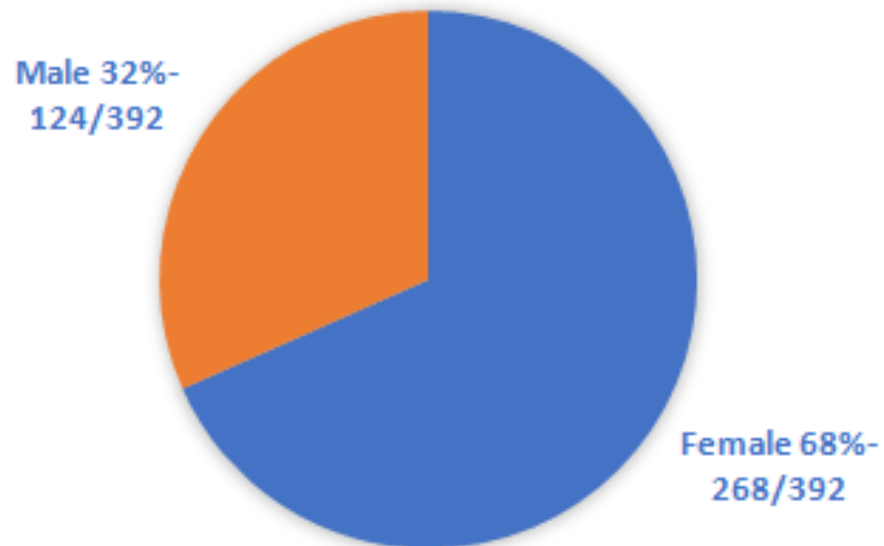
(NFAMC Environmental Scan, 2018)



Program Data

Data Collection from the Newcomer Mental Health Pilot Project

PERCENTAGE OF MALE/FEMALE CLIENTS



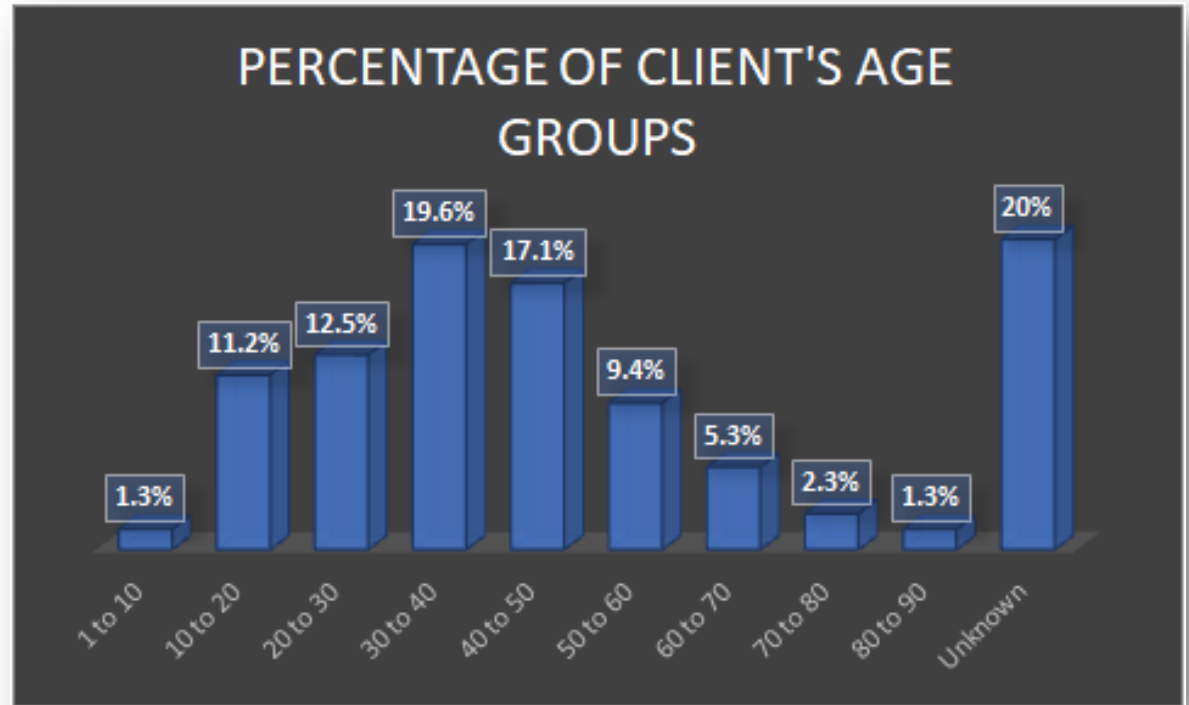
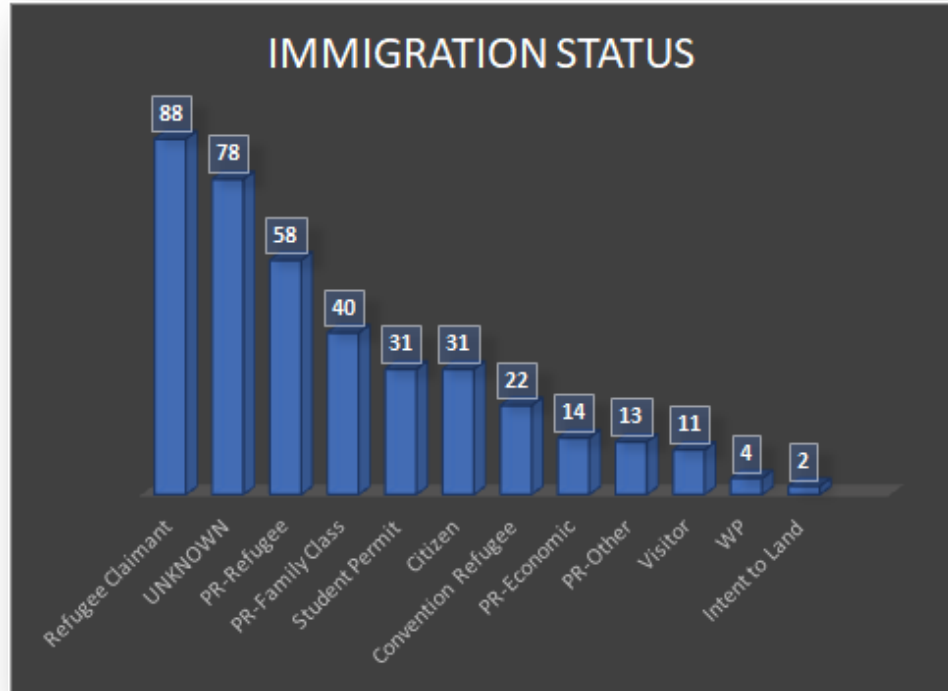
Total Clients Served: 392

Total served in one-on-one sessions: 131

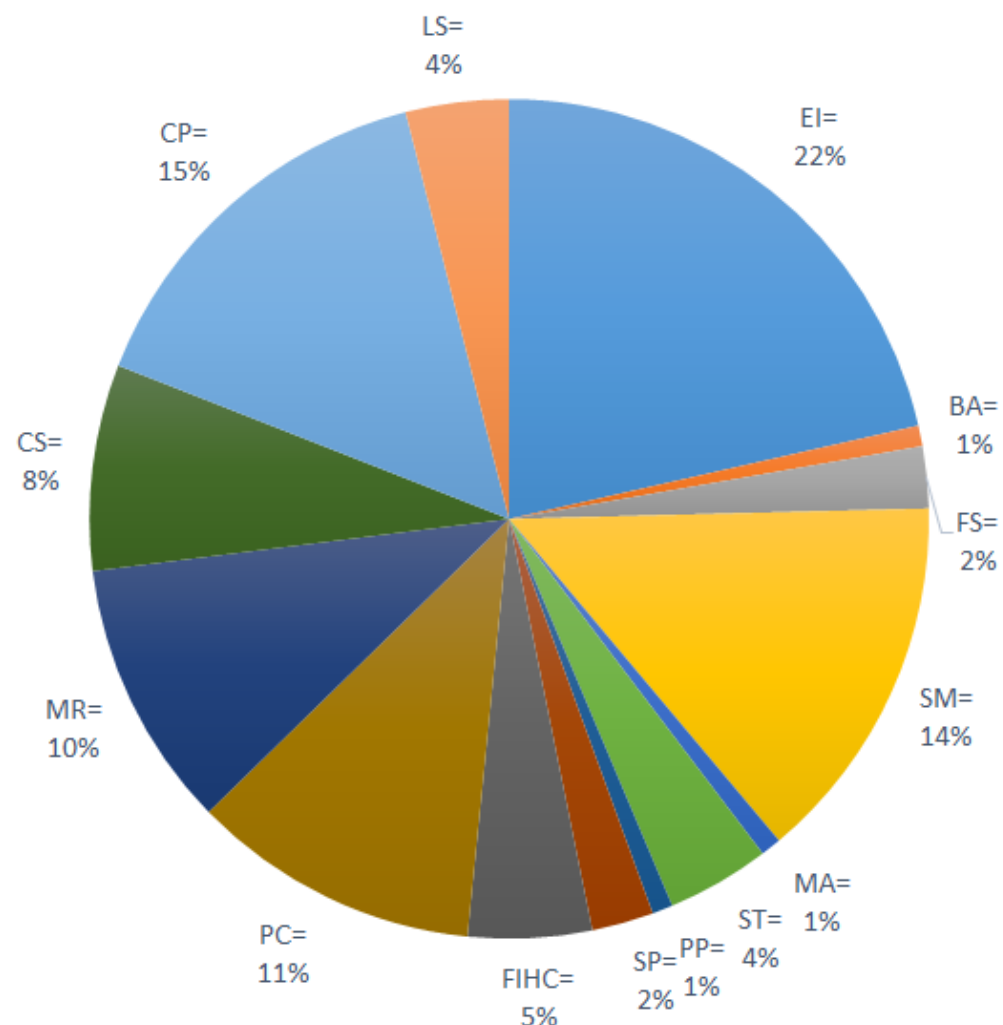
Total Visits for group activities and one-on-one sessions: 833



Demographics



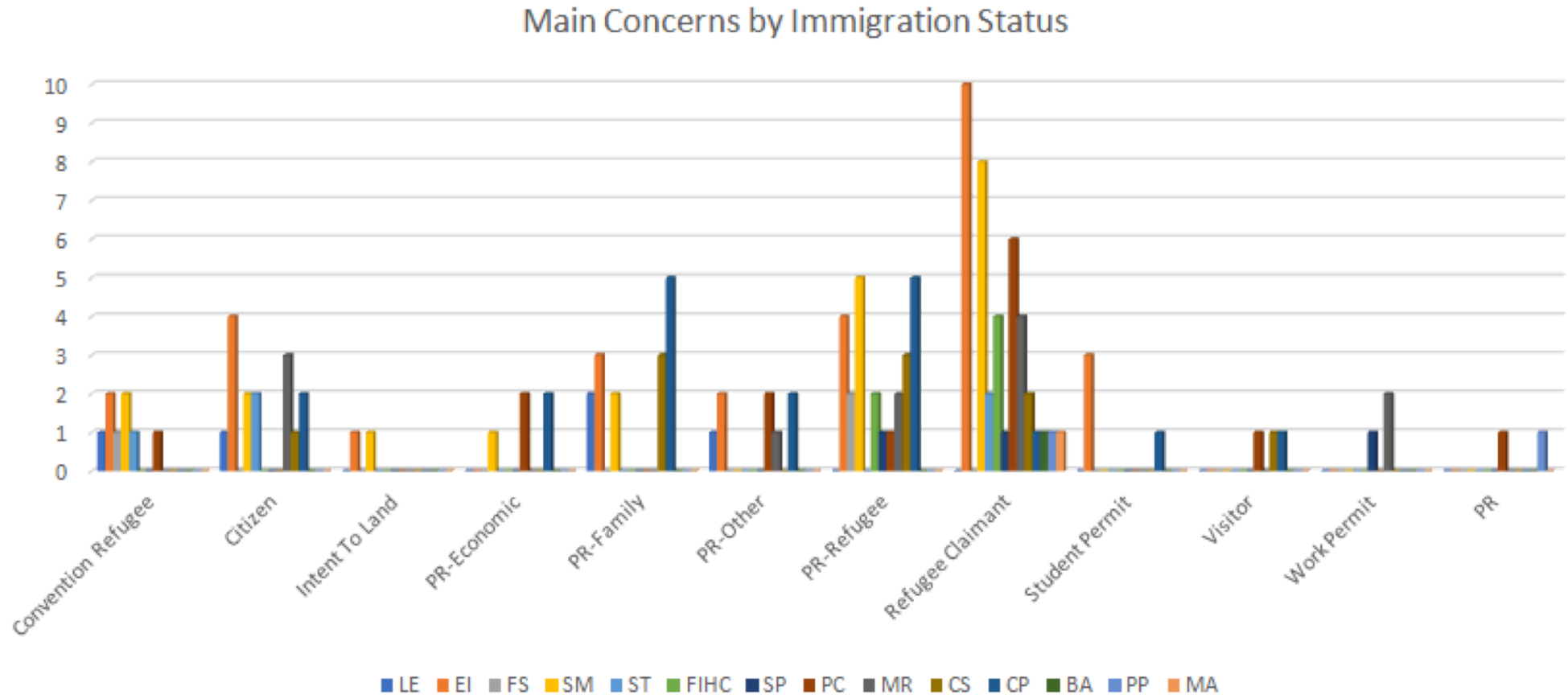
Percentage of Main Concerns



- Emotional Issues
- Behaviour Adjustment
- Family Support
- Stress management
- Migratory Adjustment
- Suicidal Thoughts
- Physical Problems
- Sleep Problems
- Families in home country
- Parenting Concerns
- Marriage Relationship
- Communication Skills
- Career Planning
- Learning Skills



Main Concerns by Immigration Status



Newcomer Mental Health Pilot Project: Emerging Best Practices

Five Key Learnings & Success Factors:

- a) Service in first language
- b) Anti-stigma campaign
- c) Support services (childcare & transportation)
- d) Culturally-informed social support activities
- e) Community space vs. institutional space



Recommendations

1.Support approaches to promoting migrant wellbeing across systems including: health, social services, settlement, education etc. through developing, enhancing and coordinating partnerships between sectors

2.Support integrated community-based mental health services that :

- a) Address social determinants of migrant mental health
- b) Are gender/life stage sensitive
- c) Recognize both challenges and resilience of diverse groups of migrants

3.Support education/training towards:

- a) Providing public education campaigns that are directed at diverse groups of migrants on the mental health system (acute and community-based services) and how to access them appropriately
- b) Provide education to health and social service providers as well as students on culturally competent mental health promotion



Recommendations

4. Support policies that remove barriers to economic and social integration of newcomers (for example : through recognition of education and training)

5. Support longitudinal and comparative research of migrant mental health that considers multiple determinants of well-being through interdisciplinary approaches and community-academia alliances



Future Directions – Broad Spectrum

- Breaking down silos between government, arts, NGOs and business community
- Role of social enterprises
- System inequalities in funding portfolios
- Social isolation impact on equity seeking groups



THANK YOU!

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