

# STABILIZING THE BAND AID

NAVIGATING NATIONAL CHALLENGES THROUGH  
CREATIVE SOLUTIONS IN ADDRESSING CANADA'S  
UNIQUE REFUGEE POPULATION NEEDS



NATIONAL GAR CASE MANAGEMENT  
CLIENT SUPPORT SERVICES (CSS)

Coordinated by:  
Coordonné par:



Funded by:



Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship Canada

Financé par :

Immigration, Réfugiés  
et Citoyenneté Canada

# Stabilizing the band aid

## Navigating national challenges through creative solutions in addressing Canada's unique refugee population needs

This session will discuss challenges and barriers experienced by the following GAR profiles and offer creative solutions SPOs have implemented to facilitate a positive resettlement experience:

- Single mother GAR clients
- Minor GAR clients (who are also head of household)
- Clients with disabilities



# Stabilizing the band aid

## Navigating national challenges through creative solutions in addressing Canada's unique refugee population needs

**The CSS intensive case management approach: National trends from CSS**

**Mehreen Nayani, *Program Manager, Client Support Services - YMCA GTA, Toronto, ON.***

**The Refugee Health Conundrum: An Analytical and Proactive Approach to Addressing the needs and challenges of unique GAR profiles**

**Hanaa Elkolaly, *Case Manager and TVIC Committee Chair, London Cross Cultural Learner Centre, London, ON.***

**A Helping Hand: A Solution focused Approach to Accommodate the needs of GARs with Physical, Mental and Cognitive Disabilities**

**Lina Abbas, *Program Manager, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, Calgary, AB.***



# THE CSS INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT APPROACH

## NATIONAL TRENDS FROM CSS



### Introduction: The CSS Approach

- Program objectives & outcomes



### Data Collection

- How do we collect data?



### Key Findings

- National trends across the CSS network



Client Support Services (CSS) is a nationwide program providing specialized settlement services to meet the complex needs of Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) in their first 12 to 24 months of resettlement in Canada.



# 27 SERVICE PROVIDERS



## COORDINATION TEAM



(YMCA GTA)

## PARTNER

## ORGANISATIONS



Coordinated  
Approach &  
Standardization

FUNDED BY:



IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES  
AND CITIZENSHIP CANADA

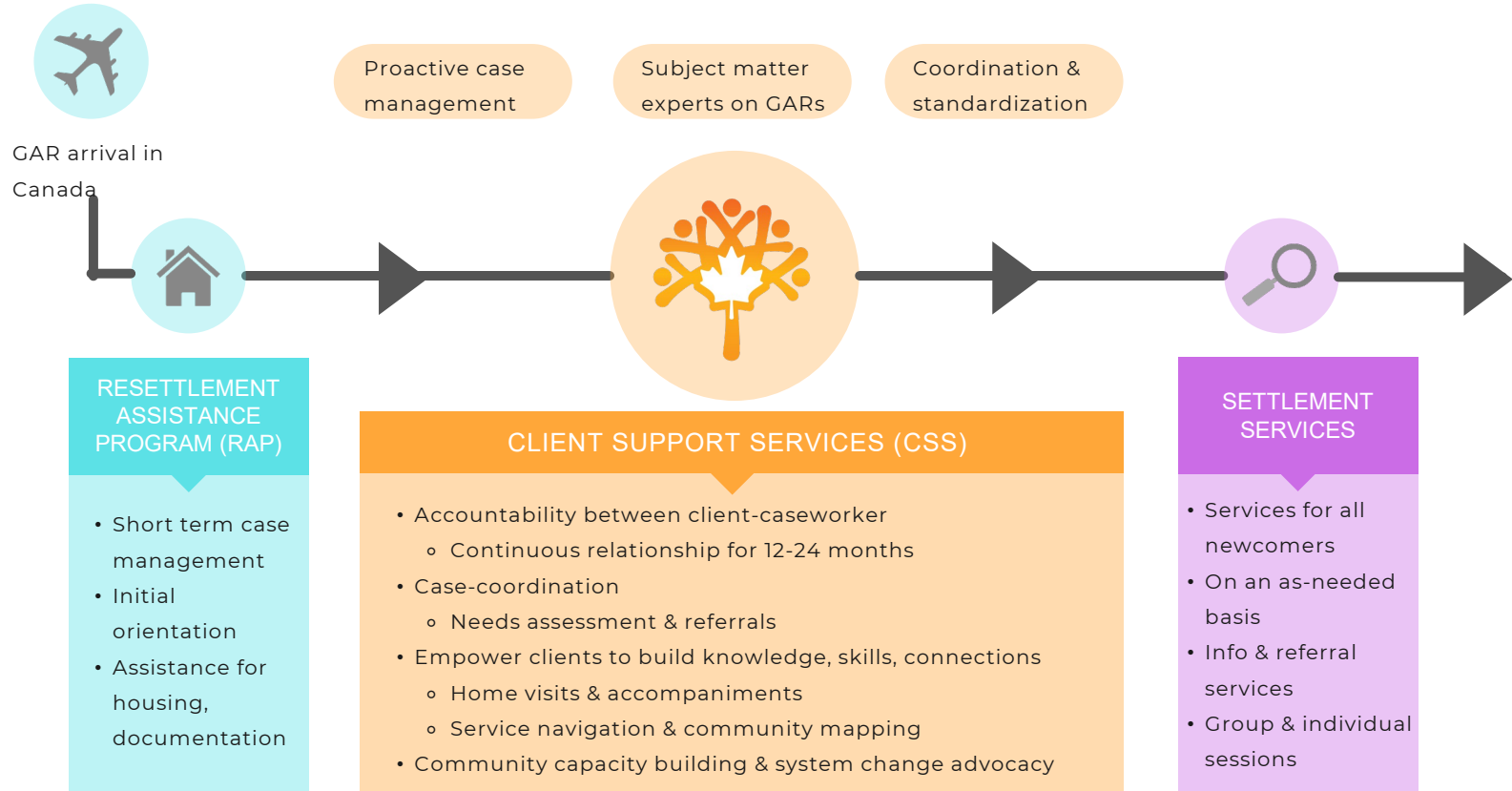


Community  
Connection



Intensive Case  
Management

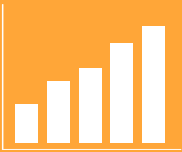
# RESETTLEMENT: INTEGRATED SERVICES MODEL





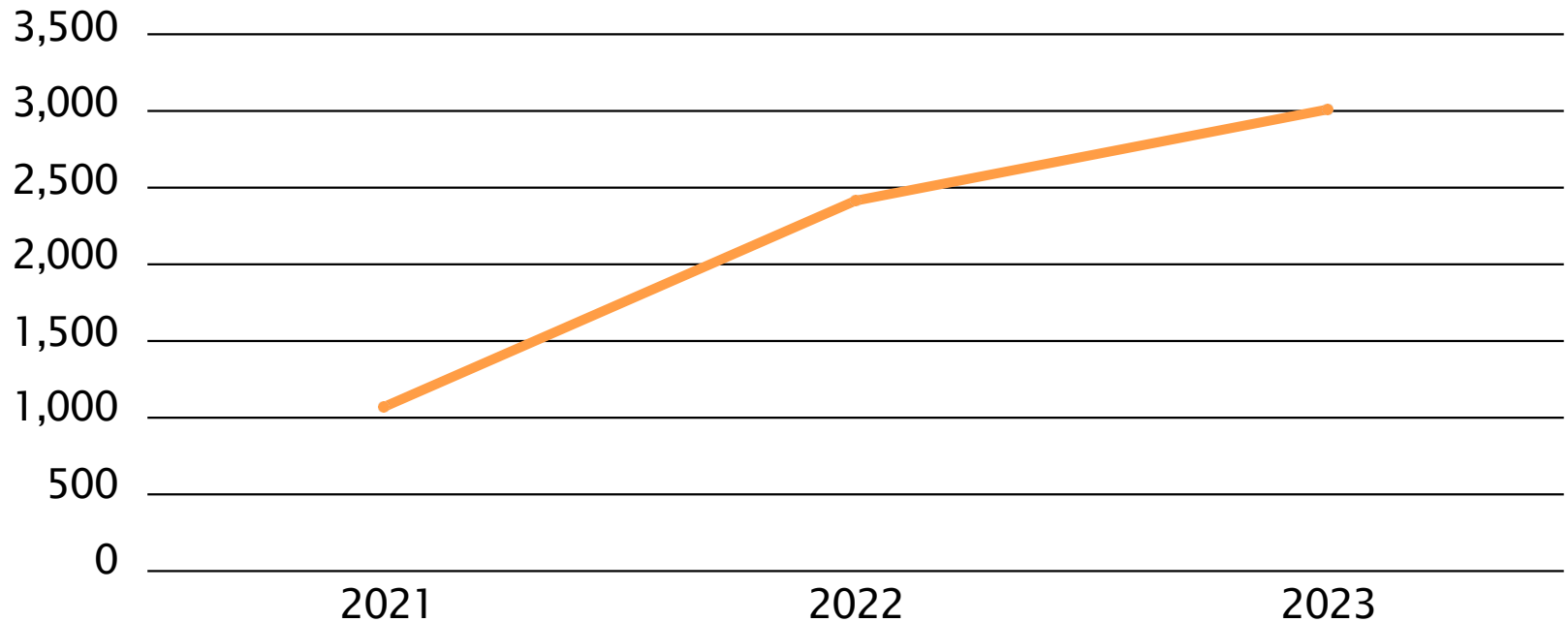
# CSS NATIONAL TRENDS



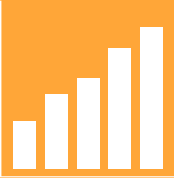


# NATIONAL TRENDS: SINGLE MOTHER GAR CLIENTS

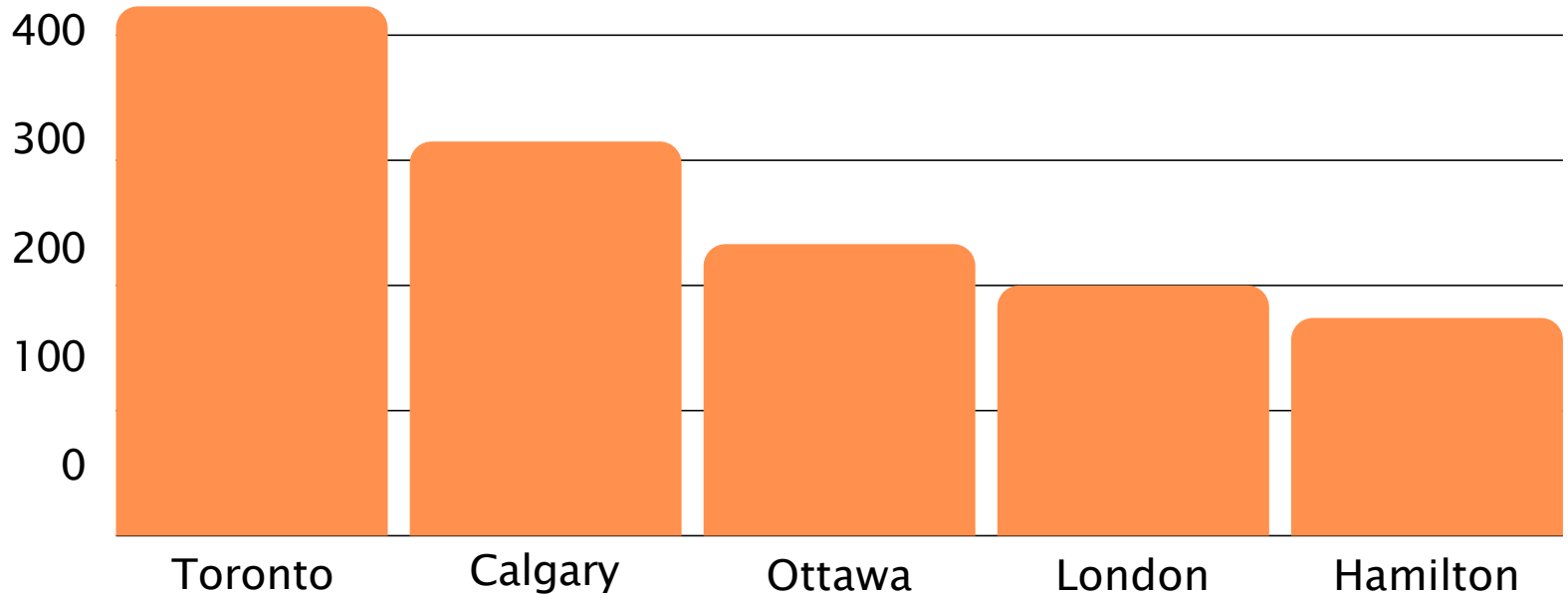
Total number of single-mother GAR clients in 2023 = 3010

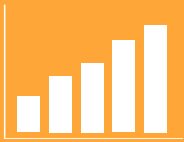


# NATIONAL TRENDS: SINGLE MOTHER GAR CLIENTS



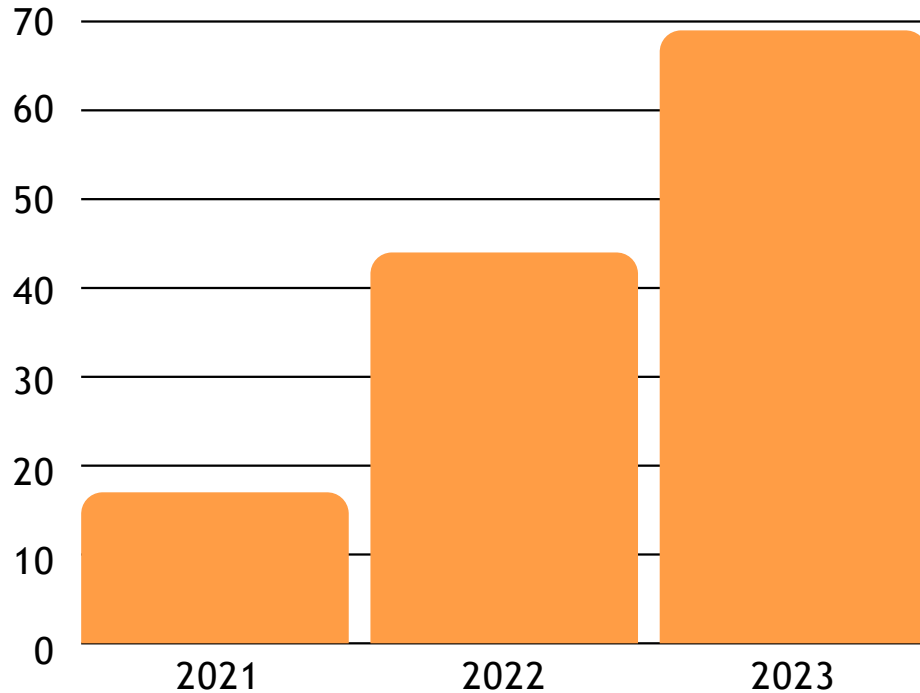
Top Sites with the highest increase in the number of single mother clients from 2021-2023





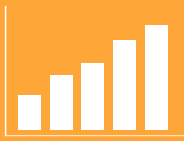
# NATIONAL TRENDS: MINOR GAR (HOF) CLIENTS

Minor GAR (HOF) clients from 2021-2023



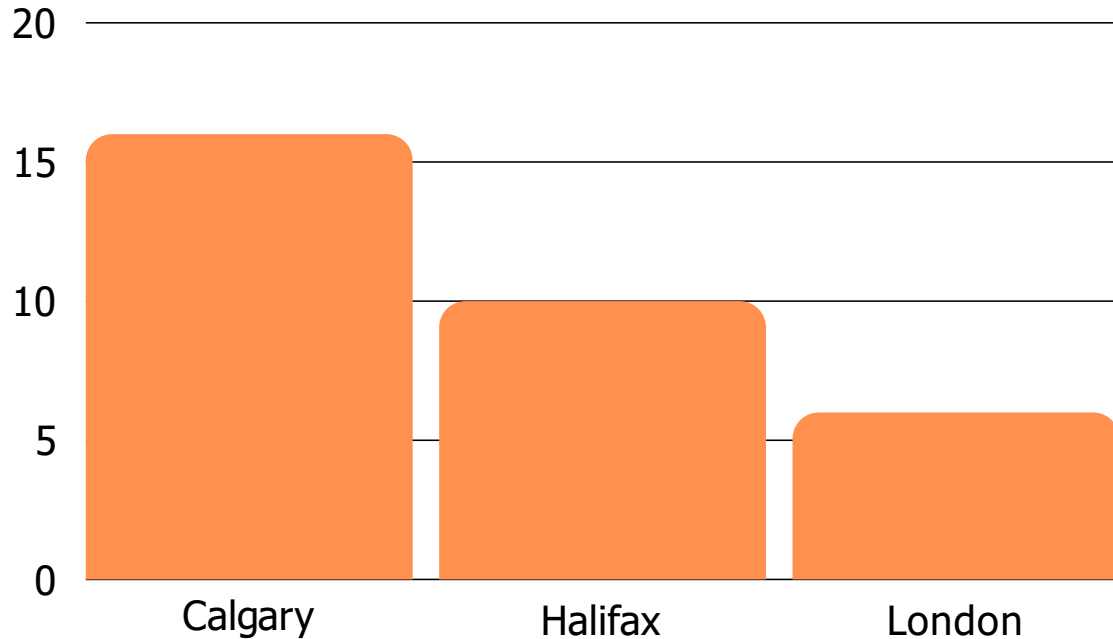
This chart depicts the increase in the total number of minor GAR clients among all CSS sites from 2021 to 2023.





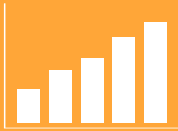
# NATIONAL TRENDS: MINOR GAR (HOF) CLIENTS

Top Sites with the highest increase in Minor GAR (HOF) clients from 2021-2023



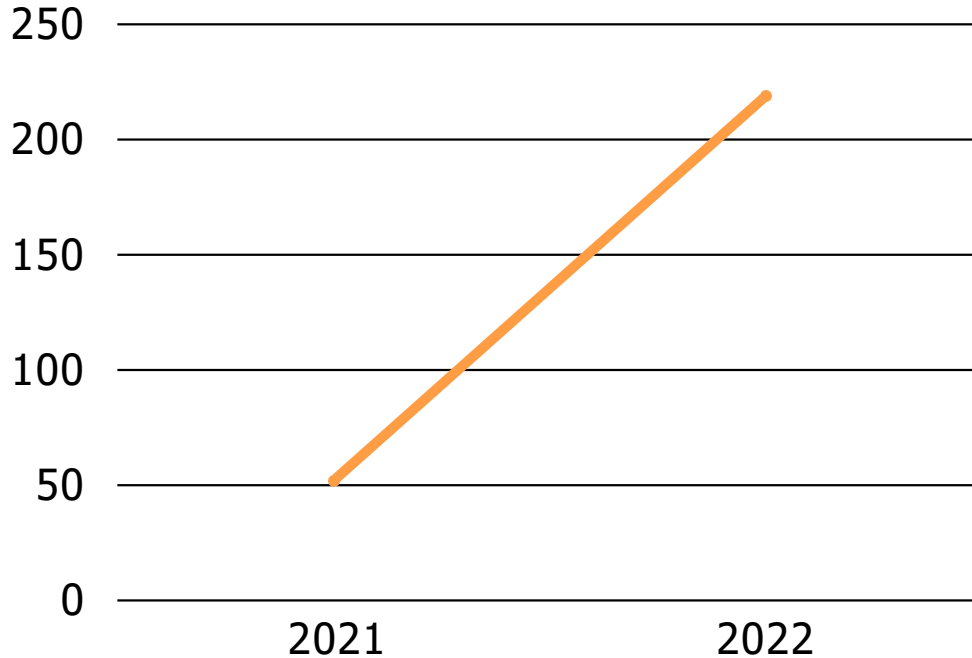
This chart depicts the top 3 sites with the highest increase in the number of minor GAR clients HOF among all CSS sites from 2021 to 2023.





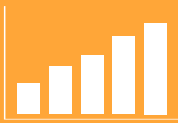
# NATIONAL TRENDS: CLIENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Data for clients with disabilities 2021-2022 (total of all Sites)



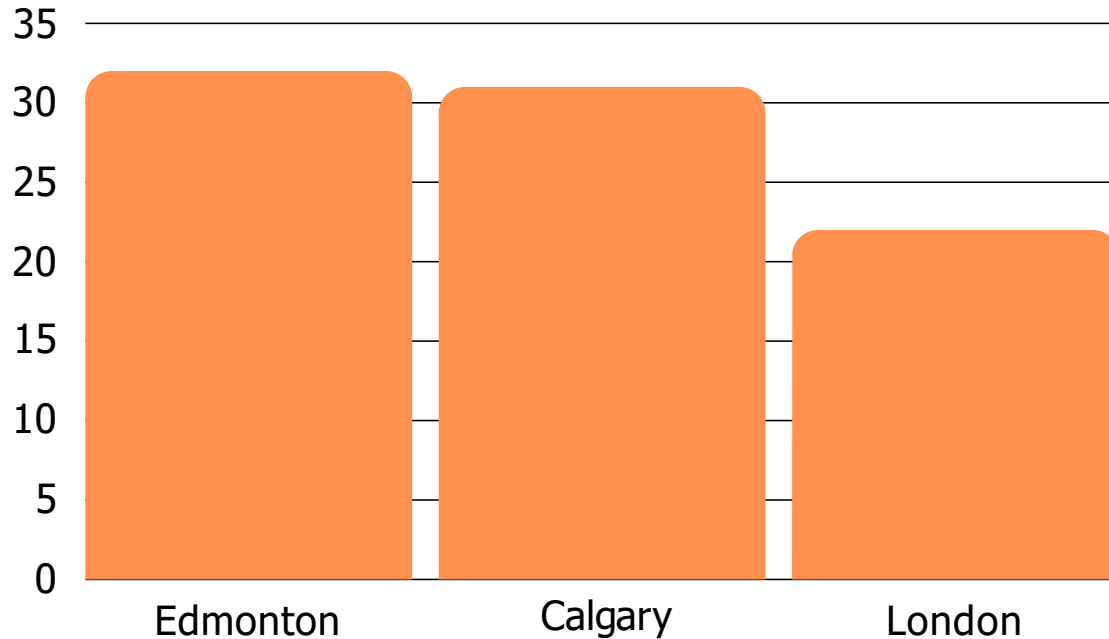
This chart depicts the total number of clients with disabilities among all CSS sites from 2021 to 2022.





# NATIONAL TRENDS: CLIENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Top Sites with the highest increase in clients with disabilities from 2021-2022



This chart depicts the top 3 sites with the highest increase in the number of clients with disability among all CSS sites from 2021 to 2022.



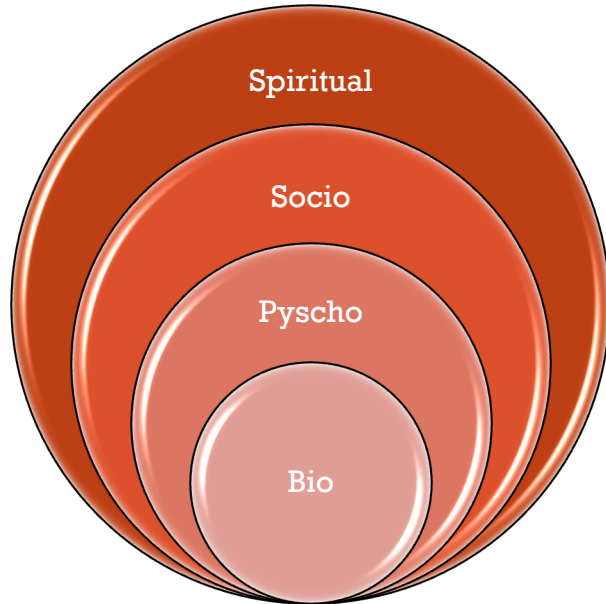


# CSS LONDON

Cross Cultural Learner  
Centre

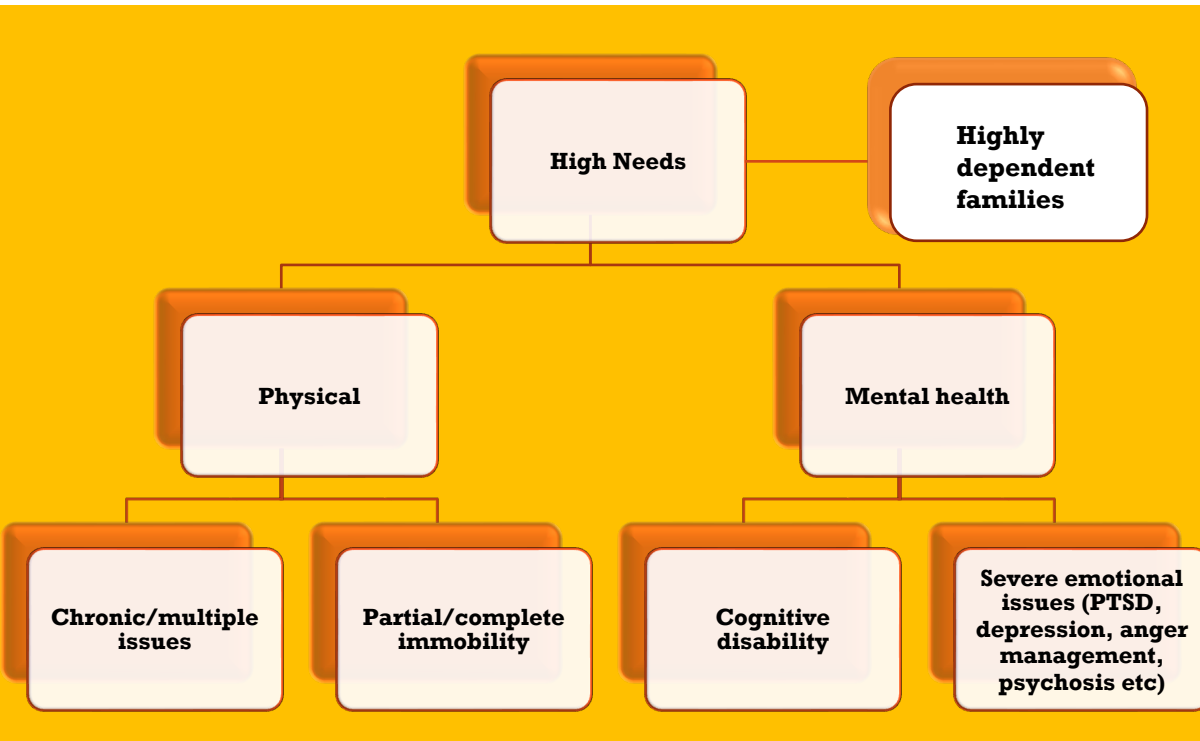


## Case Management/Wellbeing Model

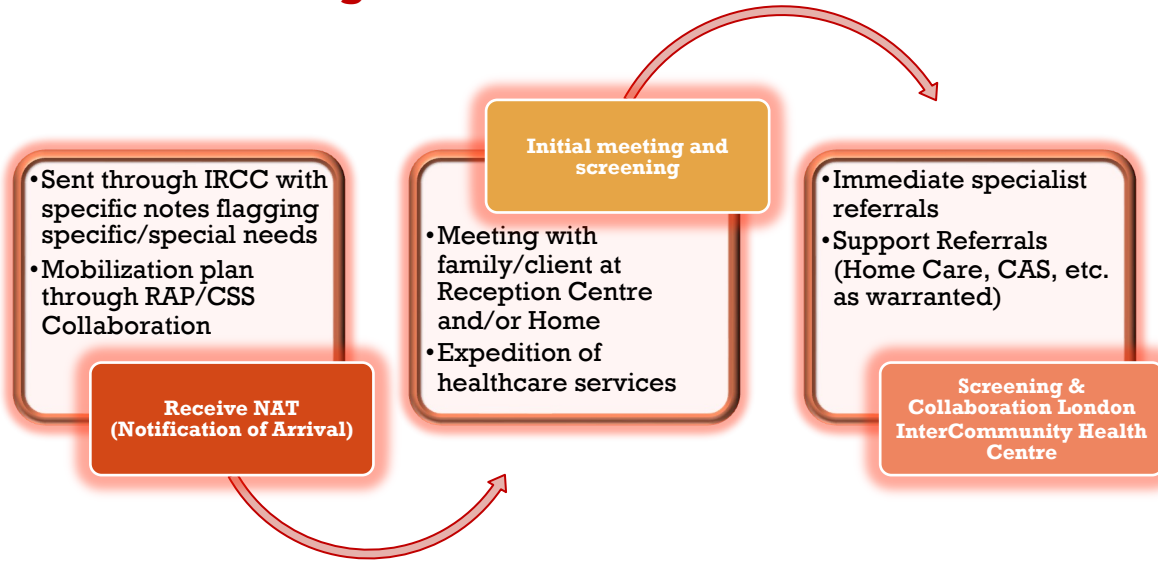




## Basic Classification



## Determination & Processing of High Needs





**PRE-MIGRATION  
EXPERIENCES & SOCIAL  
DETERMINANTS OF  
HEALTH**

# The GAR Single Mother Spectrum



War widows



Escape from abusive situations



Performing laborious work to survive



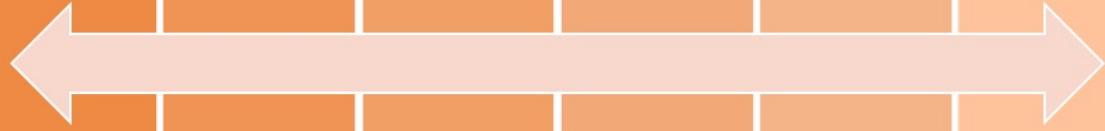
[IL]Literacy



Evolving family dynamics



Continuous trauma cycle



# The GAR Minor Family Spectrum



Trauma of  
losing  
parents



Shift &  
increase of  
responsibility



Conflict --  
change in  
guardianship



Financial/emplo  
yment  
implications



## Moderate-severe PTSD

- Ongoing emotional distress
- Psychosomatic symptoms

## Language Barrier

- Illiterate in mother-tongue=>greater dependency
- Untrusting of interpreters

## Information retention

- Difficulty with navigation
- Difficulty with basic life skills

## Shouldering parenting reforms single-handedly

- Parenting according to Canadian standards
- Tracking all appointments

## [Un]employment

- Issues with previous experience
- Issues with childcare

# A BRAND NEW WORLD

## Post-Migratory Challenges





# CASE STUDY #1

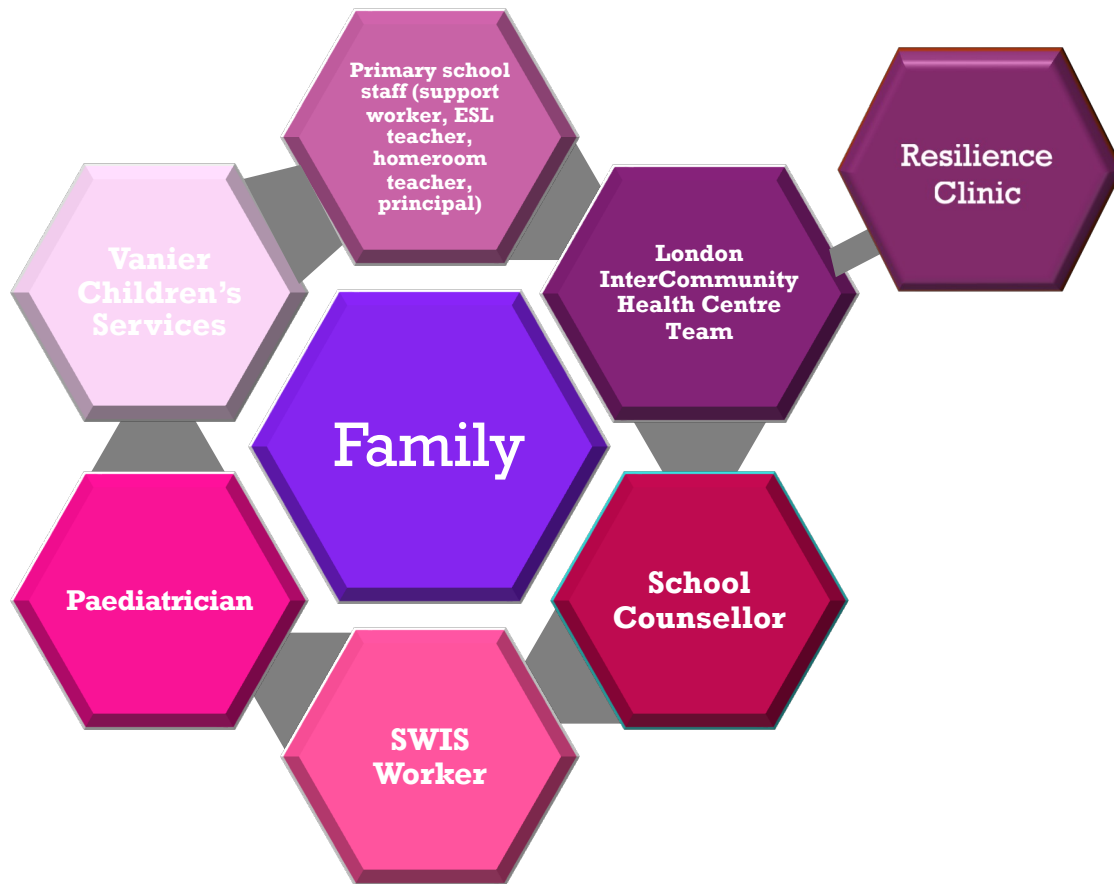
-London-  
Cross Cultural Learner Centre



- A single mother of 4, arrived pregnant with twins from Kurdistan
- The family had escaped a dangerous domestic situation
- Children had a history of trauma, particularly child #3 who appeared to be the target of traumatic domestic situations
- Child #3 also had a variety of chronic health concerns
- Mother experienced issues with childcare, language barriers, navigational barriers
- Children experiencing bullying both in and out of school
- Child #3 began portraying signs of mental health concerns (described by school staff as “manic” episodes)
- There are currently a number of high health needs with 4 of her children, including renal issues, mental health, chronic issues, and conflict at school







# HOLISTIC WRAP-AROUND CARE

London





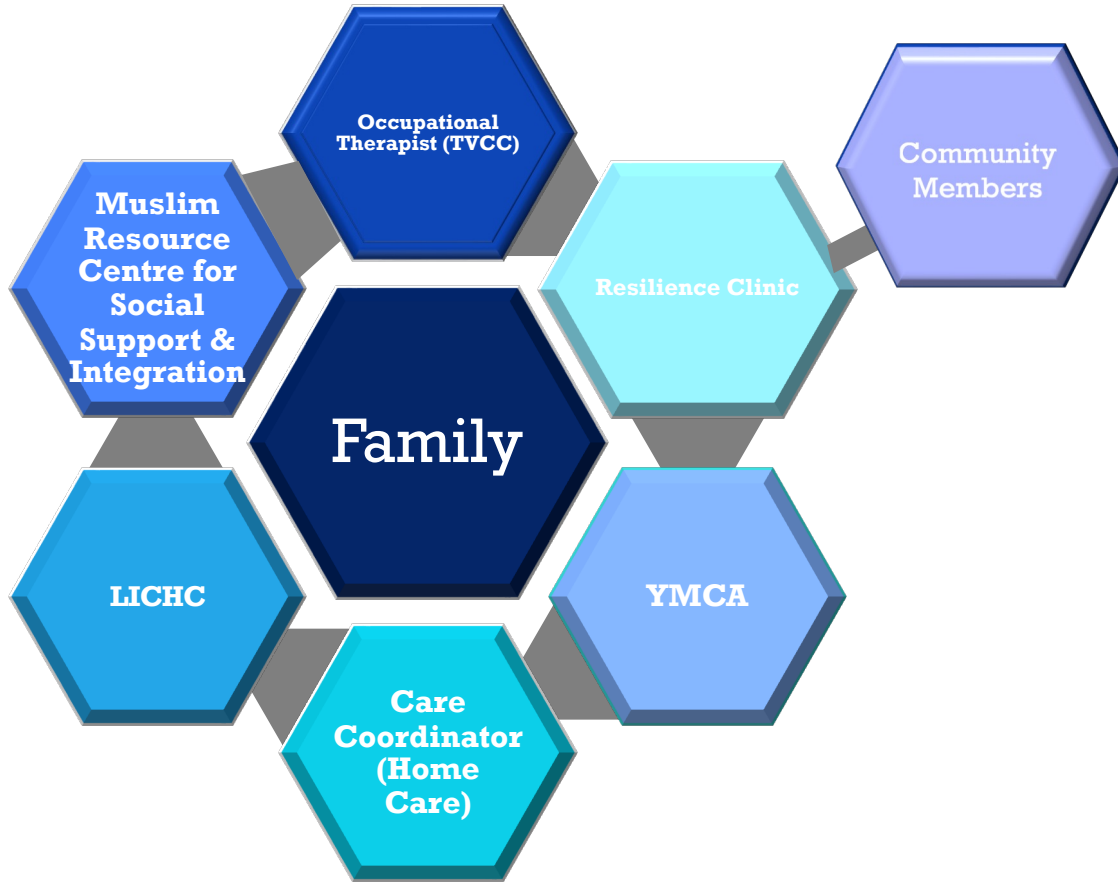
# CASE STUDY #2

-London-  
Cross Cultural Learner Centre



- A family of 7 transfer from Toronto; originally from Syria
- Child #1 (16 years) is experiencing severe rage and depression, causing some family conflict
- Child #3 (11years) is living with cerebral palsy, digestive issues, dental issues, severe stiffness in joints amongst other issues
- Mother is overwhelmed with responsibility





# Holistic Wrap-Around Care



- **Periodic Needs Assessment and Referrals**
- **Tracking client's progress**
- **Revisiting Client Charter when necessary**
- **Readapting model to meet client's needs**
- **Continuous establishment and follow-up of 'circle of care' model**

# **Implementing the CSS Model**

**Learning Opportunities Cont'd**



- Ensuring clients are not only included, but leading their re-resettlement journeys
- Ensuring clients understand their autonomy and power to make decisions
- Clients understand roles as well as responsibilities
- Newly implementing Client Commitment Agreement (CCA)

# Re-Empowerment



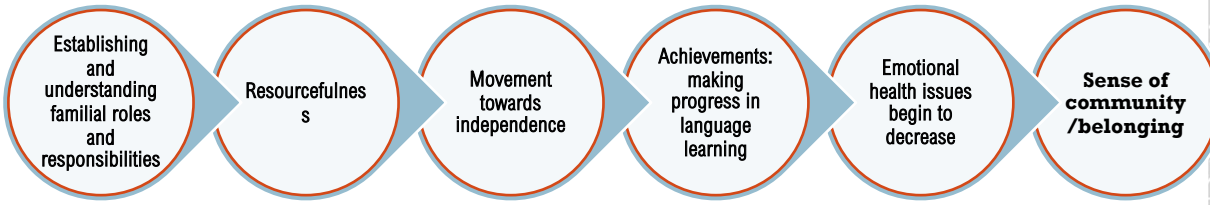
- Education and options to make informed decisions
- Providing choice with interpretation
- Inclusion in programs with accessible child-care
- Meeting the client where they are as opposed to where we expect them to be
  - ex. Flexibility with Life Skill hours
- Re-assessing gaps and creating solutions

# TRAUMA & VIOLENCE INFORMED CARE

-LONDON-

APPROACHES & PRACTICES





# SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES: POST- TRAUMATIC GROWTH

AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

-LONDON-







**A HELPING HAND: A SOLUTION-  
FOCUSED APPROACH TO  
ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF  
GARS WITH PHYSICAL, MENTAL, OR  
COGNITIVE DISABILITIES**

**LINA ABBAS  
CALGARY CATHOLIC  
IMMIGRATION SOCIETY, CALGARY,  
AB**

*“My advice to other disabled people would be, concentrate on things your disability doesn't prevent you doing well, and don't regret the things it interferes with. Don't be disabled in spirit, as well as physically.”*

**Stephen Hawking**





## CCIS (Calgary Catholic Immigration Society)

is a non-profit organization that provides settlement and integration services to all immigrants and refugees in Southern Alberta.

- Business, Employment, and Training Services
- Community Development and Integration
- Family and Children's Services
- Resettlement and Integration Services
- Refugee Claimants transitioning into the Community (RCTC)
- Brooks & County Immigration Services



## Trauma

- From country of origin & country of asylum

Lived in limbo in a country of asylum before resettlement

Lived in rural areas – lacking urban living skills

Lack of formal education & illiteracy

Lack of trust

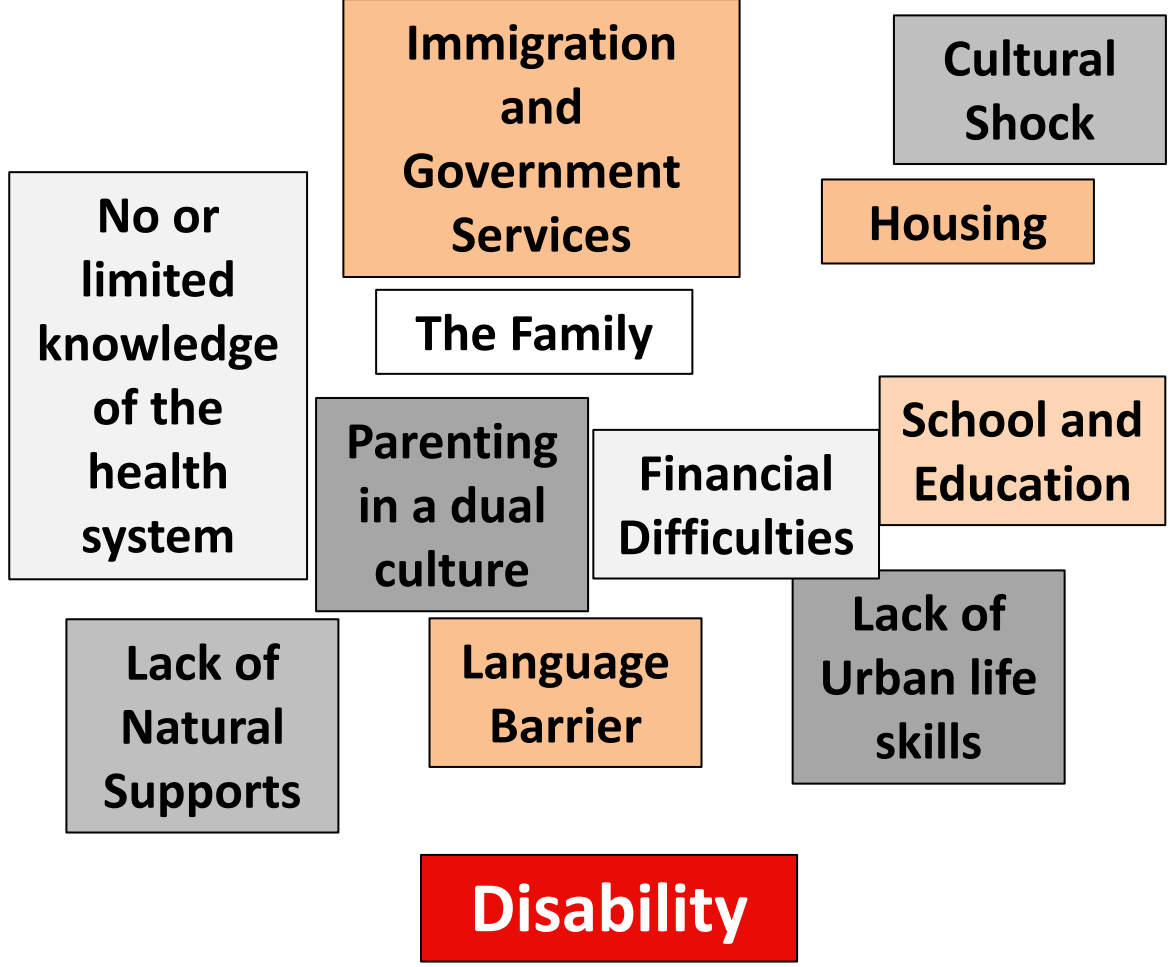
Health issues/lack of access to

Housing insecurities

Lack of employment opportunities

Faced exploitation/ torture/ imprisonment





**136** Clients with disabilities  
from April 1 to September  
30, 2023



# Referral Channels

- The medical information on the Notification of Arrival Transmission (NAT)
- Referrals from RAP team
- Referrals from the settlement team (later)
- Referrals from partners such as Mosaic Refugee Clinic



## Primary Profile

- Single parents
- Elderly
- LGBTQ+
- Complex Physical/Mental Health Needs
- Disability
- Youth at Risk
- Child Soldiers
- Domestic violence

## Secondary Profile

- Low education
- Lack of urban living skills
- No family or community connections
- Housing issues
- Cultural pressures
- Gap in education
- Coping & adjustment

## Assets

- Higher education
- Fluent in English
- System navigation abilities
- Strong social connections in the city
- Experience living in urban areas
- Tech literate

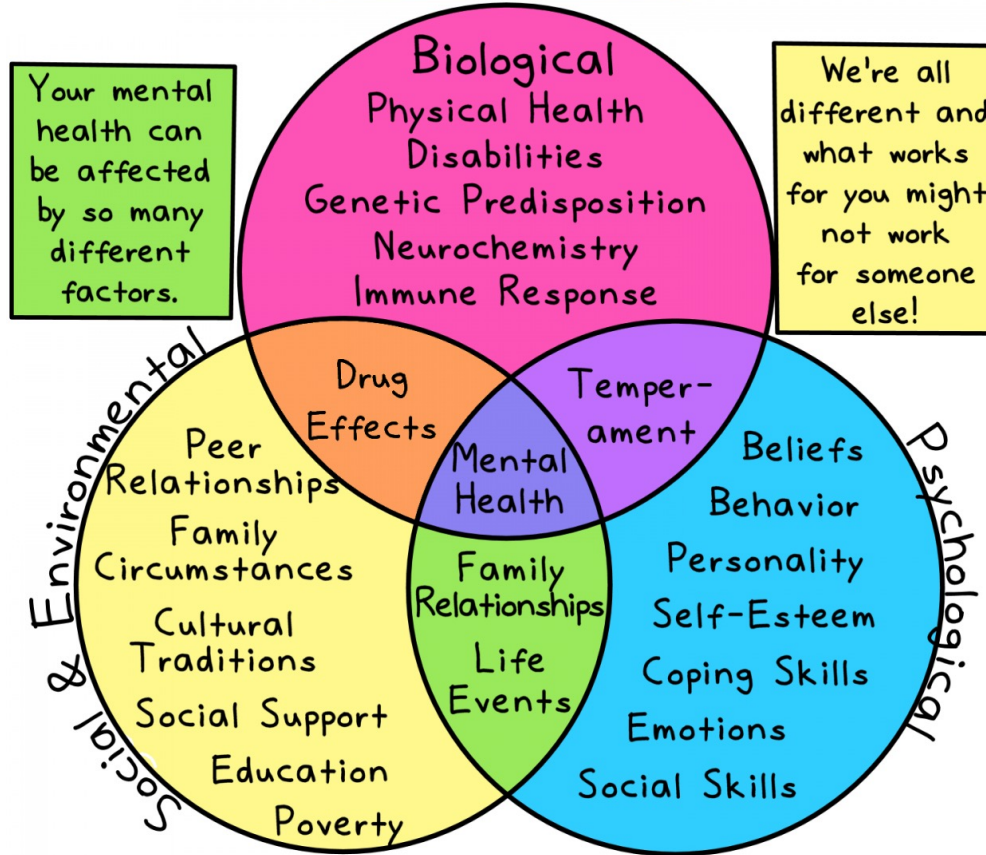




## How Do We Perceive our Cases?



# Biopsychosocial Model for Mental Health



# The CSS Model

- **Assessing the Needs**
- **The collaborative Empowerment plan**
- **Client-centred orientation and training**
- **Case consultation and conferencing**
- **The referrals and community connections**
- **Coordination**
- **Advocacy**



## How Intensive Case Management Help Clients with Disabilities?

- By coaching our clients to find their own voice and become their own advocates, we empower and enable them to tell their own story.
- The support provided by case managers through Court processes, AISH appeals, FSCD/PDD agreements, and medical appointments are all but some examples of Situations that involve the use of a lot of technical language can be difficult for people who are not familiar with it to understand.
- These situations, can become an **overwhelming experience** for newcomers with disabilities





# CASE STUDY #2

**Calgary Catholic Immigration  
Society (CCIS)  
Calgary**

- A family of 8 was in a refugee camp in since 2013 in very adverse conditions.
- They lacked urban skills, were totally illiterate, and didn't have basic life skills such as using washrooms, showering, eating, etc....).
- 3 adults and 2 kids with a variety of issues ranging from severe cognitive and physical disabilities, marginalized capacity for information processing/ social engagement
- negligible life skills in the backdrop of dislocation from a tribal environment



## Primary Profile

- Single parents

Elderly

- LGBTQ+

Complex  
Physical/Mental  
Health Needs

Disability

Youth at Risk

- Child Soldiers
- Domestic violence

## Secondary Profile

Low education

Lack of urban living  
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# HOLISTIC WRAP- AROUND CARE

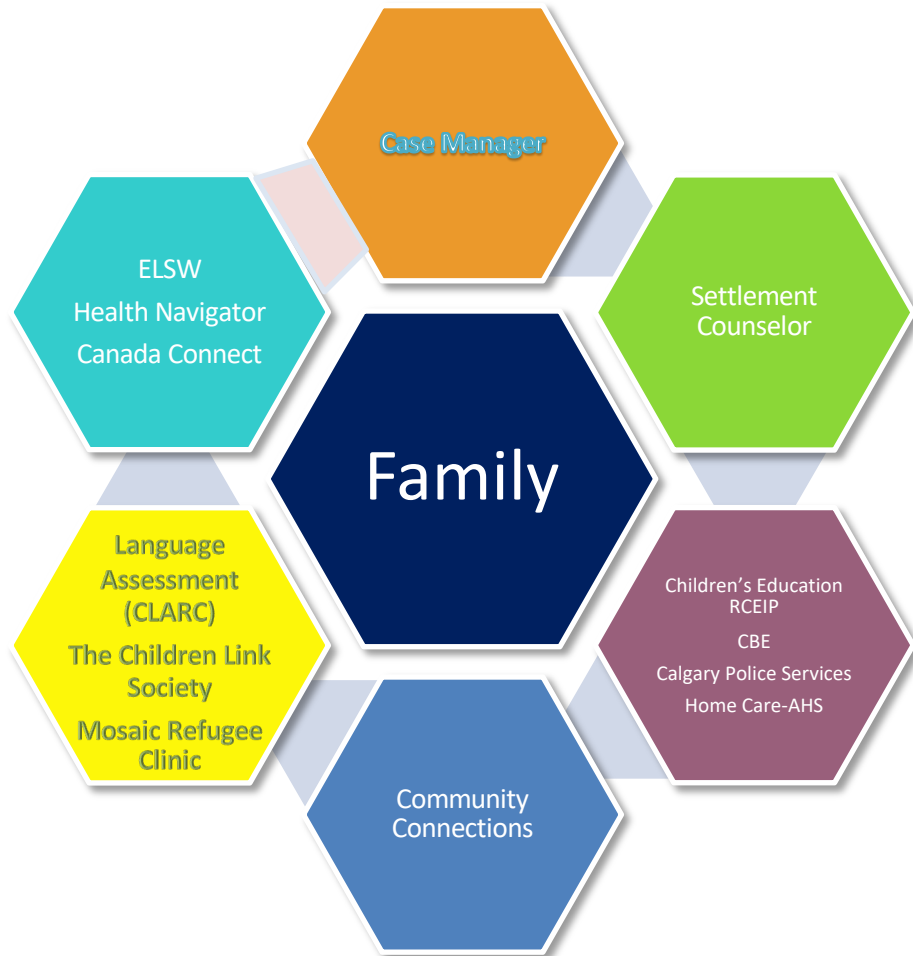
Calgary



## CSS Model for the X Family

- **Assessing the Needs**
- **The collaborative Empowerment plan**
- **Client-centred orientation and training**
- **Case consultation and conferencing**
- **The referrals and community connections**
- **Coordination**
- **Advocacy**







## CHALLENGES

- The long waiting time after submitting the applications/ Getting Declined/Appeal
- After being approved for these programs, families without English-speaking members face additional barriers.
- Ongoing training and orientations will be required for this family to understand all these services
- Limited availability of accessible housing
- Isolation
- Accessing other services



## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Managing Expectations: Clear and transparent communication with the families

Boundaries and limitations

celebrating and cheering on the achievements (big or small)

Adaptive activities and programs and more adaptive activities and programs

ASL classes for Newcomers



# THANK YOU!

## CONTACT INFO

MEHREEN NAYANI

MEHREEN.NAYANI@YMCAGTA.ORG

HANAA ELKOLALY

HELKOLALY@LCCLC.ORG

LINA ABBAS

LABBAS@CCISAB.CA

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