




**MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION FOR
NEWCOMER CHILDREN & YOUTH**

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Carla Kowal, YMCA
Jean Tilling, MOSAIC
Seham Abbakar, NEEDS
Sara Warkentin, NEEDS

SESSION OVERVIEW

- Best Practices for Mental Health Promotion
- Mental Health Promotion in Practice: What is happening already?
 - Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network
 - YMCA Newcomer Wellness Program
 - NEEDS Centre Psychosocial Support Program
- Questions

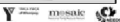


BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- The immigration and settlement process, in itself, is a stressful event for youth.
- Experiences related to immigration and settlement can compound already existing mental health issues and/or create new challenges during an already complex time.
- It is important to note that the 'refugee experience' is very diverse and although there are recurring themes, not everyone's experience is the same

THE TRIPLE-TRAUMA PARADIGM

PRE-FLIGHT	FLIGHT	POST-FLIGHT
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IMPACTS OF SETTLEMENT ON THE WELLBEING OF CHILDREN & YOUTH:

- +Isolation/minimal social network
- +Feelings of grief related to loss and separation
- +Disconnect from support systems (elders, faith community, teachers, etc.)
- +Coping with high amounts of change and stress
- +Living in the unknown (expectations, cultural rules and norms, future plans, etc.)
- +High levels of frustration (doubting self, skills and abilities)
- +Depression and anxiety
- +Difficulties with self-regulation
- +Unhealthy coping mechanisms (drug and/or alcohol use, smoking, high risk sexual behaviour)
- +Suicidal thoughts
- +Experiences with poverty, racism and discrimination



FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

+Fostering safe, supportive and welcoming relationships between newcomer youth and trusted adults is one of the most effective ways to **promote** well-being and **prevent** mental health challenges

+Safe and supportive relationships with youth help to create a sense of belonging which improves overall self-esteem and self-worth

+Relationship building is especially important to youth who may be more at risk because of experiences of trauma, disconnection from traditional kinship networks, and/or family conflict.



FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

+Take initiative in getting to know each youth participant; maintain an ongoing but respectful interest in their lives (respecting autonomy and privacy)

+Create opportunities for peer-to-peer interaction in a supervised environment

+For pre-school children, focus on building supportive and caring relationships with parents/guardians so that they can support the child in the transferring of trust

+Research shows that if children and youth have to ask for or seek out connection it is not as meaningful



BE TRAUMA INFORMED

†Trauma-informed care can be viewed as an overarching philosophy and approach, or even as a set of universal precautions, designed to be both preventive and rehabilitative in nature, in which the relationship among environment, triggers, and perceived dangers is noted and addressed.

†Trauma-informed care is based on the understanding that many clients have suffered traumatic experiences, and the provider is responsible for being sensitive to this fact, regardless of whether a person is being treated specifically for the trauma. Workers should initially approach all of their clients as if they have a trauma history, regardless of the services for which the clients are being seen.

What is wrong with you? → What happened to you?



YOUTH LED PROGRAMMING

†Allow youth to have an active role in both building and evolving programs promotes empowerment

†Hire newcomer youth as staff to help provide positive role models and insight into what the needs of program participants might be

†Provide opportunities for youth to give feedback and make recommendations on what services and/or resources they would like to have provided to them



CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE/SENSITIVE PROGRAMMING

†A crucial element in mental health promotion involves providing programming that is culturally appropriate and culturally sensitive

†Staff who are culturally representative of the youth helps create a sense of belonging and helps the youth relate to trusted adults

†Recognize and address Western assumptions about mental health and wellbeing; destigmatization



ROUTINE & CONSISTENT PROGRAMMING

- †Consistency and routines decrease feelings of 'unknown-ness' and helps create a safe space for youth
- †Youth feel less 'overwhelmed' and get a break from the stressful and often confusing environments they spend time in (school, public transportation, etc.)
- †Behaviour managements plans and strategies that are consistent will help youth know what is expected of them
- †Post daily plans in areas where youth can see them. Use lots of visual aids to help youth who have lower English language skills



Mental Health Promotion in Practice: What is happening already?



YMCA/YWCA NEWCOMER YOUTH WELLNESS PROGRAM



†The Newcomer Youth Wellness Program is a community based, well-being support that provides psychosocial support primarily in a group setting for newcomer youth ages 12 - 21 years; intake is continuous

†The program aims to support resilient newcomer youth who are integrated and engaged in their communities, are able to heal from post-traumatic stress or other mental health challenges, and have skills to successfully participate in their education.

†This program currently runs out of two YMCA-YWCA branches; the Elmwood Kildonan Branch and the Downtown Branch. When enrolled in the program, the youth are able to earn a complimentary YMCA-YWCA membership and have access to all YMCA-YWCA fitness facilities.



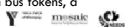
†Within both programs, we provide facilitated well-being enhancement workshops; one-on-one psychosocial support, mentorship (referral to NEEDS), and recreation opportunities to immigrant and refugee youth who are interested in exploring the concepts of mental wellness and overall wellbeing.

†These activities integrate physical activity, psychoeducation, skill building, creative expression, mindfulness, identity building, and cross cultural understanding.

†We also have guest speakers come in and speak on various topics related to mental wellness, such as stress management, physical exercise, healthy relationships and sexual health.

†All services are recovery oriented, trauma informed and culturally safe. Groups are separated by gender and age to promote feelings of safety and openness.

†The Newcomer Youth Wellness program also provides youth participants with bus tokens, a healthy snack and interpretation/translation services as needed.



†Youth who are identified by a service provider as experiencing mental health difficulties in some capacity, but are not in immediate crisis, can be referred to our program and participate in a holistic approach to their recovery.

†Our program is also open to any newcomer youth who would like to support their wellbeing and learn new skills relating to stress management, healthy coping, and self-care.

†Our program is also useful for youth who may have friends and/or family members experiencing mental health challenges and would like to learn more about how to support them.

†Youth who are in need of more comprehensive care or crisis services will be referred to mental health professionals who can better serve their immediate needs.



→We have found it to be extremely beneficial to spend a lot of time initially building relationships and getting to know the youth within our group. We emphasize consistent attendance and ask the youth to arrive early or on time. We use icebreakers and other group activities each session before we begin having conversations related to mental wellness and trauma.

→Evaluation: Gathered feedback from 30 questionnaires and 3 focus groups from youth that fit certain criteria.

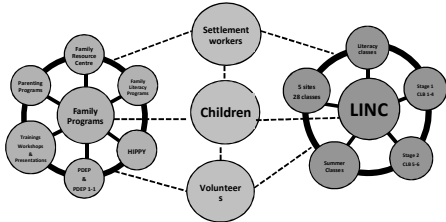
1. I feel safe and comfortable to express myself when I am in program
2. I have learnt things in this program that can help me live a healthier life
3. The program content is relevant to my life and experiences as a newcomer
4. As a result of this program I am better prepared to deal with stress/anxiety/conflict
5. Participants use their memberships to access the YMCA 2-3 times a week
6. Youth like: that they are involved in choosing topics, have their questions answered, Y cards
7. Youth would like to see: more speakers, outings and better food (restaurant food)



MOSAIC NEWCOMER FAMILY RESOURCE NETWORK



FAMILY PROGRAMS AND LINC CLASSES



A trauma Informed agency





Newcomer Family Resource Network

PARENTING, FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS, CHILDCARE PROGRAMS, WORKSHOPS AND TRAININGS

- ❖ are relationship based
- ❖ are rights-based
- ❖ are based on the belief that if parents/caregivers are doing well this will impact positively on children
- ❖ provide information on child development
- ❖ provide information and support on individual differences
- ❖ provide information and support on trauma and stress
- ❖ are offered in partnership in the communities where families live
- ❖ are offered with language support &/or in first language
- ❖ are inclusive of children
- ❖ prioritize creating a safe, trauma informed agency/space for all

All Mosaic Family Programs and LINC classes have onsite childcare or include the children in the program



THE FOUNDATION OF ALL PROGRAMS AT MOSAIC IS RELATIONSHIP



All of Mosaic programs promote healthy attachment



ATTACHMENT

Mosaic supports parents, childcare workers and all caregivers in understanding that each child needs to develop a relationship with at least one primary caregiver in order to have healthy brain development doesn't have to be the parent



We help all caregivers understand how loss or threat of loss of the child's safe caregiver causes distress



MANY CHILDREN AT MOSAIC HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA:

When a child has experienced stress and trauma and doesn't feel safe and secure you will see attachment behavior.



Mosaic's programs support families by helping caregivers look beyond the behaviour to understand the underlying feelings causing the behaviour and supporting the caregivers in meeting their own needs in order to enhance their ability to meet the child's needs



AT MOSAIC WE HELP TO REFRAME

Misbehaviour \Rightarrow Attachment (stress)behaviour

Behaviour is what children and adults use to meet their needs

Important to understand the reasons behind the behaviour

As adults we have learned socially acceptable ways of getting our needs met

Children are only beginning to learn ...

Behaviour \leftrightarrow Communication



WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF ATTACHMENT BEHAVIOUR

Making eye contact

Smiling

Touching

Staying close

Running away

Crying

Yelling

Hitting

Hiding

Standing on tables

Throwing things



HOW DO WE CHANGE BEHAVIOUR?

We can't change the behaviour...

...without first understanding the reasons for the behaviour

.. and empathizing with the feelings causing the behavior.

Mosaic programs are empathy-based



MOSAIC'S FAMILY PROGRAMS, WORKSHOPS AND TRAININGS ALL SUPPORT PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS SO THAT THEY CAN THEN SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN &/ OR THE CHILDREN IN THEIR CARE.

Breaks sense of isolation for parents

Parents build attachment within the groups

Parents are empowered as valuable contributing group members

Parents builds knowledge and skills

When parents feel connected and empowered they are more able to understand and meet their child's needs



POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN EVERYDAY PARENTING

"Positive Discipline" describes a non-violent approach to teaching our children, while being respectful of the child as a learner and individual human being.



PDEP - One to One Home Visit Program in First Language



HANDLE WITH CARE



Helping parents and caregivers promote the mental health of young children from birth to 6 years
(An 8 session program offered in communities)



BOUNCE BACK AND THRIVE



Resilience program for parents and children.



NOBODY'S PERFECT



Parents Sharing & Learning – Rhymes and songs in English and your language and a time to talk about being a parent in Canada
(6-8 two hour sessions in communities)



GRANDFRIENDS



Sharing and caring across generations. A wonderful way by which newcomers parents and children share stories and memories together with our senior friends by doing different activities like cooking, games, and bookmaking.





FAMILY LITERACY

Parent-Child Mother Goose
Play to Learn-Learn to Play
Wiggle Giggle and Munch
Bonding with Family Bookmaking



HIPPY HOME INSTRUCTION FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL YOUNGSTERS



HIPPY is a program where home visitors model relationship building activities that parents can do with their child.



MOSAIC FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT MENTORSHIP PRACTICUM



This is an 80 hour practicum which provides both training and practicum experience to the Family Engagement Volunteer Mentees.



PRESENTATIONS FOR PARENTS



TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS

Honoring Relationships Start with the Child

Welcome to the Positive Discipline Facilitator Training

By: Heidi Rasmussen, Family Resource Network, PDP Training Team

Fostering Language through Talking Tools

Created by Asha Goyal, PDP

Relationship Heals Trauma It's up to us!

Helping parents learn skills to be the family hero

SENSORY PROCESSING AWARENESS

Positive Discipline in Everyday Teaching

Teacher Training Program

©Save the Children Sweden,

MOSAIC FAMILY PROGRAMS MENTORSHIP SCAFFOLD TRAINING MODEL

- Mentorship support is offered at each level of the scaffold.
- The orange triangle indicates additional training and support provided at each level

Mosaic Mentorship Program has 30 active facilitators representing 19 different languages.

SOME OF OUR AMAZING FACILITATORS



NEWCOMERS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (N.E.E.D.S) INC.





Promoting mental wellness is a priority within all of our programs

Our Psychosocial Support Program aims to meet the unique needs of newcomer children and youth as they participate in agency programs, services and activities.

FOCUS is on addressing the social-emotional needs that impact settlement and integration



PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM STRATEGIES

- †Establish rapport and build relationships with newcomer children, youth and families
 - †Create a safe and supportive space for youth to ask questions and share their experiences
 - †Agency staff and volunteers actively engage with youth during program activities as a supportive presence
 - †Take initiative in getting to know each youth participant; maintain an ongoing but respectful interest in their lives (respecting autonomy and privacy)
 - †Establish, maintain and model appropriate boundaries
- †Create opportunities for peer-to-peer interaction in a supervised environment (enhance sense of belonging and engagement)



PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM STRATEGIES

- †Help individuals learn the possible reasons for their behaviours and assist in learning new behaviours when appropriate
 - †Frame all behaviour as communication
 - †Assist youth in exploring their feelings and emotions
 - †Help youth find ways to grow personally and socially
 - †Help youth transfer success from one environment to another
- †Assist youth in connecting to their community/culture in meaningful ways
- †Provide opportunities for comfort for past/current challenges and experiences and hope for the future



PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM STRATEGIES

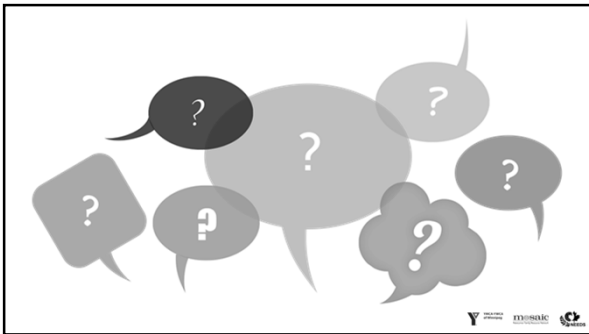
- †Assist youth in recognizing their abilities, capacities, interests, goals and personality
 - †Building or mastering a skill can help increase a youth's self-confidence and self-worth
- †Provide consultations and training to the greater Winnipeg community on the challenges and unique needs of newcomer youth
- †Talk about mental health and issues related to it to make open communication a norm and decreases stigma
- †Remain sensitive/mindful to cultural implications while still providing youth with the information they need to keep themselves safe



PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM STRATEGIES

- †Provide specific psychosocial support interventions for individual children and youth participants, include:
 - †Behaviour management strategies
 - †Action plans
 - †Referrals (to more appropriate/intensive programming)
 - †Advocacy
 - †Follow-up
- †Topics might include:
 - †Self-regulation and coping strategies
 - †Healthy Relationships (with peers, partners & parents/guardians)
 - †Drugs/Alcohol/Smoking & Refusal Skills
 - †Gangs
 - †Puberty and safer sex





CONTACT INFORMATION:

- Jean Tinling, Mosaic, JTinling@mosaicnet.ca
- Marko Gjuric, YMCA, marko.gjuric@ymanitoba.ca
- Sara Warkentin, NEEDS, sara@needsinc.ca
- Seham Abbakar, NEEDS, seham@needsinc.ca