

## Youth Mental Health Workshop

Bridging the gap between  
mental health services &  
newcomer youth



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## Video: *Change the View on Mental Health*

Created by the EMYS Newcomer Youth  
Participants in 2010 for CMHO Video Contest  
(Awarded with 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize, May 2010)

## Mental Health

- Balance between all aspects of life - social, physical, spiritual and emotional.
- Influences the ways individuals look at themselves, their lives, and others in their lives.
- Impact of migration on mental health

## Stats

- Mental health problems account for half of all disability among young people between the age of 10-24
- 45% of youth disability is related to depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and substance abuse

Study by WHO - Health.com June 6, 2011

## Stats continued...

- 10-20% of Canadian youth are affected by mental illness
- In Canada 1 in 5 kids have mental health problems and only 1 out of 5 children who need mental health services receives them
- Approximately 4,000 youth die prematurely each year by suicide

Stats Canada

## Stats continued...

- Low income rate for newcomer youth is 3 times higher than Canadian born youth
- Unemployment rate for newcomers is 15.4% compared to 12.5% for Canadian born youth

Census Canada (2009)

## Interesting facts

- Asian immigrant children had a mental health advantage over European immigrant children
- Immigrant girls had fewer emotional / behavioral problems than immigrant boys

Study by Dr. Beiser *Poverty, Family Process and mental health of immigrant children in Canada*

## Determinants of mental health for newcomer youth

- Social, cultural and economic status
- Parental psycho pathology
- Family discord
- Ineffective parenting/harsh disciplines
- Children prematurely assuming adult roles
- Adjusting to Canadian education system
- Stigma related to ESL classes

Shakya et.al., Canada Metropolis.net 2008

## Determinants of mental health for newcomer youth, continued....

- Traumatic experiences in their native country
- Experiences during their journey to the new country
- Settlement related difficulties in the new country

## Increased psychological stress for newcomer youth

- Rapid physical development and deep emotional changes during adolescence
- Increased vulnerability to stress
- Accentuated stress for immigrant youth

## Why focus on newcomer youth mental health?

- Strengthen & expand our existing models of care
- Early Intervention & Treatment
  - Estimated economic cost of mental illness in Canada- \$7.3 billions in 1993 & \$57 billion in 2010 (CAMH study 2010)
- Growing newcomer population in Canada
  - 1996 - Immigrants represent 17% of total population in Canada (Stats Canada)
  - 1996 - 42% of all Toronto residents were immigrants

## Development of ethno specific services at EMYS

- 1998 - Launched Markham Chinese Youth Project
- 1999 - Launched South Asian Drug Abuse Project
- 2005 - Launched Afghan Youth Outreach Project
- 2008 - Diversity in Action Scarborough (DIAS)

## Research initiatives

- 1989 - Needs assessment study of Chinese community
- 1997 & 2001- Mental health needs assessment of Markham/Scarborough Chinese youth
- 2005 - Mental health needs assessment of Afghan/South Asian youth

## Making it Personal

### Nandu's Story

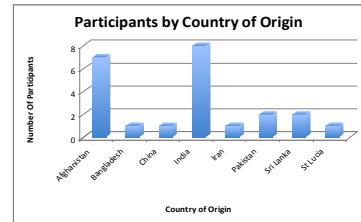
EMYS Newcomer Youth Participant

## Newcomer Youth Program

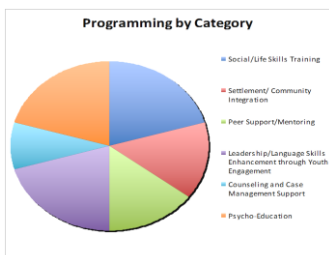
- 2008- CIC funded Newcomer Youth Program

Objective: To reach out to and provide support to newcomer youth residing in East Toronto between the ages 13-24 dealing with the challenges of acculturation and settlement, some of which may be complicated by mental health issues

## Newcomer Youth Program 2010-2011



## Programming Components





## Major themes

- Undiagnosed/unidentified mental health problems
- Stigma
- Lack of knowledge about mental health problems/available services
- Post traumatic symptoms related to violence/war trauma

## Challenges in serving newcomer youth with mental health difficulties

- Family's belief system/previous experience may impede their youth's treatment and recovery
- Stigma and lack of awareness/knowledge on mental health issues/services
- Language barrier & cultural shock
- Challenges in ethnic identity formation

## Challenges continued...

- Parents' mental health issues
- Emotional and social unavailability of parents
- Unidentified mental health issues
- Lack of parental engagement

## Challenges in working across different systems

- Eligibility criteria
- Long waitlist for services
- Limited linguistically appropriate services
- Lack of trust and understanding of available resources
- Fear of being identified by publicly funded agencies

### Challenges continued...

- Difference in parenting practices and the fear of being involved with CAS
- Lack of awareness of resources to help families appeal decisions made
- Limited community resources for adults who don't meet specific mental health diagnostic criteria

### Challenges continued....

- Challenges in transition of clients from children's mental health to adult mental health system
- Challenges in collaboration between agencies; agencies work in silos
- Lack of advocacy skills in clients
- Cross sector challenges

### Challenges continued....

- Unavailability of certain services if diagnosed is late
- Certain diagnoses have more access to funding for services
- Challenges in applying for services; ODSP for clients who are not involved with community agencies

### Challenges continued...

- Delay in seeking treatment
  - > Due to parental denial
  - > Lack of case management
  - > Lack of agreement between service providers
  - > Voluntary nature of services

### Questions/Comments?

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Thank

you

