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## Presentation Outline

- Background Information
  - The DIAS Partnership
  - The Need
- Goals and Strategies
- Activities and Outcomes
- Recommendations



## Psychology Foundation of Canada

- F. 1974 to share sound psychological knowledge to better people's lives
- Building resiliency in homes, workplaces, and communities
- Four Core Programs to Date
  - Kids Have Stress Too!
  - Parenting for Life
  - Staying on Top of Your Game (Workplace Mental Health)
  - Diversity in Action

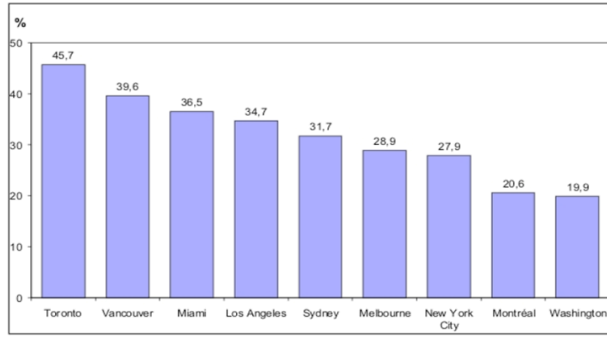


## Diversity in Action: Scarborough (DIAS)

- Launched 2008
- Partnership of PFC, the 4 Children's Mental Health Agencies in Scarborough, and a settlement agency
- Outreach experts from the target community work with both newcomer families and agencies to increase:
  - Newcomer families' capability to address their mental health needs
  - Mainstream agencies' capability to meet mental health needs of newcomer children, youth and their families
  - Work with representatives of ethno-specific groups to build community capacity through education, training, mentoring
- In addition, DIAS itself will:
  - Refine, test and disseminate the model and share the lessons learned, to guide future work with other newcomer groups.



## Foreign-born Percentage in Population



Toronto has the highest (45.7%) foreign-born population. Canada has three of the highest in the top 10 in the world.

Note: The data from the United States is from 2005.

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census; U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey.



## Portrait of the Community—2006 Census

- Portraits of major metropolitan centers
  - Of the 789,400 school-aged children who were between 5 and 16 years old in the Toronto metropolitan area, recent immigrants made up 10.5%.
  - Among these school-aged children, 54.9% reported speaking a non-official language most often at home
  - 47,400 school-aged newcomers settled in the City of Toronto between 2001 and 2006.
  - They accounted for 14.3% of all school-aged children



# Afghanistan



## Afghan Culture

- 38% Pashtun
- 25% Tajik
- 19% Hazara
- 11% Turkmen, Baloch, Nourstani and other)
- 6% Uzbek
- 1% other

In Afghanistan there is a hierarchy amongst the different ethnic groups. As a result some like to be referred to by their ethnic group and others don't.



## Religion

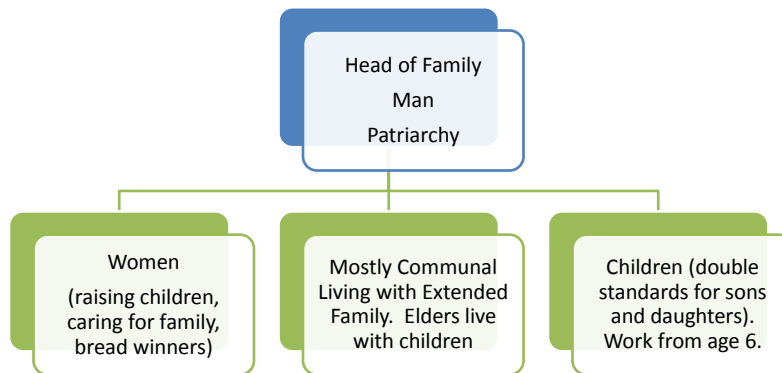
- Islam:
  - 83 % Sunni Muslim
  - 14 % Shai Muslim
- Culture and religion has been mixed (i.e., forced and arranged marriage are a part of culture)
- Other
  - 3% other
  - Christian, Jewish , Hindu & Sheik
  - Some research shows that this number has changed but no solid evidence presented)

## Family

- Parental Authority
- There should be no secret within the family
- Difficulties are kept in the family
- Children's success are an indicator of family's achievement and success
- Children's failure brings shame and embarrassment for the family in the community
- Mature children will live with parents



## Family Structure

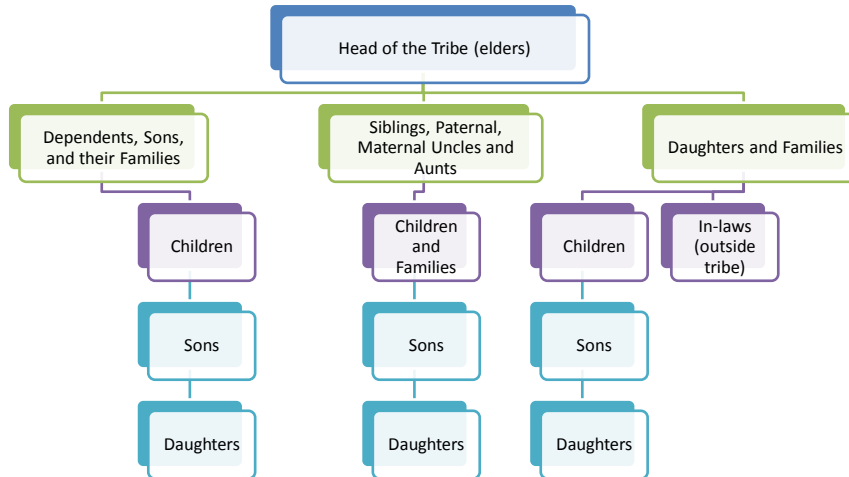


## Community Structure

- Each family is a small community, most families are large, from four to eighteen children
- Marriage with first cousins is common, most people in one village are related to each other
- 30-50 years ago more people preferred to marry someone within their tribe.



## Community Structure



## Literacy

- Literacy: definition: age 15 and over can read and write
- Total population: 28.1%
  - Male: 43.1%
  - Female: 12.6% (2000 est.)



## Resettlement and Mental Health

- Stressors:
  - Loss of emotional and other support of family members
  - Isolation and complexity of new socio-economic situation.
  - No access to shrine for spiritual coping and other cultural and religious routines to perform
  - Constant fear of losing loved ones in Afghanistan
  - Requirement to provide financial support to family members still living in Afghanistan
  - Increased pressure to arrange marriages to sponsor them as spousal class



## Challenges

- Difficulty engaging families to access services
- Limited Afghan mental health professionals
- Lack of exposure to mental health system
- Limited mental health vocabulary in the community's spoken languages
- On-going stressors and exposure to direct and indirect trauma



## The Approach...

- Respect and understand the cultural values and belief system when approaching the community
- Involve the community in the decision making process and the project progress
- Focus on positive mental health, early intervention, prevention and the reduction of stigma through community events, cultural gathering and celebrations
- Meet with community members at mosques, LINC classes, daycares, Afghan businesses, and during community gatherings such as now-rooz, mother's day, Friday prayer time and during Eid prayer times.



## Activities to Date—Afghan Project

- Core Activities
  - Raised understanding and provided tools to manage issues
    - educational sessions, including parenting programs (29 families/week)
    - Parent support groups at three different mosques
    - Education sessions at Afghan Canadian Senior Centre
    - Kids have stress too! Workshops at Afghan Women Organization
    - Ready Set Go! School readiness program
    - youth mentoring program
    - Girls leadership workshops
    - Created a network of Afghan front line workers to share knowledge
    - articles for ethno-specific journals, magazines, and TV programs



- Completed 77 presentations in 17 organizations to help agency staff better understand the Afghan community
- Consulted to schools, firefighters, police, CAS, Lawyers, mental health professionals, and settlement workers
- Facilitated unprecedented linkages and collaborative initiatives
- Instituted a cost-efficient, outcome-effective strategy to provide services for the 73,245 newcomers in Scarborough





## Girls Leadership Workshops!





## Accomplishments

- Demonstrated potential to educate and engage children, youth and parents in mental health promotion in the following ways:
  - Engaging a large number of Afghan professionals and community members to the Afghan Project Steering Committee
  - Attracting and partnering with media (14 monthly magazines, two radio stations, two TV programs) to take an active part in distributing information about mental health
  - Recruiting Afghan youth volunteers to provide peer support, tutoring and to show leadership in the community
  - Attracting Afghan young local musicians to promote mental health awareness on their websites



## Activities to Date—Diversity in Action

- In addition, significant progress has been made in:
  - Developing leading edge evaluation tools
  - Evaluating the effectiveness of the model
  - Codifying the model for use in other communities
  - Applying the model with the Mandarin-speaking Chinese community



## Lesson Learned—Complexity

- Initially, we collaborated with one Afghan organization.
- We have since established multiple relationships Afghan
  - The Afghan Association of Ontario,
  - Afghan Women Organization,
  - Sabawoon,
  - Afghan Youth Organization,
  - Mosques and multiple Afghan media resources.
- This has resulted in a much more diverse perspective as to the needs and strengths of the Afghan community



## Recommendations

- Recommendation to the Mental Health Commission of Canada to continue to support culturally and linguistically sensitive programs for communities.
  - Basic knowledge of child development and mental health.
  - Programs for youth to build a sense of accomplishment (volunteer opportunities, recreational, and academic).
  - Financial incentives such as a scholarship fund for members of the community accessing services, receiving treatment and making changes in their lives and communities.
  - Consulting resources for newcomers with complex needs to provide culturally sensitive service
  - Psycho educational materials (written and visual) in various languages to be included in the welcome package upon entry in Canada.

