

## **Undergraduate Honors Thesis Summary**

### **Background**

This study conducted a process evaluation of a program developed for newcomers to Canada: Brandon, Manitoba. The program was titled, “Supporting Newcomers to Canada Program” and was delivered in a two-day workshop. It focused on newcomers to Brandon, Manitoba mental health, loneliness and social isolation. The Centre for Critical Studies of Rural Mental Health (CCSRMH) developed the program facilitator booklet and a companion activity booklet for the newcomers. The workshop was administered to newcomers by Westman Immigrant Services (WIS).

### **Purpose**

The study focused on the participants’ mental health, loneliness and social isolation experiences, barriers to social connection as newcomers to Brandon and the participants’ perception of the “supporting newcomers’ to Canada program.”

### **Method**

Research interviews were conducted with participants after participation in two-session newcomers’ workshop. Participants were five male newcomers, aged between 24 and 55, They were asked questions about mental health, social isolation, loneliness, and awareness of community resources. The interview comprised open-ended questions and responses were analysed based on common themes found in participants responses.

### **Result**

The research outcomes revealed that newcomers' understanding of mental health differ across cultures. Our research participants view of mental health revolved around five themes: mental illness or sickness, reaction to life challenges, use of drug, stigmatizing language, and comparisons of mental health meaning between their home country and Canada.

We found that social connection was highly important to newcomers' settlement. Also, results indicated that language related challenges and Covid-19 restrictions were two major barriers to newcomers' social connection. Participants' overall feedback on the newcomers to Canada program was positive.

### **Significance**

Study results provided relevant information that would help improve newcomers program design and culturally appropriate program delivery.

**Keywords:** mental health, loneliness, social isolation, newcomer, process evaluation