

Building Connected Communities: Improving community supports to reduce loneliness & social isolation in immigrants 65+

Centre for Elder Research, Sheridan College, Oakville, ON

AGENDA – DEC 8, 2017

Knowledge Exchange Think Tank

9:00 - 9:15 Welcome & coffee/tea

9:15 – 9:45 Presentations

9:45 – 10:00 Break

10:00 - 11: 30 Small group discussions & brainstorming

11: 30 – 11:45 Break

11: 45 – 12: 30 Lunch and networking

12:30 – 12:45 Closing remarks

Mission Statement:

The Centre for Elder Research conducts innovative ‘Lab to Life™’ research that enhances the quality of life of older adults while serving as an education and resource hub for Sheridan and the broader community.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Project Partners



Research supported by:



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada 

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Societal issues

1. An aging population:

- By 2036, about 1 in 4 Canadians is expected to be 65+¹
- For the first time in history, older adults outnumber children ages 0-14 in Canada¹

2. The increase in the number of older immigrants in Peel and Halton Regions:

- 44% of the Mississauga Halton region identify as immigrants²
- 47% of the Central West region identify as immigrants³

3. The growing prevalence of loneliness and/or social isolation among older adults

- Up to 16% of older adults in Canada experience social isolation⁴
- Some groups are at greater risk than others⁴

¹Statistics Canada, 2015

²Mississauga Halton Health Integration Network, 2016

³Central West LHIN, 2015

⁴Statistics Canada, 2010

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Definitions

Social isolation is a dynamic *objective* state that can be defined as a lack of social belongingness, engagement with others and social contacts. It can occur during life transitions¹.

→ Can be measured objectively by observing social networks and interactions

Loneliness is a dynamic *subjective* state that involves feelings of loss of companionship. It can occur when there's a mismatch between the social relationships that one has, and those they want (i.e. in quantity and quality)².

→ Can be measured subjectively by asking about perceptions and feelings

¹Nicholson, 2009

²de Jong Gierveld et al., 2011

RESEARCH CONTEXT

General risk factors – Social isolation¹

- Age and gender: being age 80+, being female
- Ethnicity: being an immigrant
- Geography: living in a rural/remote area or deprived a neighbourhood
- Health and disability: having physical and/or mental health issues
- Knowledge and awareness: lack of info about community services or technology

RESEARCH CONTEXT

General risk factors – Social isolation¹

- Life transitions: loss of spouse, job, home, driver's license
- Poverty and lack of access to resources: lack of affordable housing and care options
- Sexual and gender identity: being LGBT
- Social relationships: low quality of relationships, no children or family nearby, living alone

¹National Seniors Council, 2016

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Why might older immigrants be at greater risk?

Immigration represents a major life change that may be made more challenging by language barriers, loss of status (real or perceived), disrupted social networks, conflicting family values and cultural differences¹.

Older immigrants are at increased risk for social isolation and/or loneliness because they have a different cultural and linguistic background and may experience more barriers in daily life².

¹Hossen, 2012

²National Seniors Council, 2016

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Research questions

1. What do older immigrants report as the barriers to and, opportunities for, forming meaningful connections in their communities?
2. What are the most effective strategies for collectively identifying and reaching immigrants 65+ at risk of loneliness and/or social isolation?

THE RESEARCH

Work phases completed to-date

Phase 1: Environmental Scan of the services, tools and outreach strategies already available for older immigrants in Peel and Halton *Completed

Phase 2: Learning from older immigrants about their experiences and needs living in Peel and Halton *Completed

Phase 3: Knowledge mobilization & translation: developing, adapting and sharing tools and results with community stakeholders (i.e. agency staff, community members) *This is where we are now

PHASE 1

Environmental Scan

- The main purpose of the **environmental scan** was to take inventory of the assets that currently exist in Halton and Peel that support older immigrant adults 65+.
- 1 Master's placement student from York and 8 Sheridan student researchers conducted the original environmental scan.
- The research team was asked to scan the Internet and various publications like community newspapers to source programs focused specifically on serving immigrant older adults

PHASE 1

Environmental Scan

- The findings were categorized by *Ethno-specific agencies, Intercultural/Multicultural agencies, Faith Groups, Mainstream or Other groups*.
- Over 220 services were logged in the original database (* Please note that the current database includes approximately 280 entries).
- Of the services logged, **Community Profiles** were created and then used for outreach for potential service provider interviews.
- 34 service provider site visits and phone interviews were conducted.

ASSET MAPPING

Definition & Research Question

Community asset mapping is a tool used in Community Development work to help build strong communities. It is a process to help mobilize a community to use its assets as a way to engage in problem solving and improve residents' quality of life¹.

- It identifies the strengths/assets that already exist within the community before making recommendations around needs and deficits.
- The main purpose of engaging in asset mapping was to look for assets, gaps and challenges that may exist and how that plays out geographically in terms of where the services are located and where older immigrant adults live in relation to them.
- The main research question investigated in the work looked at whether or not the current strategies and services being offered in Peel and Halton are geographically situated and clustered where the highest density of older adults 65+ are living in these communities?

¹(OHCC, 2016)

PHASE 1

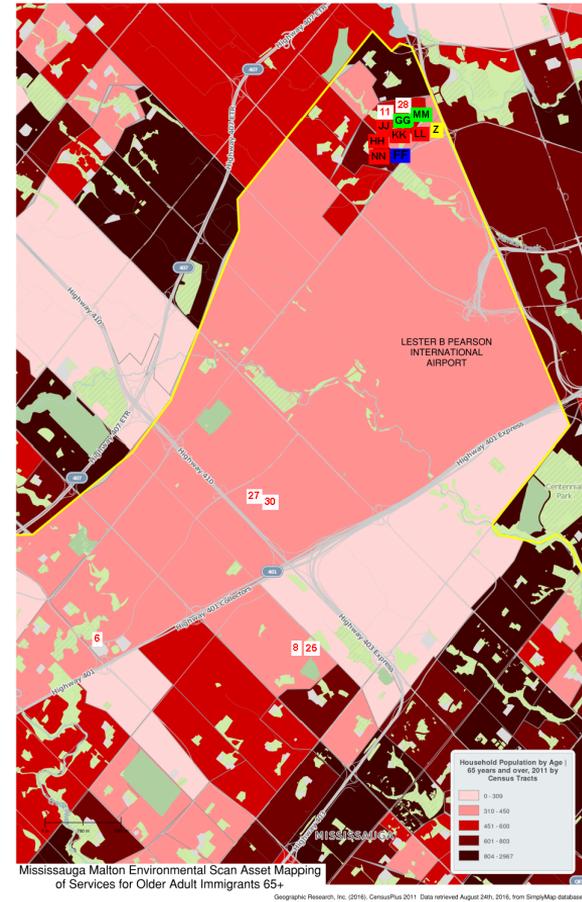
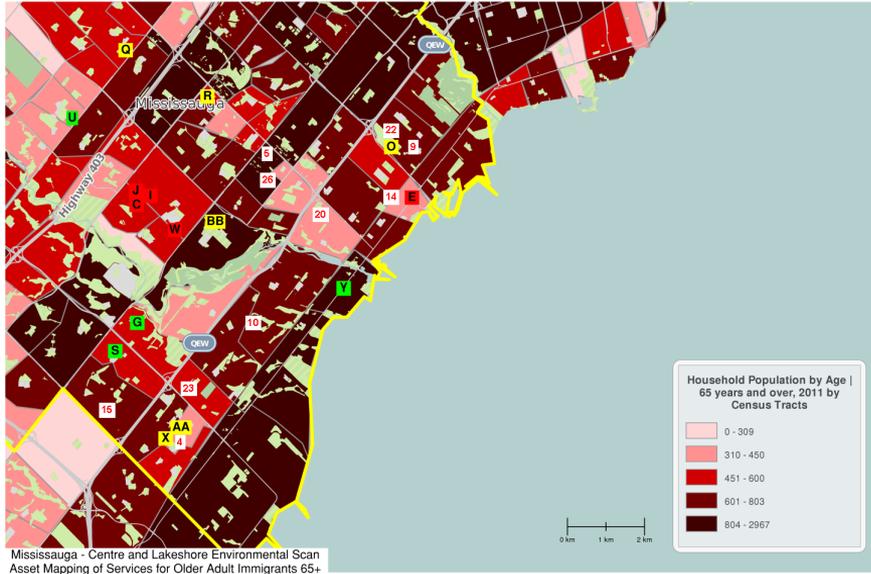
Asset Mapping

Asset Maps (Service Providers, Additional Services and Household Population by Age)

Colour Coded Legend	Type of Service
Red	Ethno-specific
Green	Intercultural/Multicultural
Blue	Faith Group
Yellow	Mainstream
Black	Other
White with red numbers	Additional Services (Library, Community Centre, Recreation Centre, Hospital)

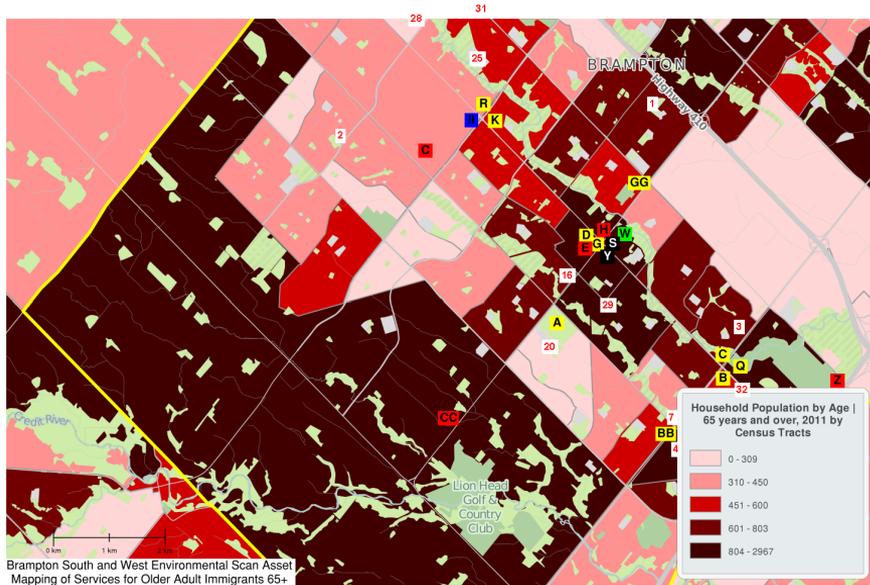
PHASE 1

Asset Mapping Peel Samples



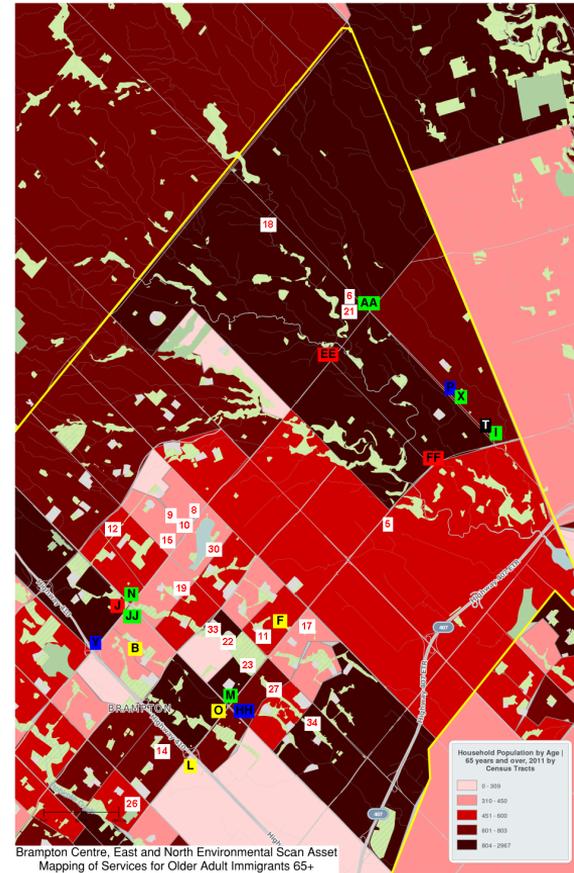
PHASE 1

Asset Mapping Peel Samples



Brampton South and West Environmental Scan Asset Mapping of Services for Older Adult Immigrants 65+

Geographic Research, Inc. (2016). CensusPlus 2011. Data retrieved August 24th, 2016, from SimpyMap database.

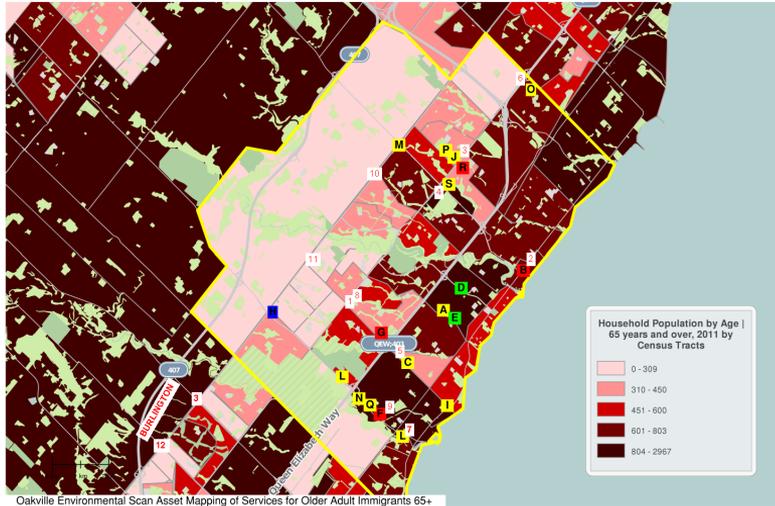


Brampton Centre, East and North Environmental Scan Asset Mapping of Services for Older Adult Immigrants 65+

Geographic Research, Inc. (2016). CensusPlus 2011. Data retrieved August 24th, 2016, from SimpyMap database.

PHASE 1

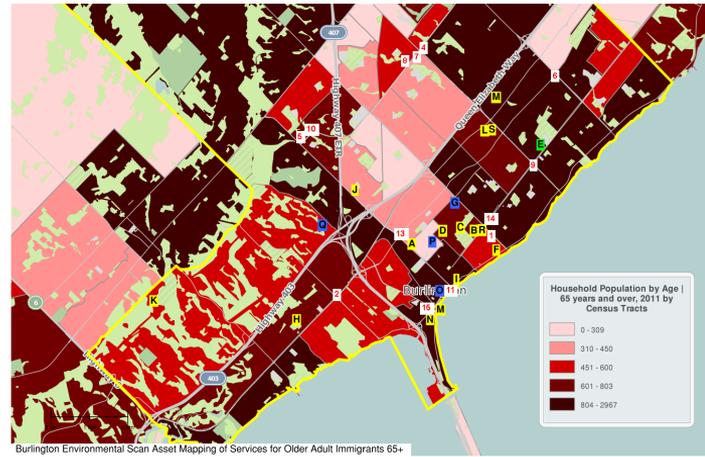
Asset Mapping Halton Samples



Geographic Research, Inc. (2016). CensusPlus 2011. Data retrieved August 24th, 2016, from SimgisPlus database.



Geographic Research, Inc. (2016). CensusPlus 2011. Data retrieved August 24th, 2016, from SimgisPlus database.



Geographic Research, Inc. (2016). CensusPlus 2011. Data retrieved August 24th, 2016, from SimgisPlus database.

PHASE 1

Overall Summary Asset Mapping

- Overall Brampton has a variety of services for older adults located primarily in highest density areas where older adults are living in the city. They appear to be clustered as well which supports accessibility.
- Similar in certain parts Mississauga but when you look closer at the neighbourhood level there may be gaps in terms of services. Both Erin Mills and Streetsville are dependent on mainstream organizations to meet the needs of immigrant seniors in the area. Meaning no ethno-specific or multicultural agencies

PHASE 1

Overall Summary Asset Mapping

- There are more community assets available in Peel for older immigrant adults than in Halton. There are more mainstream organizations in Halton working to meet the needs of older adults in the community vs ethno-specific and multicultural agencies.
- Oakville is in a good place in terms of services and meeting the needs of the population group through a variety of services. There are significant gaps in terms of assets in Milton, Burlington and Halton Hills but that could be relational in terms of demographics in these smaller yet growing cities within Halton.

PHASE 1

Mapping Transportation

- Census data shows a strong correlation between the number of recent immigrants (arrived within the past 10 years) and their high usage of public transportation. One of the main reasons for this is due to its affordability¹.
- All of the services plotted on the asset maps were accessible by public transportation.
- A general scan of both Peel and Halton showed that both regions are actively integrating programs for older adults to use public transportation.

¹(Amar & Teelucksingh, 2015).

PHASE 1

Mapping Transportation

- A challenge identified in the public transportation programs is that the majority of these programs have optimal cost savings during “off peak hours” as is the case in Mississauga. Or on specific days of the week, for instance older adults in Oakville can ride public transit for free on Mondays.
- Public transportation is a staple for immigrants with low-income and research shows that there is a gendered dimension to this as well, meaning that the majority are immigrant users of public transportation are female¹.

¹(Amar & Teelucksingh, 2015).

PHASE 1

Service Provider Interviews

- Lack of ethno specific programs was a barrier that was identified by agencies/groups in the Halton region.
- The interviewees from ethno specific and multicultural agencies talked about lack of space and limited funding/resources as their main barriers to meeting demand for services. Ethno specific agencies reported mostly partnerships with other ethno specific agencies/groups serving the same population, but also mainstream ones like libraries and community centres which was consistent with the findings in Malton.

PHASE 1

Service Provider Interviews

- Thirty interviewees reported that their agencies had formal community partnerships (i.e. with other agencies/community groups). Multicultural and mainstream agencies reported this more often than the other agency types. The interviews revealed that these agencies rely on faith based and cultural groups to connect with libraries/community centres to disseminate their information.
- Lastly, ten agencies reported that they help their older adult clients with transportation (i.e. by providing bus tickets) or with membership fees by providing a subsidy for those in need. Service providers are aware of the financial challenges and barriers linked to public transportation and service use.

PHASE 1

Recommendations

- **Continue moving forward using “place based analysis” or a “place based neighbourhood approach” to identify the needs in each of the cities within the region as they are diverse.** Using a “blanket approach” could potentially miss import trends taking place in various parts of the city. The diversity and make up of each city within the two regions are different and the recommendations for each should be treated as such. More quantitative data from the recent census will help us to understand what some of those quantifiable differences are.
- **Build on the existing assets and capacities. Community hubs such as schools, community centres and libraries may be a viable way to tap into the existing community facilities and accessible infrastructure.** Additionally, optimal partnerships exist when services for older immigrant adults are clustered around a community hub.
- **Both Peel and Halton region needs to further strategize on how best to offer public transportation subsidies to meet the needs of older adults.** The removal of “off peak and on peak” restrictions for older adults in both regions is a good practice to support the reduction of social isolation and/or loneliness.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Custom Data Tables 2017 Census

Table One	Table 2	Table 3	Table 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Geography• Age• Immigrant Status & Period of Immigration• Census Family Structure• Marital Status• Language at Home• House Hold Size• Structural Type of Dwelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Geography• Age• Sex• Immigrant Status & Period of Immigration• Visible Minority• Ethnic Origin• Generation Status• Citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Geography• Age• Sex• Immigrant Status & Period of Immigration• Visible Minority• Income Statistics• Income Sources and Taxes• Structural Type of Dwelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Geography• Age• Sex• Immigrant Status & Period of Immigration• Labour Force Status• Highest Certificate• Household Income• Income Statistics• Income Sources and Taxes

*Geography: (Peel = Mississauga, Brampton, Caledon / Halton = Burlington, Oakville, Halton Hills & Milton)

PHASE 2

Sampling & Recruitment

What are the best strategies to reach out to individuals in the community who are lonely or isolated?

Referrals or word-of-mouth

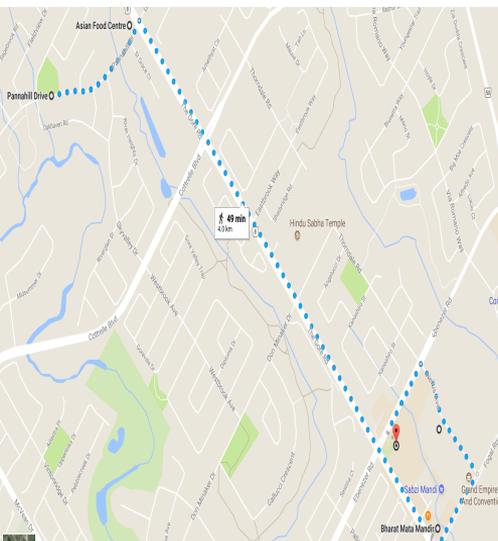
- Convenience sampling
- Purposive sampling (referral by agencies)
- Snowball sampling (referral by participants)

PHASE 2

The neighbourhood approach

Neighborhood Search – Pannahill, Brampton

Name	Type	Location	Group(s) Served
Asian Cash & Carry	Grocery Service	11, 8917 The Gore Rd, Brampton, ON L6P 1G6 biztha.com (905) 794-0015	South Asian
Bharat Mata Mandir	Place of worship	8887 The Gore Rd, Brampton, ON L6P 2K9 905 794-5530	South Asian
Bhavani Shanka Mandir & Cultural Centre	Place of Worship	90 Nexus Ave, Brampton, ON L6P 3R6 bhavanishankar.com (905) 913-2868	South Asian
Castlemore Medical Centre	Health Services/Doctor's Office	4515 Ebenezer Rd, Brampton, ON L6P 0B7 (905) 794-5900	ALL
Dhillon Video	Business	4525 Ebenezer Rd, Brampton, ON L6P 2P7 fmgurbanradio.com (905) 204-1313	South Asian
Gore Meadows Community Centre & Library	Community Centre	10150 The Gore Road 905.874.3477	ALL
Gurus Chilli Chinese Cuisine	Restaurant	8917 The Gore Rd, Brampton, ON L6P 2L1 (905) 794-0995 chillichinesecuisine.com	South Asian & Chinese
Medical Care Store	Business	4550 Ebenezer Rd, Brampton, ON L6P 2R2 medicalcarestore.com	ALL



Sheridan

Centre for
Elder Research

**BUILDING CONNECTED COMMUNITIES:
REDUCING LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION IN
IMMIGRANTS 65+**



Hello!

My name is Zahra. I work at the Centre for Elder Research at Sheridan College. I am working on a project to benefit people in your neighbourhood.

If you can have a conversation with me, I would like to hear your story and learn more about what older adults need in your neighbourhood.

Please contact me at:

Phone: 905-845-9430

extension 30137 or

Email:

sayyedz@sheridancollege.ca

• Are you a South Asian man or woman age 65+?

• Is it difficult for you to participate in activities in your neighbourhood?

• Do you know someone in your neighbourhood who is isolated or seems lonely?

The results from this project will help us to recommend the best ways to support older adults in your neighbourhood who feel lonely or isolated.

Note: Please leave a message and your call will be returned. Phone calls will be conducted primarily in English; let us know if you require translation services. You are not obligated to participate in this research project. Any information you share will remain completely private.

Research supported by funding from:

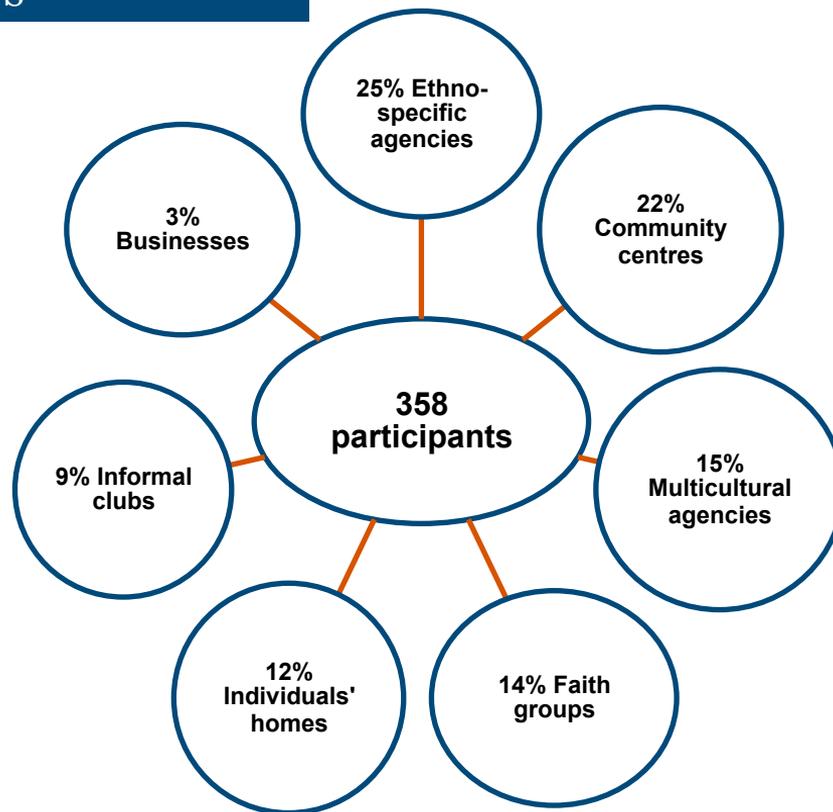


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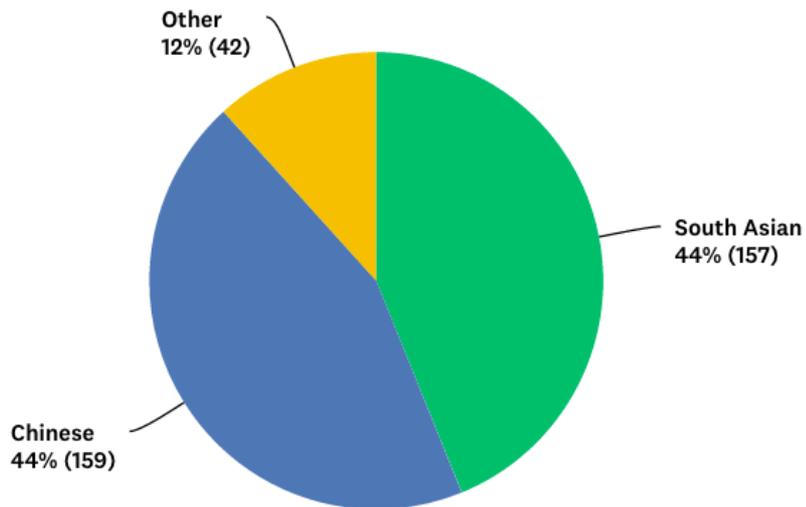
OUTREACH

Through “gatekeepers”



SAMPLE

Who contributed data?



How was the data collected?

- In English 51%
- In another language 49%

SAMPLE

Socio-demographic Summary

Most participants:

- Were between age 65 and 74
- Were born in China or India
- Were settled immigrants (living in Canada for more than 5 years)
- Resided in Brampton and Mississauga
- Were generally healthy
- Spoke some English and almost all (92%) spoke at least one additional language

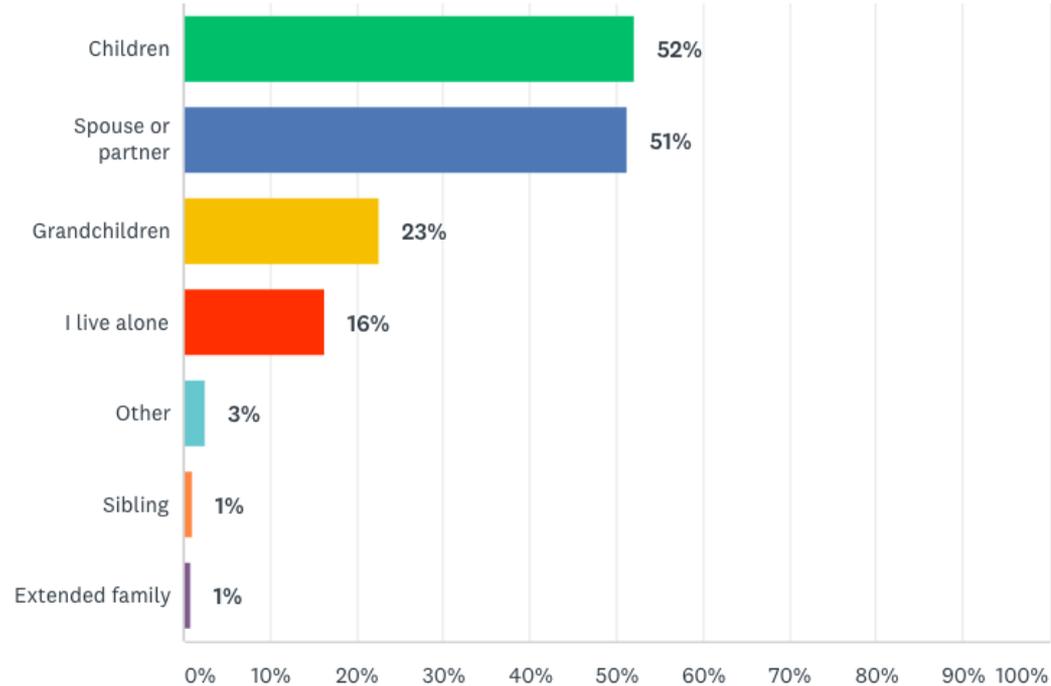
Characteristic	Response Percent (%)
Age (n=341)	
65-74	66
75-84	29
85+	5
Gender (n=346)	
Female	59
Male	41
Length of residence in Canada (n=352)	
More than 15 years	52
11-15 years	10
6-10 years	20
5 years or less	18
City of residence (n=345)	
Mississauga	61
Brampton	19
Milton	7
Oakville	7
Burlington	5
Halton Hills	1
English speaking ability (n=355)	
Strong	30
In the middle	46
Weak	24
Self-reported health status	
Good	75
Not good	25

SURVEY DATA

Living arrangements (n=355)

- Majority of the participants lived with their spouse and/or children
- **85%** also had family/friends who lived close by and most saw them often

Q: Who lives with you? (Please select all that apply)

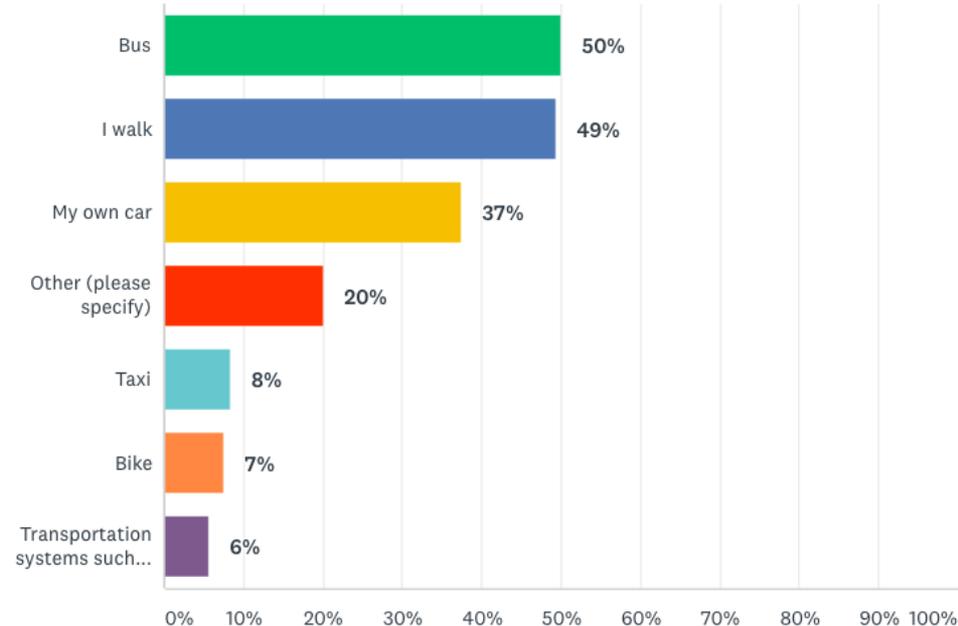


SURVEY DATA

Transportation (n=350)

- **83%** of participants relied on some form of transportation that was not their own car
- Of those using public transportation, **71%** reported barriers to using it
- The most commonly reported reported barrier was the schedule
- Transportation barriers became more pronounced if language was barrier as well

Q: Which forms of transportation do you use?

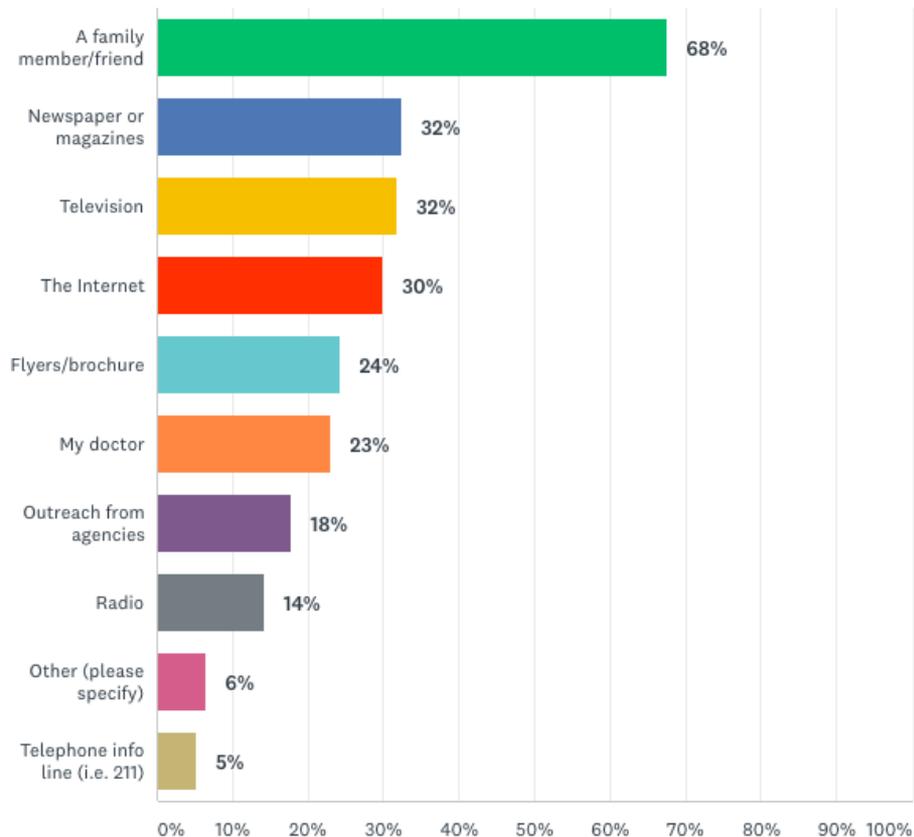


SURVEY DATA

Access to services & information (n=342)

- Most participants accessed social/cultural programs, recreation programs and faith communities frequently
- The least frequently accessed were in-home services
- **64%** of participants preferred to get information about services in their own language
- **68%** heard about services/programs through word-of-mouth

Q: How do you hear about the services you use?

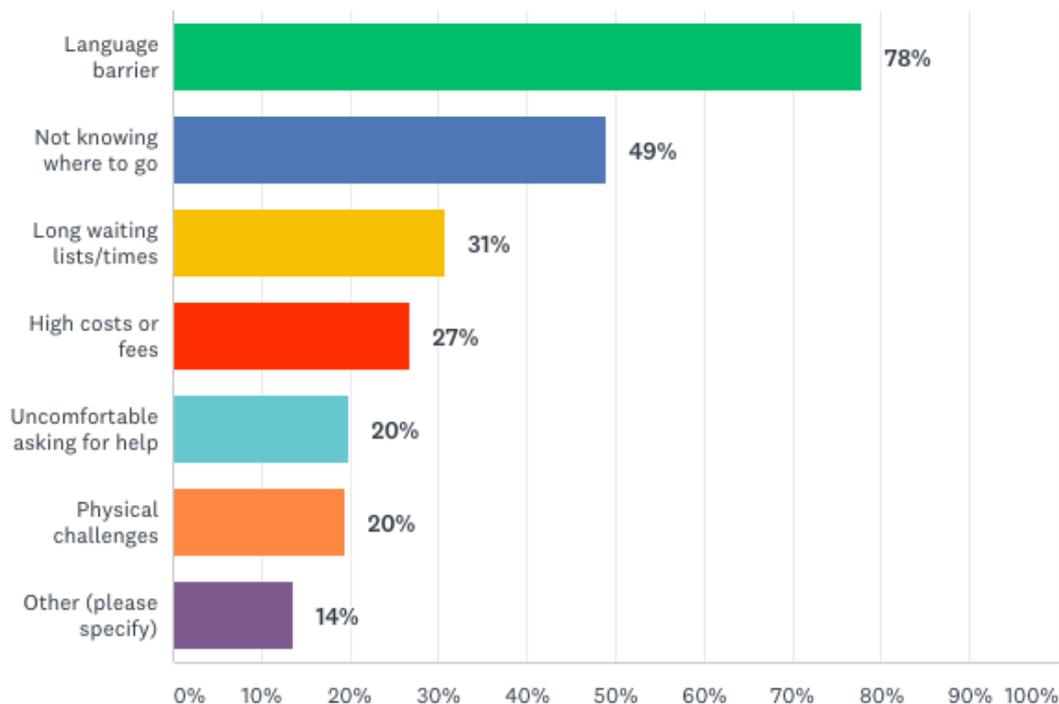


SURVEY DATA

Barriers to service access (n=302)

- **78%** of participants reported language barriers to accessing services
- This included little or no services in their preferred language, and limited access to translation services

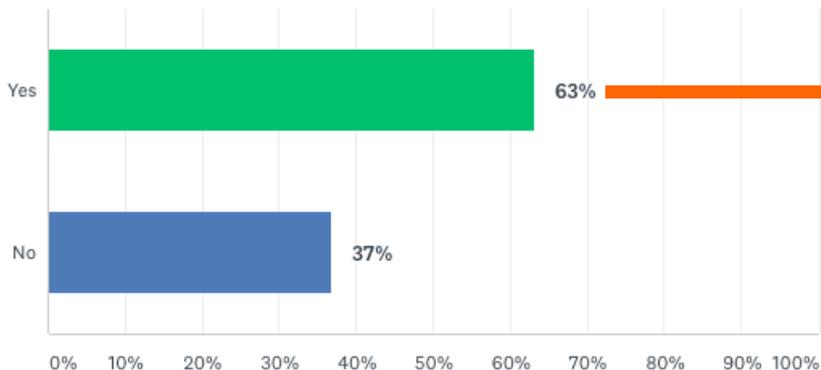
Q: Do you experience any of the following challenges when you need services?



SURVEY DATA

Life transitions

Q: Have things in your life changed for you recently? (n=320)



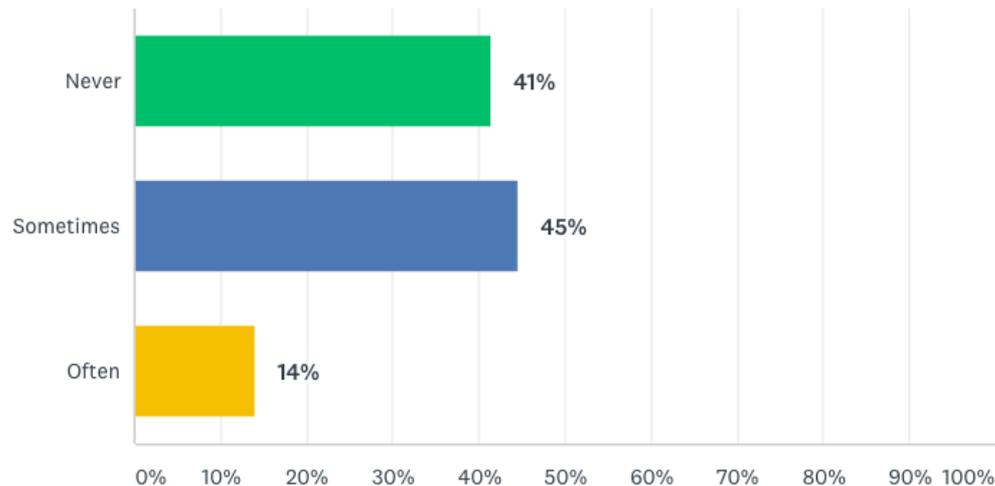
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Changes with your health	40%
▼ Loss of someone	30%
▼ Moving to a new home	25%
▼ Retirement	25%
▼ New responsibility	10%
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 8%
Total Respondents: 213	

SURVEY DATA

Social isolation (n=341)

- **59%** of participants said they 'sometimes' or 'often' feel isolated from others
- Many felt this way, even if they left their home almost everyday

Q: How often do you feel isolated from others?



SURVEY DATA

Social isolation: Participant quotes

“I feel isolated when I am restricted by my language barrier in my interaction with people”-Participant 1

*“Life is very different here from [back home], I have very limited interaction with the social environment. Even though Canadians are nice, I can’t interact with them”
-Participant 2*

“Before I found the library and the other seniors [of my background] who go there, I stayed home all day cooking and doing housework”-Participant 3

SURVEY DATA

Social isolation risk factors

Compared to those who never feel socially isolated those who often feel socially isolated are significantly more likely...

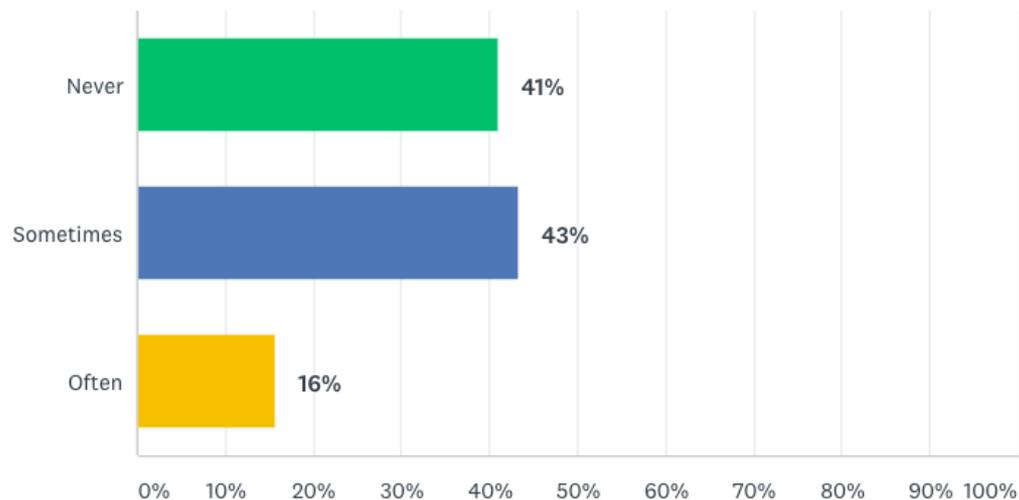
1. to be recent immigrants
2. to experience a language barrier
3. to feel poorly about their health

SURVEY DATA

Loneliness (n=342)

- **59%** of participants 'sometimes' or 'often' felt lonely
- Even if they did not live alone, and were socially engaged

Q: How often do you feel that you don't have friends?



SURVEY DATA

Loneliness: Participant quotes

“Even though I have some friends in Canada, I do not feel very close to them. They are not the same as my long-term friends back home” -Participant 4

“My husband passed away 2 years ago. Since then I feel very lonely” -Participant 5

“I came to Canada to help my children with their tasks around the house. It’s okay if I don’t have many friends of my own” -Participant 6

SURVEY DATA

Loneliness risk factors

Compared to those who never feel lonely those who often feel lonely are significantly more likely...

1. to be dissatisfied with the quantity/quality of their social interactions
2. to have recently experienced a life transition (i.e. loss of loved one)

SURVEY DATA

Possible protective factors

- Technology (computer & home phone)
- Having hobbies that can be enjoyed with other people
- Regularly attending a place of worship
- Having a community centre/library with programs nearby
- Knowing about ethno-specific clubs or agencies to join
- Positive/supportive experience transitioning to life in Canada

“You have to adjust yourself when you move to a new place if you want to be happy. You have to get out of your house and make friends” -Participant 7

SURVEY DATA

Group differences

Q: Are there significant *gender* differences in the data?

- Female older adults were more likely than males to experience transportation and financial barriers (i.e. relying on others for rides, the cost of public transportation)

SURVEY DATA

Group differences

Q: Are there significant differences in experiences of social isolation and loneliness between *recent* and *settled* immigrants?

- Recent immigrants were more likely than settled immigrants to feel isolated even if they were living with family (which was also more likely).

SURVEY DATA

Group differences

Q: Are there significant differences in experiences of social isolation and loneliness between different *ethnic groups*?

- In our sample Chinese older adults were more likely than the other groups to be recent immigrants and to experience a language barrier.

SURVEY DATA

A few 'take-aways'

- Language and transportation barriers can lead to social isolation
- Recent immigrants are at particular risk
- Loneliness often accompanies life transitions, like loss of a spouse

SURVEY DATA

A few 'take-aways'

- Although different groups encounter many of the same barriers, they can also be uniquely affected by specific barriers
- Just leaving the house everyday is not enough to prevent isolation or loneliness
- Being around other people doesn't mean an individual is satisfied with the quality or quantity of their social interactions

Thank you!

For more information about this project please contact:

**Marta Owsik, project coordinator
marta.owsik@sheridancollege.ca**