



# Integrating multicultural seniors in age-friendly North Shore communities



# Integrating multicultural seniors in age-friendly North Shore communities







- Understand experiences of multicultural seniors living on North Shore
- Share strategies for fostering more age-friendly communities and meaningfully include seniors in local programming

Today's goals



## Senior-specific immigration demographics for North Shore

**Margaret Coates**  
*Lionsview Seniors' Planning Society*



Partnership Project  
between Silver  
Harbour Seniors'  
Activity Centre,  
Lionsview Seniors'  
Planning Society  
and City of North  
Vancouver

Funded by The  
Union of BC  
Municipalities

# INTEGRATING MULTICULTURAL SENIORS IN AN AGE- FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

This short presentation focusses on the demographics of the senior's immigrant population in BC and the three municipalities on the North Shore. It also focusses on four immigrant populations chosen for the project.

A presentation of the overall report will follow.

# DEMOGRAPHICS

Several thin, parallel white lines of varying lengths and orientations are positioned in the lower right quadrant of the slide, creating a modern, abstract graphic element.

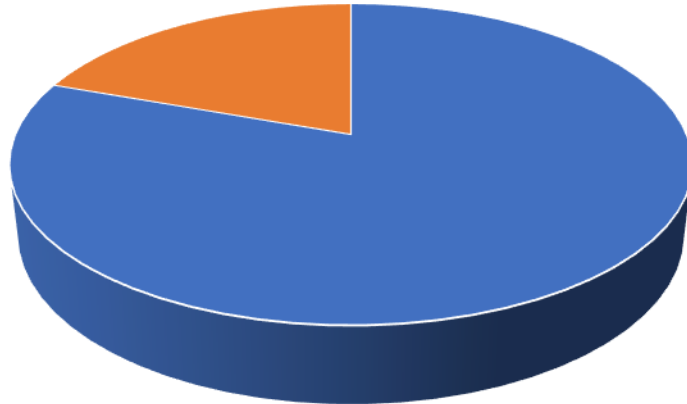


## BC SENIOR POPULATION (65+), 2016 CENSUS

	BC immigrant population	Senior population (% of total pop.)	Senior immigrants (% of seniors pop.)
European origin	150,935	19%	45.3%
Asian origin	138,680	17.4%	41.6%
All other origins	43,770	5.5%	13.1%
Total immigrant population	333,385	41.9%	
Total BC senior population	795,415		

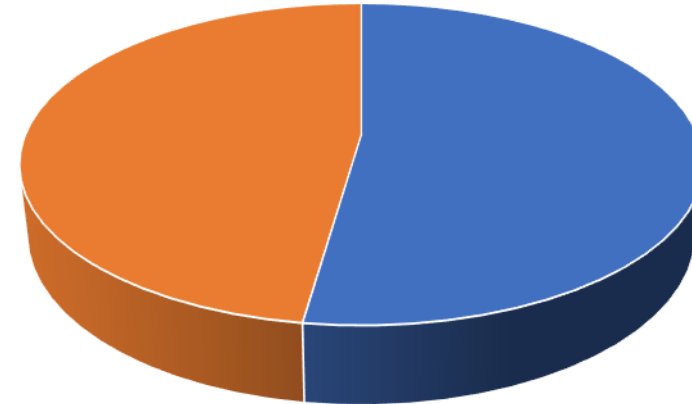


North Shore Population 2016 Census



■ Under 65 ■ 65 and Over

North Shore Population 65+



■ Seniors Born in Canada ■ Immigrant Seniors

## North Shore Population According to the 2016 census

Total population 181,306

Over 65 years of age 35,385

**19.5%**

Immigrant senior population 16,885

**48%** of the total senior population





# CULTURAL GROUPS

- ▶ Iranian
- ▶ Chinese
- ▶ Korean
- ▶ Filipino

## Demographics rationale

The target multicultural groups for this project were chosen based on the demographic information about the immigrant population of the North Shore obtained from Statistics Canada, 2016. It was noted that seniors from China, Iran, Philippines and South Korea formed a high percentage of the immigrants on the North Shore.



Immigrant Population Aged 65 and Over					
Selected Groups from Canada Census Data 2016					
Place of birth	City of North Vancouver	District of North Vancouver	District of West Vancouver	North Shore Total	% of All Immigrants
Iran	530	810	660	2,000	11.8%
China	210	510	395	1,115	6.6%
Philippines	215	180	55	450	2.7%
Korea	80	125	85	290	1.7%
Selected Total	1,035	1,625	1,195	3,855	22.8%
All other groups	3,110	5,475	4,445	13,030	77.2%
Total All Immigrants 65+	4,145	7,100	5,640	16,885	100.0%
Note: China includes Hong Kong					



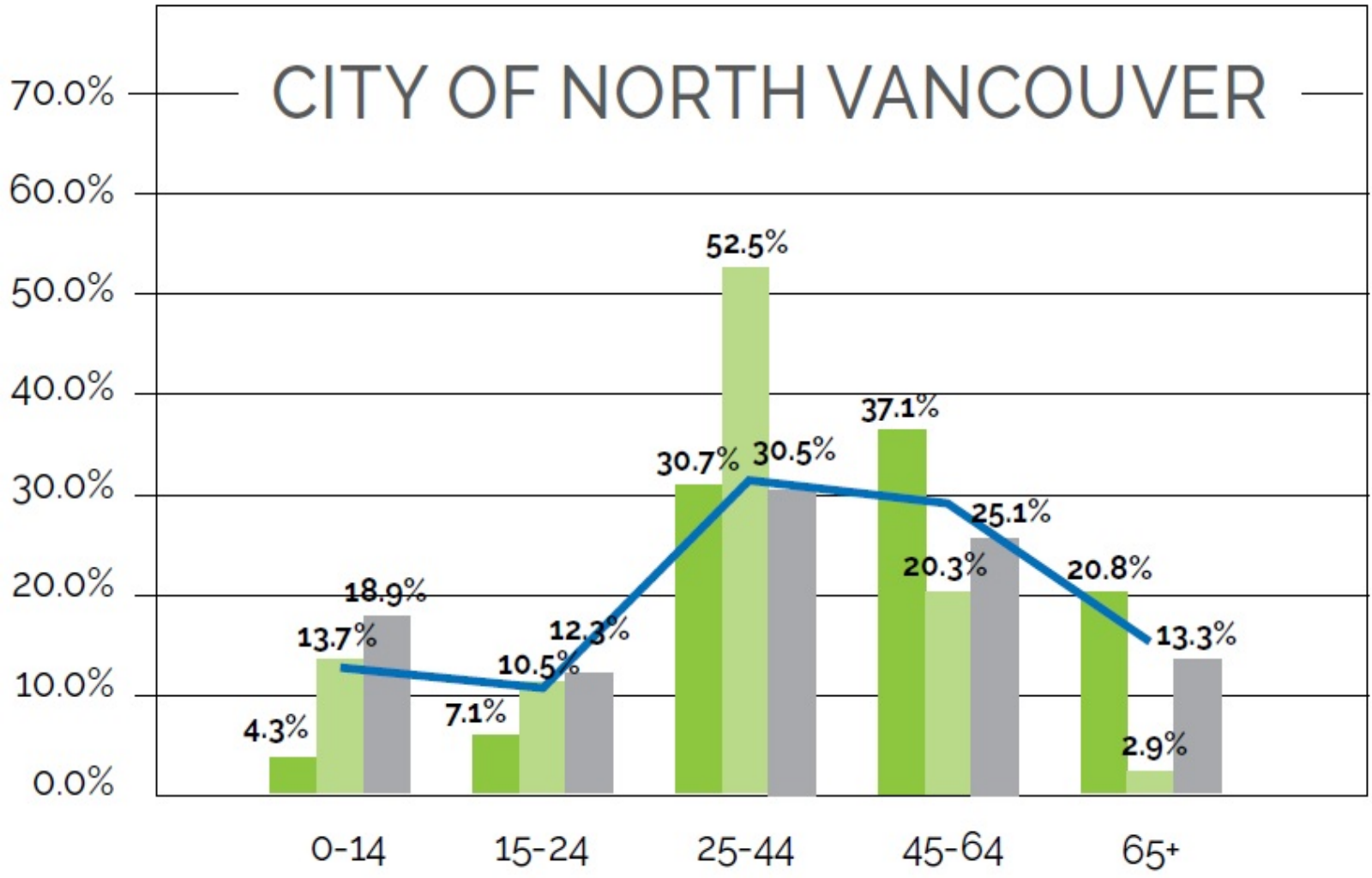
Recent Immigrant Population Aged 65 and Over					
Immigration Period 2006 to 2016					
Selected Groups from Canada Census Data 2016					
Place of birth	City of North Vancouver	District of North Vancouver	District of West Vancouver	North Shore Total	% of All Recent Immigrants 65+
Iran	110	160	100	370	44.8%
China	40	30	50	120	14.5%
Philippines	25	30	-	55	6.7%
Korea	-	-	10	10	1.2%
Selected Total	175	220	160	555	67.3%
All other groups	60	125	85	270	32.7%
Total All Recent 65+	235	345	245	825	100.0%
Note: China includes Hong Kong					



■ Total Immigrant   ■ Recent Immigrant   ■ Canadian Born

— Total Population

# CITY OF NORTH VANCOUVER



Recent Immigrants  
arrived between  
2011 and 2016

Data from 2016 Census  
Graphics by NewToBC

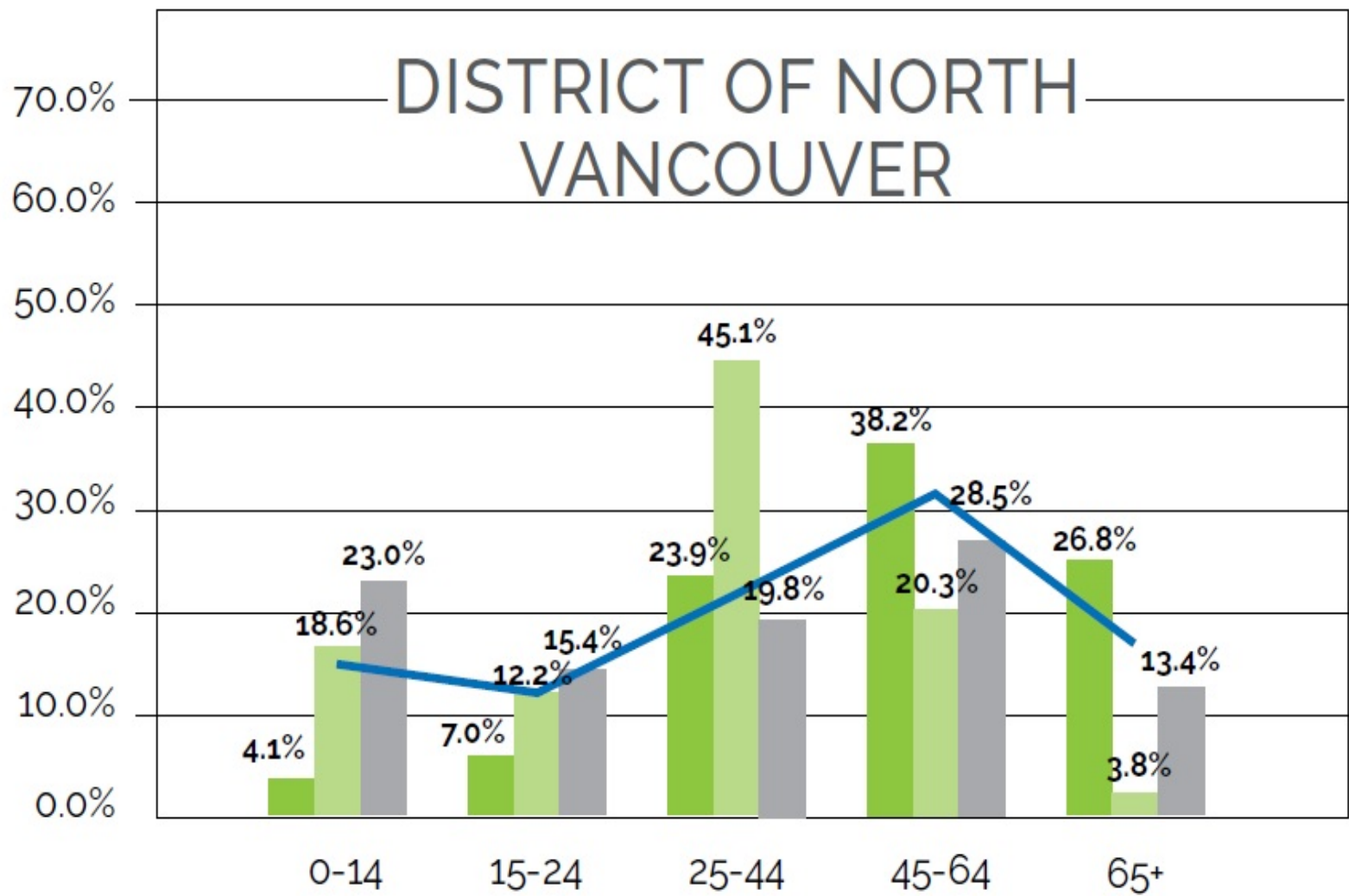






■ Total Immigrant   ■ Recent Immigrant   ■ Canadian Born

— Total Population



Recent Immigrants  
arrived between  
2011 and 2016

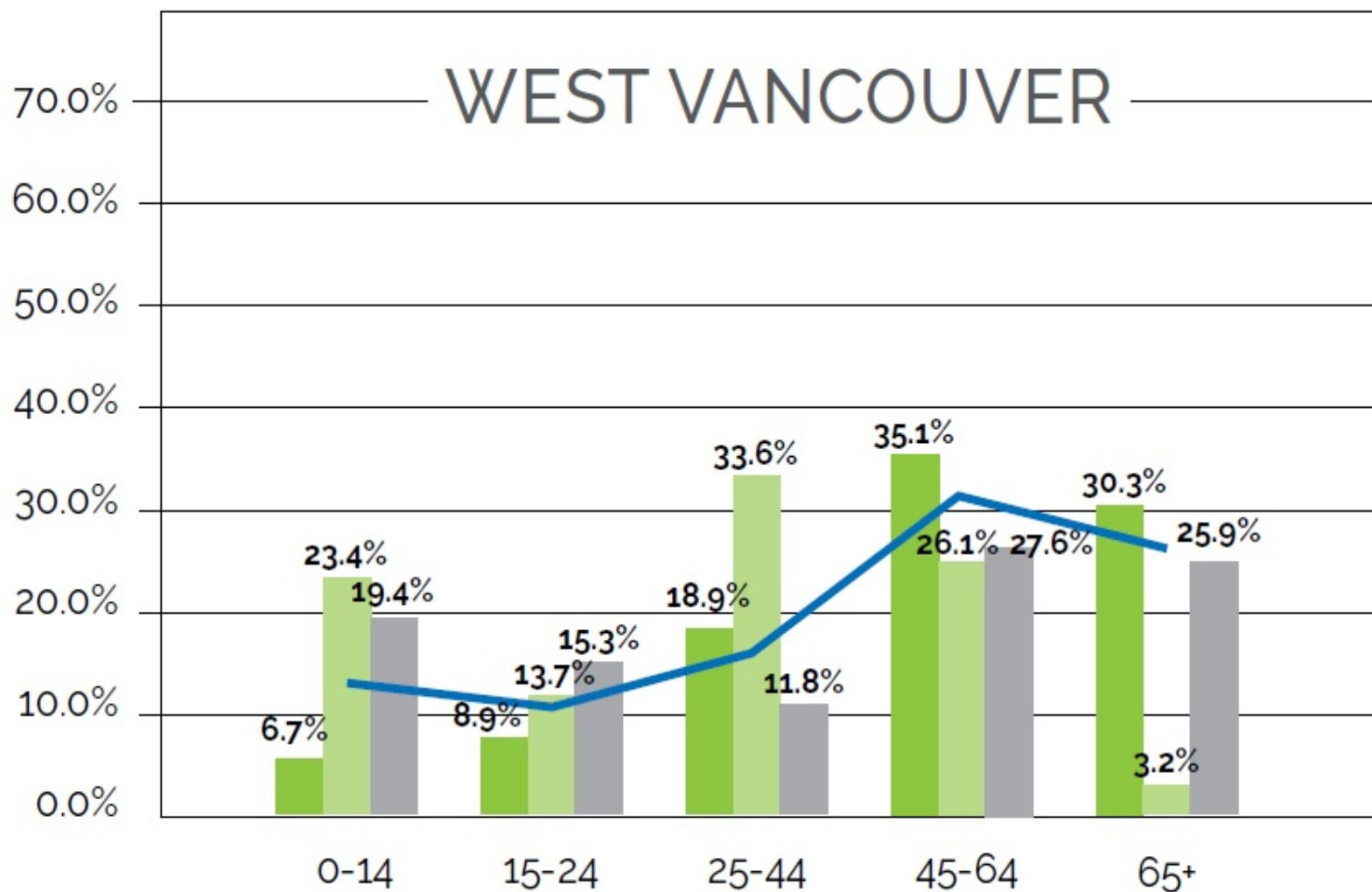
Data from 2016 Census  
Graphics by NewToBC





■ Total Immigrant   ■ Recent Immigrant   ■ Canadian Born

— Total Population



Recent Immigrants  
arrived between  
2011 and 2016

Data from 2016 Census  
Graphics by NewToBC



Between loneliness and belonging:  
Lifelong experiences of (dis)connection  
among older immigrants

Sharon Koehn  
*Department of Gerontology at SFU*



# **BETWEEN LONELINESS AND BELONGING**

Lifelong experiences of  
(dis)connection among  
older immigrants

Sharon Koehn, PhD (Gerontology, SFU; Sharon Koehn Research Consulting)

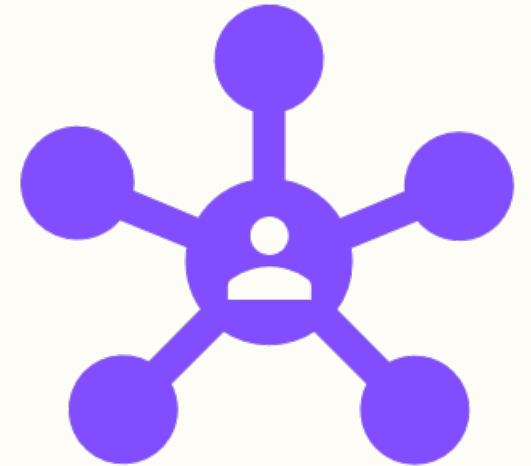
Multicultural seniors in age-friendly North Shore communities  
webinar, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020



# Social isolation vs. loneliness

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- **Social isolation** (no or few meaningful ties) to social participation – *objective*: size of the person's social network.
- **Loneliness** to belonging – *subjective*: the feeling that the number or intimacy of social relationships is not enough
  - But social isolation also seems to have some subjective components



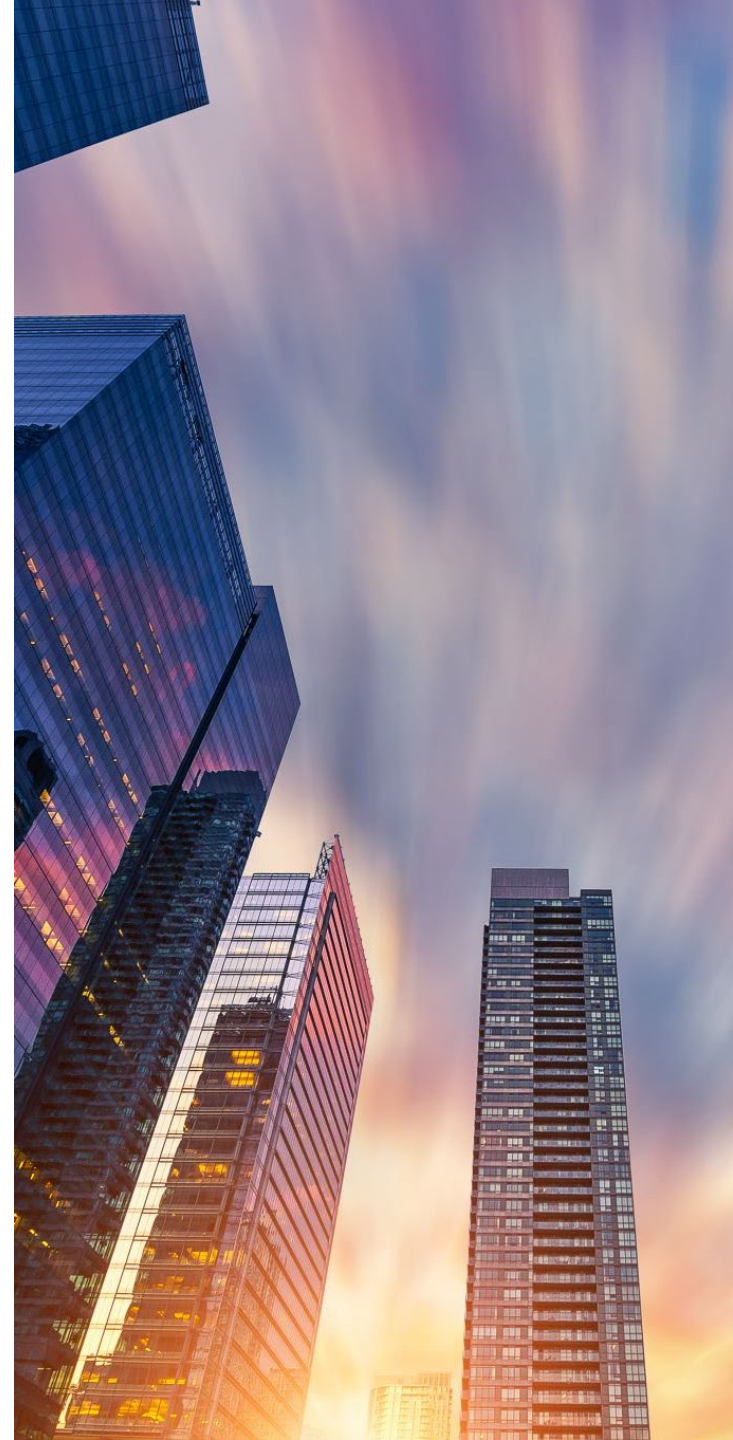
# Canadian government response

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Social isolation of Seniors (Vol I): Understanding the  
Issue and Finding Solutions

Social Isolation of Seniors (Vol II) Ideas exchange  
event toolkit

**FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR SENIORS**



# Recent immigrants (in Canada < 5 years) at greater risk

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More likely to experience risk factors identified for all older adults (e.g., higher levels of poverty, lack of awareness of services),



Experience unique challenges, such as lack of charter language (English/French) ability

# Lived Experiences of Aging Immigrants

*A narrative-photovoice project 2014-2017*

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McGill

School of Social Work  
École de service social

SFU

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
ENGAGING THE WORLD



# Risk factors for social isolation and loneliness (1)

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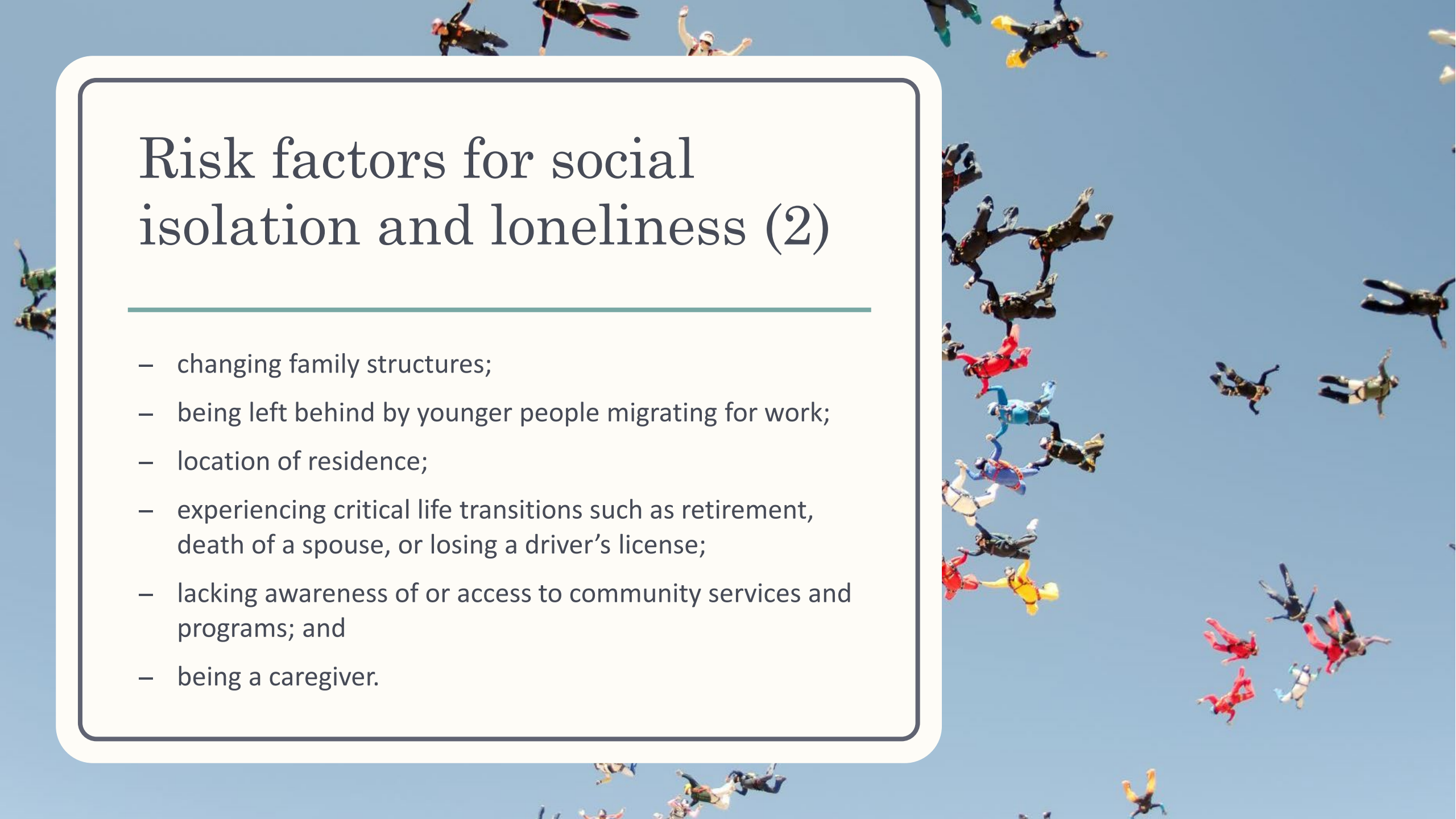
- living alone;
- being age 80 or older;
- having compromised health status;
- having multiple chronic health problems;
- having no children or contact with family;
- lacking access to transportation;
- living with low income;



# Risk factors for social isolation and loneliness (2)

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- changing family structures;
- being left behind by younger people migrating for work;
- location of residence;
- experiencing critical life transitions such as retirement, death of a spouse, or losing a driver's license;
- lacking awareness of or access to community services and programs; and
- being a caregiver.



# Storytelling

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2 case studies



# Kim Young Chul, 77

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“In Canada, the most difficult part  
is finding a place to rent”



Kim Young Chul, 2016







“Without [my daughter], every single thing is a challenge.”

# Mr Kim's risk factors (1)

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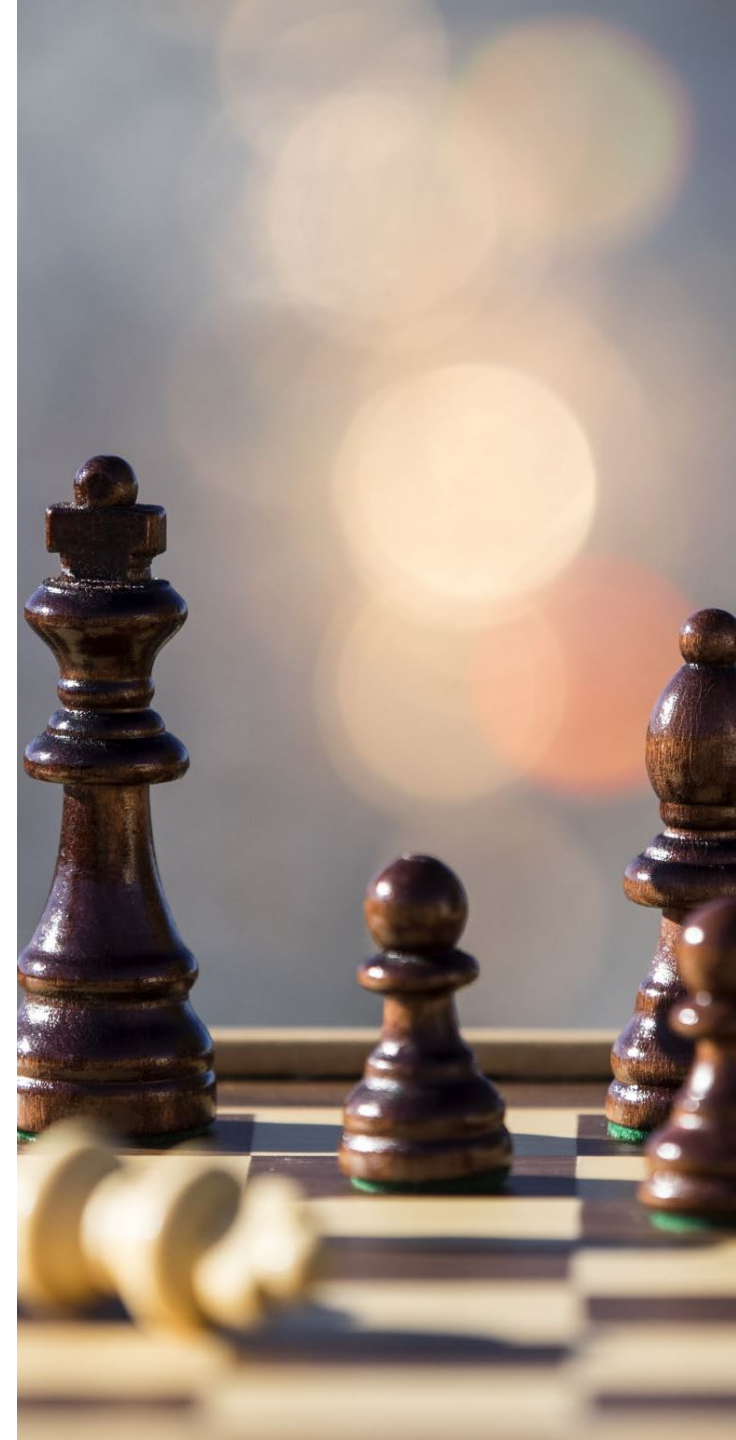
- ~~— living alone;~~
- ~~— being age 80 or older; [getting close]~~
- having compromised health status;
- having multiple chronic health problems;
- having no children [close by] or contact with family;
- lacking access to transportation;
- living with low income;



# Mr Kim's risk factors (2)

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- changing family structures;
- being left behind by younger people migrating ~~for work~~;
- location of residence;
- experiencing critical life transitions such as retirement, ~~death of a spouse~~, or losing a driver's license;
- lacking awareness of or access to community services and programs;
- being a caregiver.





# Immigrant-specific barriers

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- Lack of English
  - Money for interpreters
  - Pay for English courses
  - Citizenship disqualifies him for free EAL classes
  - “It’s inconvenience, difficult. But let’s say I feel like disabled. ...No communication....I can’t [be] involve[d].”
  - Takes classes at immigrant-serving organizations; studies at library
  - Hampers navigation to housing



A group of nine women of various ages are smiling together indoors. The women are arranged in two rows, with some standing and some sitting or kneeling. They are all looking towards the camera. The background is a simple indoor setting with a white wall and some decorative elements like green triangular flags and a string of dried corn cobs. The text "Family and Support" is overlaid in the center of the image, with a green underline under the word "Family".

# Family and Support





Divine |

# Ill health and support network

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- Relied on a network of friends; no family nearby
- Depression from dependency (“burden”) – support group
- Struggles to establish eligibility for services (compensation, caregivers)
- Rehabilitation, surgeries, medications
- Return to Philippines for family support – too expensive



# Divine's risk factors (1)

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- living alone;
- ~~being age 80 or older;~~
- having compromised health status;
- having multiple chronic health problems;
- having no children [close by] or contact with family;
- living with low income;
- lacking access to transportation;





# Divine's risk factors (2)

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- ~~— changing family structures;~~
- ~~— being left behind by younger people migrating for work;~~
- location of residence;
- experiencing critical life transitions such as retirement, ~~death of a spouse, or losing a driver's license;~~
- ~~— lacking awareness of or access to community services and programs;~~
- ~~— being a caregiver.~~

Two white birds, possibly egrets or herons, are shown in flight against a clear, light blue sky. The bird in the foreground is lower and more to the left, with its wings spread wide. The second bird is positioned higher and further to the right, also in flight. The overall scene is serene and minimalist.

# Factors specific to migration that increase risk of social isolation (1)

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- **Language barriers** – not all immigrants can take classes as newcomers due to conflicting responsibilities, but classes are no longer free after 5 years. Few services in origin languages for some minorities, e.g. Korean.
- **Family** – often assumed that immigrant families “take care of their own” but migration (and pre-migration circumstances, e.g. war, unstable employment) can separate families and not all immigrants have children
- **Migration policies** – long period of dependency following sponsorship\*/domestic worker rules limits opportunities



## Factors specific to migration that increase risk of social isolation (2)

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- **Caregiving** – grandchildren (esp. sponsored immigrants) +/- or spousal
- **Lack of awareness of services** – language barriers + unfamiliarity with social structure and variety of services
- **Housing** – location limited by affordability/accessibility – late-life immigrants (esp. sponsored) often have low income, limited choices
- **Transportation** – language + sensory impairment/disability adds to difficulty of getting driving license; language barriers can inhibit transit use





**Community supports**, esp. in own language – includes immigrant serving agencies, multicultural clubs in community centres and religious institutions



**Charter language capability** – classes needed at any stage of migration trajectory



**Subsidized housing** close to community supports and public transit



**Pensions** (prior to end of sponsorship period, now 20 years)

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## What helps?



**Babysitting services** in conjunction with community programs for immigrant older adults



**Low-cost/free culture and language appropriate respite care** for caregivers (volunteers?)



**System navigator** outreach to assist immigrant older adults with finding needed services

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What helps?



Son Jung Suk ignores the rain to connect with friends

# Thank you!

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**Sharon Koehn Research  
Consulting**

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Connect via LinkedIn or  
Researchgate





Please use the chat function to  
ask a question



Q & A



Five minutes



Short break



Challengers & barriers and pathways to success for North Shore newcomer & immigrant seniors' access to community services

**Parampal Sharma**  
*North Shore Multicultural Society*

**Annwen Loverin**  
*Silver Harbour Seniors Activity Centre*

# **BARRIERS AND PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS FOR NORTH SHORE NEWCOMER AND IMMIGRANT SENIORS' ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SERVICES**

PARAMPAL SHARMA  
(NORTH SHORE MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY)  
AND ANNWEN LOVERIN  
(SILVER HARBOUR SENIORS' ACTIVITY CENTRE)



27 Years  
Experience  
Working with  
Immigrant  
Seniors

Knowledge  
and Best  
Practice  
Expertise

(North Shore  
Multicultural Society)



Integrating  
Multicultural  
Seniors in an  
Age-friendly  
Community  
Project

(City of North  
Vancouver,  
Lionsview Seniors  
Planning Society,  
Silver Harbour Seniors'  
Activity Centre)



Today's  
Forum:  
Multicultural  
Seniors in  
Age-Friendly  
North Shore  
Communities



# **NORTH SHORE MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY: SERVICES FOR SENIORS**

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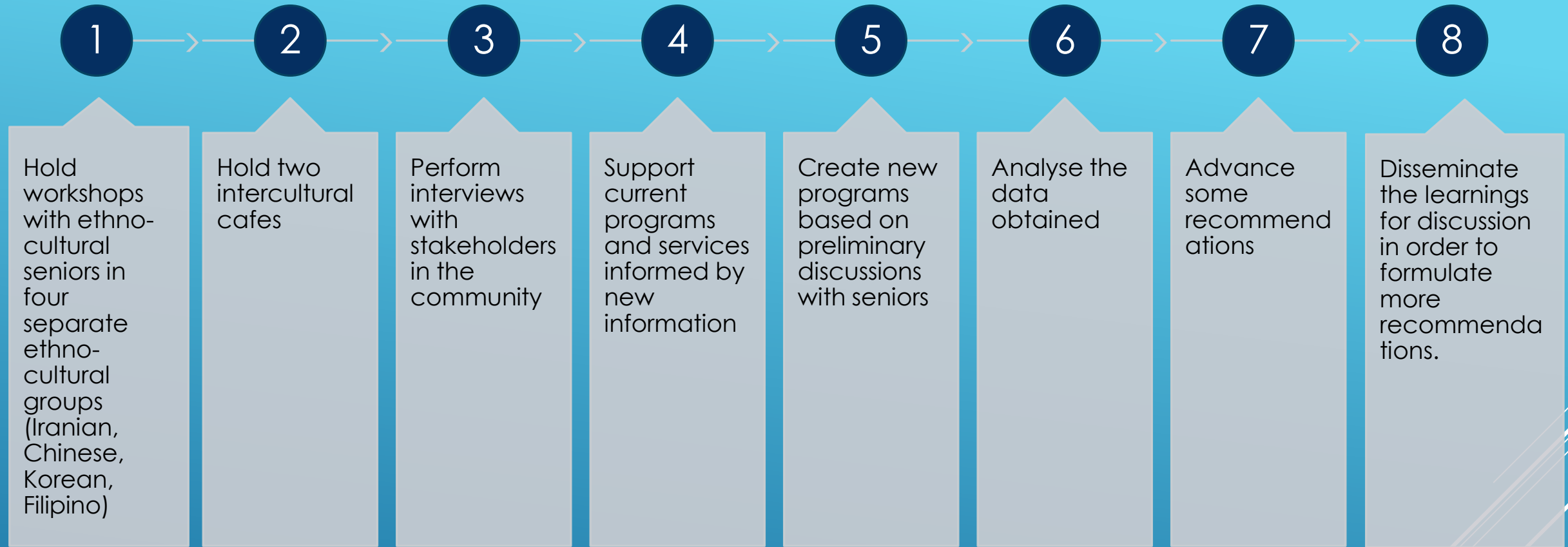
Bridging  
Programs

Community  
Connections

ESL Programs

Settlement  
Services

Community  
Events



# COMMUNITY PROJECT

# SETTING THE CONTEXT

- ▶ Immigrant older adults are increasingly diverse. This is not only due to changes in countries of origin for seniors but also due to the many 'statuses' of immigrant seniors
- ▶ Settlement and integration is a complex process that takes time... and is often connected to life changes/ transitions

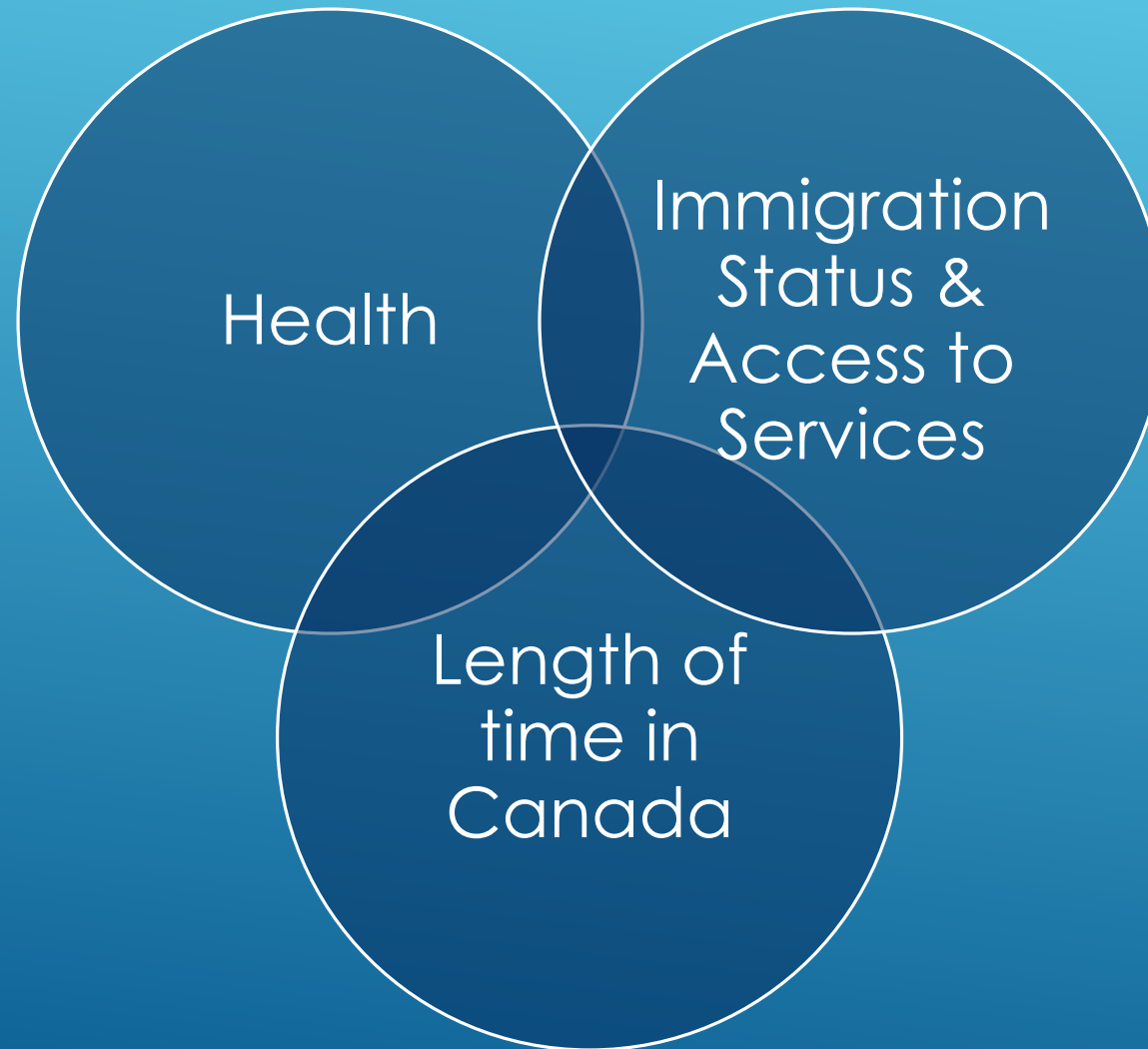


# CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY IMMIGRANT SENIORS ON THE NORTH SHORE

- ▶ Varying legal and social service access statuses
- ▶ Settlement and tasks of daily life in Canada
- ▶ English Language challenges
- ▶ Cultural challenges, expectations and changing roles
- ▶ Dependence on family and sponsorship breakdown issues
- ▶ Housing/ transportation / 'geographic dispersement'
- ▶ Poor social ties and bonds
- ▶ Poor social connections and bridges to mainstream society
- ▶ Managing health, wellness and frailty
- ▶ Limited funding for seniors settlement/ESL services = less availability of services



# SENIORS & VULNERABILITY



# MIGRANT SENIORS STATUSES & VULNERABILITY

	"Super-Visa' Senior	Newly arrived immigrant senior	Aged in Canada Immigrant seniors
Vulnerability	Highest	May Still be High	Lower
	<p>Visa holder</p> <p>Private health insurance</p> <p>No access to CPP or OAS or other income securities</p> <p>No access to Settlement Services</p> <p>Highly dependent on adult children *</p> <p>High levels of isolation *</p> <p>High barriers due to language and cultural barriers *</p>	<p>Smaller group due to changes in immigrant system.</p> <p>Often sponsored family reunification category which is capped.</p> <p>Access to health care</p> <p>Access to Settlement Services</p>	<p>Largest group of seniors</p> <p>Start seeing first wave of high diverse cohorts – will increase. Not well understood.</p> <p>Secondary and primary applicants.</p> <p>Access to 'limited' CPP, OAS.</p> <p>More independent, more settled children.</p>

# BEST PRACTICES FOR IMMIGRANT SENIOR SERVICES

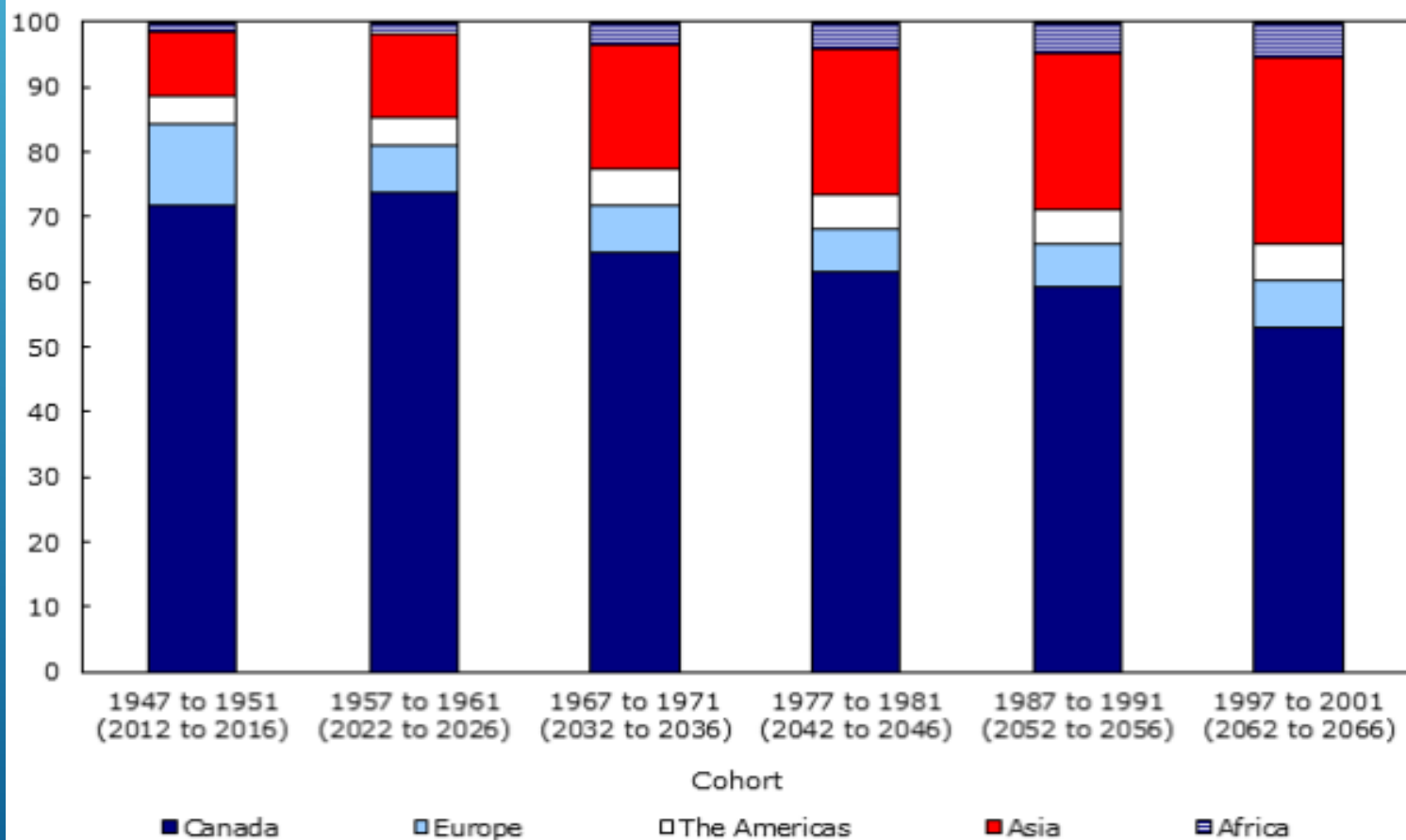
- ▶ ESL and social connection programs
- ▶ Settlement services
- ▶ Intergenerational programs
- ▶ Programs that support the reflection of life and wisdoms through appropriate cultural lenses
- ▶ Accessible and cultural relevant seniors programming in the community
  - ▶ “Parallel Programming” - 1<sup>st</sup> language
  - ▶ Bridging Programs (Settlement to Local Seniors Programs)

# INCREASING DIVERSITY

**Chart 7**

**Projected distribution of various cohorts at age 65, by place of birth**

percent



**Source:** Statistics Canada, Demography Division, special tabulations from Demosim, reference scenario.



# SERVICE DELIVERY CONSIDERATIONS

Developmental  
Stages

Diversity of  
Seniors

Goals of  
Integration

Vulnerabilities  
are Diverse

Create Bridging  
Programs

A series of three parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom left towards the top right, located in the lower right quadrant of the slide.

Many move relatively successfully throughout the community (shop, take public transportation, meet with friends and peers)

Didn't take public transportation because it was confusing

Need improvements in outdoor spaces, roads and streets

## COMMUNITY PROJECT LEARNINGS - MOBILITY

Some are more comfortable within their own cultural group and have not found a need or incentive to become more involved in the larger community

Some return to their home country, because of a lack of supports.

Some perceive their adult children pattern themselves after western culture and do not "take care" of their senior parents as it occurs in their home country. This often leaves the seniors living in some isolation.

Some depend on their children thus putting a stress on family.

## COMMUNITY PROJECT LEARNINGS - CONNECTEDNESS

Financial losses, cultural isolation, lack of integrative programs and services are barriers to full integration

Don't use some health care services (e.g. vision, hearing, physio) because of cost

Lack of English skills prevented people from taking classes or participating in community activities

Not enough English classes for seniors, to build language skills and encourage integration

## COMMUNITY PROJECT LEARNINGS - BARRIERS



More ESL classes  
tailored to seniors  
learning styles

More intercultural  
conversational  
programs

Interpreters for  
accessing  
government  
documents

Intercultural  
gatherings,  
celebrating other's  
cultures

Transportation  
training and built  
environment  
improvements

Specific workshops  
(first language or with  
translation) on various  
topics (health,  
housing, technology,  
volunteering, etc.)

Meaningful  
volunteer  
opportunities in the  
community and  
help finding these

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve collection of data from seniors not connected to services
- Reduce financial barriers to service access
- Develop collaborative model and system of working with newcomer seniors



Please use the chat function to  
ask a question



Q & A



Thank you for joining

