

There was an internal discussion group that gathered on March 21 2018 at Mount Pleasant Neighborhood House(MPNH). There was 6 people and two organizations. Most of the people present had experienced working with immigrant or refugee clients.

These are their answers to the questions

What are the issues that face you today?

Hunger is a problem for new immigrant. The Foodscape program offered at MPNH helped establish healthy eating habits, improved access to foodbanks, and showed where to find cheap produce. Shopping and Cooking skills were needed to navigate the supermarkets including-reading labels, nutritional content, and developing healthy eating habits.

Many new immigrants have complained that the price of food was too high

Syrians have an attachment to their gardens in their home country and have developed the skills to produce their own food.

Transportation is an issue for new immigrants, traveling in non connecting subway system can be difficult and refugees will often sacrifice clothes, HOUSING, and access to jobs.

Many reported their source of income assistance but that only last for one year. Then most will then apply for welfare. Other countries have different set of family values. Many woman are used to raising children and have reported low levels of education. Which compounds the problems of adjusting to the customs of a new country.

The first year is tough and several themes are emerging for new immigrants. One year of assistance is not enough to learn the language, customs, mobility of the city. A kit for for assimilation would be great for new-comers

Access to community supports such as "Better at Home", "Pathways", or the leisure access card have helped establish a community base to build from. Although many have said that a womans and childrens only timeslot for the pool would encourage more use from some cultures. More work can be done to promote the existing services available to newcomers.

Adult education is hard to access and not language specific An incentive program for peer support system would help with creating a cycle of "old" immigrants would teach "new" immigrants or a one stop shop similar to Work BC model for new comers.

Technology plays a huge advantage such as google translate, Itranslate or similar programs Text to speech. Gordon Neighborhood House offers language classes, online education, typing. Childcare while these programs are going on would help with building new life skills for a new country.

The Welcome centre is a place that new immigrants gather and share stories. It is a stepping stone that offers resources such as Classes for english, a cafeteria, shared common space. This community build ups the strengths around an individual.

There was some negative feedback about the Welcome Centre. Some people never leave the safety of the centre and have expressed that social isolation is difficult as a newly landed immigrant. No outside contact and no friends because of language barriers. People had expressed that a peer support worker to help navigate the applications would be beneficial.

The top 3 issues that were expressed tonight were HOUSING, HOUSING, HOUSING but when further pressed for clarity. Transportation came in at a close second and non-emergency Healthcare ie. dental

Participants had expressed that more food banks with less line ups, promotion of existing services, donations of technology, ie. laptops, cell phones would help combat social isolation by allowing opportunities to socialize with family member back home.