

April 2015

# Experiences of Newcomer Youth in the Home Environment

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Arts

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EXPERIENCES OF NEWCOMER YOUTH IN THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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London, Ontario

Winter 2015

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to identify the strengths and the needs of newcomer youth within their home environments. Youth between the ages of 15 and 18 years old who immigrated within the previous two years and were living in a medium-sized Canadian city were interviewed. Group interviews were conducted with participants at a local community centre. Analysis of the data was completed using concept mapping (Trochim, 1989) which included multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis. Results indicated that newcomer youth felt secure and experienced positive familial connections; however, challenges included the need for greater warmth and support from their families as well as openness to change.

Key words: newcomer youth, home, strengths, challenges.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to greatly thank my supervisor and mentor, Dr. Jason Brown, for being inspiring, supportive, and encouraging throughout this journey. I can sincerely say that he has allowed me to grow as a researcher, an academic, a clinician, and as an individual through his infinite expertise and guidance. I would also regret to not include Dr. Brown's sense of humour; without his light-hearted demeanor continuous researching, editing, and the general thesis process, would not have been enjoyable. It only reminds me that it is important to love what you do.

I would also like to thank my other faculty supervisors, Dr. Alan Leschied and Dr. Susan Rodger, for their endless support. Thank you for the encouragement and for also reminding me that "bad luck is random, but good luck is always hard work!"

Finally I would like to thank my family and friends. Thank you for your unconditional support and motivation. In particular to my family, thank you for your endless love and patience. These past two years have been quite the journey where I have gained more appreciation than at any point in time. I value all of you and I thank you all for your caring support. Thank you.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In this chapter the global context and process of immigration, including relocation trajectories experienced by newcomer youth and their families are presented. An understanding of newcomers is described through the lens of contextualism and an encompassing framework of cultural and social spheres within which they are embedded. This is followed by a discussion of the acculturation process and its psychological, social and emotional impact on newcomers, particularly newcomer youth, and the protective factors to support against acculturative pressures. Additionally, positive and negative outcomes experienced by newcomer youth are illustrated as some of the many possible effects of the acculturation process evident within their home contexts.

### **Global Context**

Globalization has been evolving from a period of bartering and New World travels to mass transnational exchanges of goods and services. As defined by anthropologists, economists and political scientists, globalization becomes identified under its ability to control capital flows, production and distribution of goods and services, along with the grand systems that extend beyond nation-states which control human and civil rights (Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Thus, globalization may be defined as the process of change, at first, generating economic, social and cultural processes within borders of a nation-state, but then extending to a post-national stage (Suárez -Orozco, 2001).

Neoliberal and Left-wing arguments have been raised about whether or not globalization has been able to positively contribute to the economic 'well-being' of countries. From a neoliberal perspective, it has been posited that there has been a greater

balance of income distribution internationally and that there have been lower degrees of extreme poverty within the last twenty years. Through their open domestic and international financial markets, countries have been able to participate in the world economy and contribute to a greater efficiency of resources (Wade, 2004). However, Left-wing arguments state equity is not the main interest of globalization and that the effects of globalization have developed the imbalance and displacement of economic, social and cultural practices (Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Wade, 2004). Although the discussion of the effects of globalization are beyond the scope of this study, it may be realized that the consequences of economic, social and cultural factors of post-national interdependence has, in part, led to the displacement and removal of people. Through the development of globalized pressures, such as income disparities, political imbalances and demographic trends, migration movements have led populations of people to immigrate to countries with high economic development (Hatton & Williamson, 2003).

Considering that most immigration occurs in countries which hold high economic development, such as the G8 countries, Canada has seen a great increase in the newcomer population in comparison to many other G8 countries, such as Germany (Statistics Canada, 2014). In 2011, Canada had a total of 20.6% of the population being foreign-born, where the main sources of newcomers were from developing countries, such as the Philippines, China and India (Statistics Canada, 2014). Most recent newcomer populations have also been from relatively young age cohorts who reside in urban areas; 58.6% of individuals have been in the working age group, along with 19.2% of the newcomer population being children aged 14 and under (Statistics Canada, 2014). In London, Ontario, more specifically, 21.2% of the total population was represented by

newcomers in 2011, and the majority migrated from Colombia, the Netherlands and South Korea (MacTaggart & Zonruiter, 2011).

### **Experiences Following Immigration**

Newcomer families often encounter many challenges, such as becoming accustomed to a new culture and difficulties with accessing education and employment, when migrating to a host country (Hynie, Guruge, & Shakya, 2012). These challenges can take place in multiple contexts, such as the school and community setting, where the family is made to culturally adapt to the environment they are in. Considering the cultural pluralistic environment newcomer families reside in there is an interaction between the challenges experienced by newcomer families and the culture they carry and are exposed to. Through this interaction individual challenges and barriers faced by newcomers may be understood under the concept of 'contextualism', which illustrates the notion that an individual cannot be understood outside the context of the family and that the family in turn cannot be understood outside of the context of the culture (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). Thus, considering that an individual's ecology is always embedded in multiple contexts of culture that influences their perception and behavior, relationships between culture, family and the individual become important in understanding the experiences faced by newcomers and their families.

### **Finding Balance in the Acculturation Process**

Within the acculturation process newcomers come to face an interaction between their culture of origin and the host culture which results in experienced cultural and psychological changes. The acculturation process can include changes in group customs, along with changes in attitude towards the acculturation process, cultural identities and



social behaviours in relation to the groups with which they are in contact (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). The process is one that involves the alteration of how the individual views her or himself in relation to other cultural communities which results in changes to the balance of one's own ethnic and national identity. Ethnic identity is the degree to which the individual maintains aspects of one's culture and remains aligned with original cultural customs. However, national identity is the degree to which the individual has an identity with respect to the society of settlement (Sabatier & Berry, 2008). Both identities interact in a way that impacts an individual's multidimensional sense of self.

The behaviour and perception of an individual can be influenced by the culture in which he or she is embedded and by one's personal process of acculturation. In turn, the interaction between an individual's ethnic and national cultural identity has been found to have an impact on an individual's psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Dion & Dion, 2001; Su & Costigan; 2009). In an international study on the adaptation and acculturation of immigrant youth (Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006), it was found that a balance between both heritage culture and national culture promoted psychological and sociocultural well-being which also seemed to decrease the perception of discrimination among newcomer youth.

Discrimination has been widely studied within the newcomer population regarding the acculturation processes and degrees of identification. In having an uneven balance between ethnic and national identity, discrimination is more likely to be perceived and experienced by the individual, particularly if one's ethnic status is visible and dissimilar to the host culture (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; McKenney,

Pepler, Craig, & Connolly, 2006). A negative association has been found between ethnic victimization and maladjustment, regardless of immigrant status, which for newcomer youth has led to feelings of anxiety, depression and aggressive behaviours (Brenick, Titzmann, Michel, & Silbereisen, 2012; McKenney, Pepler, Craig, & Connolly, 2006).

### **Maintaining Family as a Protective Factor as a Newcomer**

Particularly in the case of newcomer youth, family has been found to be a protective factor against experiences of discrimination, along with improved psychological and sociocultural adaptation. The family context is where youth begin to acquire a sense of self-worth and learn social relationships that involve parental attachment, ethnic pride and support. However, newcomer families continuously exchange acculturation orientations, which may negatively or positively affect the adaptation of the family and the role of the unit as a protective factor (Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind, 2001; Sabatier & Berry, 2008). Intergenerational conflicts have been found to arise within newcomer families possibly in relation to the differing levels of acculturation between parents and youth, which may lead to resettlement responsibilities and leadership roles taken on by youth that are typically dealt with by parents (Hynie, Guruge, Shakya, 2012).

Role reversals taken on by youth have been found to lead to stress due to the increase in responsibility. Although experienced increases of stress among youth may be related to the increase in responsibilities, youth also find their contribution to their family as rewarding and as contributing to their sense of self-worth. On the other hand, issues with authoritarian parenting styles and the lack of parental support lead to feelings of inadequacy among newcomer youth (Hynie, Guruge, & Shakya, 2012). Other possible

challenges present among newcomer youth and the family context are issues of controllability directed by parents and the lack of familial communication and support (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Dyson, 2001; Gaytan, Carhill, & Suárez-Orozco, 2007).

The immigration and acculturation process for every newcomer differs in terms of migration trajectories taken as well as past and present experiences. However, change in cultural and psychological adaptation is always present and comes to affect each newcomer individual and their families. Particularly amongst newcomer youth, changes in responsibilities, communication and support have had a significant impact on the adaptation of youth and their families (Dyson, 2001; Gaytan, Carhill, & Suárez-Orozco, 2007; Kwak & Berry, 2001).

### **Synthesis**

In an age of mass movements of immigration, families are being displaced, either voluntarily or involuntarily, to locations that are unfamiliar with their cultural heritage, values and beliefs. Thus, via a lens of contextualism, the cultural pluralistic environment of newcomer individuals can be better understood through the interaction between barriers faced by newcomer individuals and the cultures they carry and are embedded in. As this cultural contextualism influences multiple areas of one's life, this perspective can be taken in a manner to better understand a newcomer's experience.

As a part of a newcomer's experience in a host country, acculturation pressures the individual to balance her or his ethnic and national identities. An effect of imbalance, however, may be experienced as mental health difficulties, particularly among newcomer youth (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Brenick, Titzmann, Michel, & Silbereisen, 2012; McKenney, Pepler, Craig, & Connolly, 2006). Fortunately, the family system is a

protective factor against perceptions of discrimination for newcomer youth as well as a positive source of support (Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind, 2001; Sabatier & Berry, 2008). Although newcomer youth have family as a resource, intergenerational conflicts can be prominent amongst newcomer families due to acculturation discrepancies between parents and youth, which may also result in issues with familial roles, responsibilities and obligations that can have both positive and negative effects.

### **Implications**

Although the acculturation process for newcomer youth and parents differ within each family, it is important to explore the possible needs of newcomer youth and strengths that are experienced within the home environment in order to better support youth and their families in their development in a host country.

**Clinical.** Knowledge of the experiences of newcomer youth at home would help a counsellor gain the knowledge of what may be expected within a certain ethnic or cultural population. Although each family, either immigrant or non-immigrant, is diverse in its values, beliefs and traditions, becoming familiar with the needs of youth can help a counsellor to better understand the diversity of migration processes and its unique effect on family systems. Similarly, in certain cultures the issue of gender roles and gender expectations may arise influencing the process of an adolescent's immigration and development process. For instance, in the certain cultures there may be a stronger sense of male supremacy that is rooted within the home environment (Kwak & Berry, 2001). Although decision-making by the eldest male has been found to decrease in host-countries, females have been found to have greater conflict with parents in terms of striving for individuality and autonomy (Chung, 2001; Kwak & Berry, 2001). Thus, with

an understanding of gender roles in newcomer families within the home environment one is able to view the dynamics that may interact between gender and immigration (Valenzuela, 1999).

When counsellors have a solid understanding of the possible intergenerational conflicts present among a diversity of newcomer youth they are able to grow in awareness of the cultural and developmental factors that may be involved in these intergenerational conflicts. In turn, counsellors would be able to normalize challenges experienced by youth within the household, which would ease the therapeutic process and decrease feelings of stigma surrounding the use of counselling services (Chung, 2001). With this awareness, evidence-based multicultural frameworks can be better applied to interventions, strategies, and techniques that can better tailor services to newcomer youth with an approach that considers the many barriers that may be present within a household.

In addition, understanding experiences encountered by newcomer youth not only aids counsellors in appropriately approaching the diversity of challenges an adolescent may be experiencing, but it can also create a greater awareness of the strengths youth may experience within the household. By also viewing the strengths youth encounter within their home environment, counsellors would be able help youth foster these strengths by supporting them in their resourcefulness and resilience. Focusing on strengths, along with their needs, encountered by youth within the household would allow counsellors to aid in the betterment of integration and protection of youth and their families.

**Research.** Exploring the experiences of newcomer youth at home through youth-

informed qualitative analyses allows for a deeper understanding of the unique needs of youth, which can further allow for improvement in decision-making around programs, supports, and services in a variety of contexts. With information from the perspective of newcomer youth, schools and communities can be further informed on how to better support and empower youth by having a greater awareness of the factors and interactions present in the home environment that may be influencing their psychological, social and emotional realities in their wider community.

Research knowledge will also assist with improvements for programs that may be directed towards newcomer youth and their integration in the host country. The development of programs for newcomer youth can be better approached with a multicultural framework that would let program evaluation properly analyse the expected variables present within a newcomer household. With a stronger focus on the youth-informed needs and strengths encountered in the home environment the family unit can also be strengthened and aided to maintain itself as a source of resilience and resourcefulness.

In addition, research through the perspective of youth can help develop further research in the prevention and intervention of possible experienced victimization and intergenerational conflict in a newcomer youth's life (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Brenick, Titzmann, Michel, & Silbereisen, 2012; McKenney, Pepler, Craig, & Connolly, 2006). Mental health difficulties, being a result of these faced challenges, can possibly be prevented by informing services of the barriers youth encounter. In addition, research can also highlight the multiple factors that contribute to the complication of the immigration process, such as that of simple adolescent development. As newcomer

families immigrate they not only have to manage the family's ability to adapt and integrate into a new culture, but they must also contend with the transitions that take place in the adolescent stage (Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2013).

During adolescence, youth face biological, social and psychological changes whereby support is greatly derived from the family unit (Titzman, 2012). As youth further develop their sense of self, minority status and ethnicity may become significant factors that add to the difficulties and complications in identity formation at the adolescent stage. This may also have an impact on resulting mental health experiences (Su & Costigan, 2009). Therefore, the analyses of the experiences of newcomer youth within the home environment can also further develop the way in which research perceives the integration process of newcomer adolescents. Instead of solely focusing on the process of immigration and acculturation as creating intergenerational conflict, research can also bring light to other influential factors, such as common adolescent transitions that take place during this stage, that may contribute to conflicts and challenges in the family.

**Policies.** As a result of research development, policies in immigration and for newcomer families can be further improved. Research through the perspective of newcomer adolescents can bring needed attention to the possible barriers within the household in a newcomer youth's life that can be applied to education systems and other community services. Having communities be aware of the diversity amongst newcomer populations and viewing the presence of distinct groups, in terms of gender, socioeconomic status, and immigration trajectories, policy implications can be developed to promote equity, harmony and resource access that can support capacity-building and

solution development in newcomer families (Hynie, Guruge, & Shakya, 2012).

Considering the diversity amongst newcomer families, there can be a variety of different challenges experienced within the population. Regarding residential location, newcomers residing in remote areas of Canada may undergo different challenges in their ability to access services within their community. Taking diversity and multiculturalism into consideration, it is important to implement policies that better provide accessible services to newcomer families. It is also important to remain mindful of the diversity within newcomer populations in Canada in order to create an ease in the immigration process and subsequent journeys following settlement in the host country. It is particularly important to be conscious of the homogenous assumptions of newcomer families present within Canadian policies that restrict the access and use of immigration services for both newcomer youth and their families. Being aware of the multiple barriers that can be experienced by youth and their families would aid in Canada's mission of adopting multiculturalism as a policy that values each citizen, regardless of their origin, language or religion (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012).

### **Summary of Implications**

Through a better understanding of the processes, trajectories and experiences of newcomer youth and their families, clinical, research and policy implications can be improved to best accommodate and provide a smoother integrative experience for newcomers. The use of evidence-based multicultural frameworks can be applied at both micro and macro levels that can better tailor supports, services and programs to newcomer youth and to erase barriers that may be present within the household.



## **Structure of Thesis**

The purpose of Chapter 1 is to provide an introduction to the context and implications of the study that is expanded in Chapter 2, which will include a detailed literature review of the challenges and strengths faced by newcomer youth within the household. Chapter 3 details the methodology and procedures used in the study, which is followed by a presentation of the results in Chapter 4 and a comparison between the results and the existing literature in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The immigration process has a beginning but not necessarily an end in the sense that after migrating to a new place further obstacles need to be overcome, such as integration processes within and outside of the family context. For the purposes of this study the needs of and positive factors newcomer youth encounter within the home environment are discussed. The first portion clarifies terminology used within the literature, which is followed by a focus on literature concerning the factors youth may find enjoyable within the home environment and further literature highlighting the aspects youth may seek to improve their experience within the home environment. The literature was collected through the use of the PsycINFO database, on the terms ‘newcomer’ and ‘immigrant’ in combination with the terms ‘family’ and ‘home’. This search was specified further with the use of the terms ‘youth’, ‘challenges’, ‘needs’ and ‘concerns’ which only focused on peer-reviewed literature within the past 15 years.

### **Terminology**

The term ‘newcomer’ includes both immigrants and refugees who have resided in a new country for less than 5 years. Refugees are individuals who involuntarily relocate to a new country, unlike immigrants who are not forced to flee and who settle permanently in another country. Other terms typically used for refugees include refugee claimant and asylum seeker (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2010; Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, 2009). For the purpose of this study the term ‘newcomer’ is used to refer solely to immigrant populations.

### **Positive Experiences at Home**

Three factors evident in the literature concerning positive aspects of immigrant

youths' experiences within their families after relocating to a new country include: contributions to familial well-being, bonding through communication and resilience within the family system.

**Contributing to familial well-being.** Within collectivist cultures interpersonal connection with family is highly valued (Fuligni, 1998; Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000). Family can therefore have a major impact on the psychological state of newcomer youth (Titzman, 2012). Particularly during a stressful time, such as during and following immigration when the family system can be destabilized, a youth's ability to contribute to the well-being of the interconnected family can aid in improving her or his own psychological situation. This can be seen through the involvement in role reversals and fulfilling family expectations.

**Role reversals.** As a result of immigration, the structure of a newcomer family may shift due to language and culture, which can impact both parents and children (Trickett & Jones, 2007). Newcomer children have been found to adjust and integrate faster into the society of the host country than their parents because of their closer interaction and contact with the new culture. This progressive cultural development and adjustment for adolescents places them in a position where they are better able to cope and navigate around acculturation-related demands in comparison to their parents who are likely to develop the socio-cultural skills needed to navigate through the new society at a slower pace (Titzman, 2012; Wu & Chao, 2011).

There is an acculturation gap present between youth and their parents. Adolescents have been found to take on role reversals in which adolescents are given or assumed the role of a parent (Titzman, 2012). This type of role reversal can be considered

as instrumental caregiving and emotional caregiving, where instrumental caregiving is the role of helping with domestic-related parental responsibilities and emotional caregiving consists of helping with family conflicts. Focusing on instrumental role reversals, newcomer youth can take roles as cultural translators for parents and siblings that can include mediating between government agencies, school and community contexts, and translating for parents when verbally communicating with native speakers (Chhuon, 2011; Titzman, 2012). In addition, parents can also experience many forms of pressure within the new environment and be preoccupied with their own concerns, such as employment pressures, which can also cause the child to take on parental roles such as caring for siblings (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Hafford, 2010; Titzman, 2012). Within instrumental role reversals, youth are able to collaborate with parents in order to solve family-related problems (Titzman, 2012).

While it is important not to homogenize immigrant families into particular characteristics, many with a collectivistic background have as a common basis the notion of family solidarity. In a collectivist culture there is a particular emphasis on family members' obligations and responsibilities to one another (Merz, Ozeke-Kocabas, Oort, & Schuengel, 2009; Fuligni, 1998). There is a great sense of duty among adolescents to care for their family and parents. This sense of obligation is what also assigns youth to their integral roles within the family unit (Fuligni, 1998). In one study immigrant youth were found to be more "involved in their parents' personal problems or parental conflicts than adolescents from non-immigrant families" (Titzman, 2012, p. 881).

*Effects of role reversals.* As a result of this sense of obligation and responsibility to family, particularly within a collectivistic cultural heritage, role reversals lead to

positive effects within adolescents that contribute to their sense of self and feelings of self-worth as a family member. Although role reversals have also been found to lead to negative outcomes (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Hynie, Guruge, & Shakya, 2013; Salehi, 2010; Titzman, 2012; Trickett & Jones, 2007), youth who have taken on role reversals gain improved social skills and ability to cope with adversity. As demonstrated by Titzman (2012) in a study of outcomes from instrumental and emotional role reversals, instrumental role reversals in adolescents are closely related to higher self-efficacy and lower exhaustion. Possible reasons for these positive outcomes may have been youths' ability to gain the social and cognitive skills needed to navigate around host cultural and society demands that increased their sense of competency and efficacy in an unfamiliar environment. Additionally, in terms of its impact on family cohesion, role reversals in newcomer families have not been found to impact overall family satisfaction or cohesion (Trickett & Jones, 2007). Adolescents view their role in the family as integral as they understand the situations their families face and because its resourcefulness and resilience becomes a priority, youth experience greater interdependence and cohesion (Trickett & Jones, 2007).

***Fulfilling familial expectations.*** Youth have also been found to appreciate the interaction between fulfilling expectations and obligations and developing a sense of clarity in a new home environment (Fuligni, 1998; van Geel & Vedder, 2011). For instance, newcomer parents have a tendency to place a high value on school achievement and maintain this expectation on their children for encouragement to strive for better futures for themselves. Parents often discuss this expectation by comparing the opportunities available in the country of origin to that of the host country in order to

highlight the accessible and developed education system that they can engage and succeed in. As a result, children internalize this expectation of achievement (Costigan, Hua, & Su, 2010; Fuligni, 1998). Therefore, when youth are successful in school they feel that they have positively contributed to the well-being and satisfaction of their family. In addition, by fulfilling these expectations and obligations youth feel that they positively contribute to the reputation of the family (Fuligni, 1998; van Geel & Vedder, 2011). When parents also highlight family obligations with their children they are transmitting cultural knowledge when children are asked to help the family. This allows for greater family cohesion and the promotion of ethnic activities (Su & Costigan, 2009). Thus, youths' positive feelings of familial contribution aid in their feelings of self-efficacy and achievement which may be particularly integral when migrating to a new place where unfamiliarity is often encountered and could easily promote feelings of discouragement and lack of belonging.

**Bonding through communication.** There is a lack of literature regarding the topic of open and effective communication as a factor youth find being a positive trait within the home environment. However, the factor of communication is discussed in this literature review in relation to a lack of open communication between newcomer youth and their parents.

Although communication is an integral factor in developing familial cohesion (Sabatier & Berry, 2008), open discussion within the family context about values and cultural differences is an important source of development for youth to enhance their psychological well-being. By allowing a safe space for effective and supportive communication between youth and parents there can be a greater acceptance of parental

ethnic values by youth and of youth national values by parents (Sabatier & Berry, 2008). This mutual understanding fostered through communication also allows for maintenance of emotional bonds between family members, which can, as a result, decrease the effects of acculturation gaps present within newcomer families. Thus, through affective responsiveness with acknowledgement and reciprocity parent-child relationships can flourish and remain a resourceful tool throughout the immigration process, allowing for the decrease in experiences of psychological distress among youth (Kim & Park, 2011; Kuperminc, Wilkins, Jurkovic, & Perilla, 2013).

**Family as a means of resilience.** Intergenerational conflicts tend to arise between newcomer youth and their parents as a possible outcome to the different levels of acculturation between them (Fung & Lau, 2010; Kwak & Berry, 2001; Sabatier & Berry, 2008; Wu & Chao, 2011). However, the family unit has been viewed as a source of strength and as an important resource that provides support for newcomer youth (Gaytan, Carhill, & Suárez-Orozco, 2007; van Geel & Vedder, 2011; Sabatier & Berry, 2008). The family context is where youth first begin to gain their sense of self-worth and learn to interact and build social relationships, which makes family an important resource for youth in adapting to a new environment and culture (Sabatier & Berry, 2008).

When in a new culture there is a high frequency of experienced or perceived victimization and discrimination by newcomer youth based on ethnic identity which tends to lead to experienced mental health difficulties, such as feelings of anxiety, depression and aggressive behaviours (Brenick, Titzmann, Michel, & Silbereisen, 2012; McKenney, Pepler, Craig, & Connolly, 2006). As the relationship between victimization and expression of ethnic identity is positively related, the solidarity and cohesion present

within newcomer families becomes even more important in youths' lives as it fosters their resilience and prevents and/or reduces feelings and perceptions of discrimination. Therefore, feelings of family harmony and the maintenance of familial relationships (Kwak & Berry, 2001) that are strongly supportive are seen as integral and important to youth within the home.

***Feelings of solidarity as a form of resilience.*** Comparing first generation and second generation immigrant youth, first generation youth are more likely to seek family as a source of support as they are more likely to have lost extended family support and are not as integrated into the new culture as their second generation counterparts (Adserà & Tienda, 2012; Merz, Ozeke-Kocabas, Oort, & Schuengel, 2009). As first generation children also show a strong preference for norms, values and behaviours that are similar to their culture of origin (Merz, Ozeke-Kocabas, Oort, & Schuengel, 2009; Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu, & Tatla, 2004), family solidarity also becomes important in protecting against feelings of stress (Merz, Ozeke-Kocabas, Oort, & Schuengel, 2009; Stuart & Ward, 2011).

***Factors that contribute to feelings of solidarity.*** Feelings of solidarity have been found to be especially strong among families that hold a religious denomination, as is illustrated in a study conducted by Merz and colleagues (Merz, Ozeke-Kocabas, Oort, & Schuengel, 2009). Studying first-generation and second-generation immigrants, Merz and colleagues found that families that belonged to a religious denomination displayed greater feelings of family solidarity, particularly if families identified as Muslim (Merz, Ozeke-Kocabas, Oort, & Schuengel, 2009).

In relation to the expression of religion as a form of enhancing feelings of family



solidarity, the maintenance of ethnic and national identity also makes a significant contribution to the well-being of newcomer youth. When parents continue to be embedded in their ethnic identity and behaviour, which would include retaining the language of origin and maintaining interest in food and media of their heritage, it promotes ethnic identity within the child, which, as a result, positively impacts psychological well-being (Sabatier & Berry, 2008; Stuart & Ward, 2011). A study by Sabatier and Berry (2008) examined the factors that affect psychological and socio-cultural adaptation within immigrant families. The study found that maintenance of both /ethnic and national identity among immigrant families promoted positive adaptation, which were seen to reduce levels of deviance and contribute to an increase in general and familial self-esteem. Therefore, the balanced integration of newcomer parents into the host society is also particularly important to how youth come to adapt and integrate. The ethnic and national behaviours of parents impact the psychological and socio-cultural well-being of youth, which may come to influence the manner in which they interact inside and outside the home environment. This transmission of cultural knowledge can be passed on by engaging in ethnic activities, such as cooking, but it can also be transmitted through the emphasis of obligation and expectation which teaches the importance of family and leads to greater familial cohesion (van Geel & Vedder, 2011; Su & Costigan, 2009; Stuart & Ward, 2011).

Feelings of familial support and resilience are also seen in parental traits, such as warmth, reasoning, monitoring, and autonomy-promoting parenting practices, which encourage ethnic belonging and family obligation expectations (Chen, Gance-Cleveland, Kopak, Haas, & Gillmore, 2010; Su & Costigan, 2009). Studies have found that when

parents provide a warm and supportive environment children are more likely to perceive their parents' values in a positive light, which is more evident when mother's are involved in the parenting practices (Knafo & Schwartz, 2001; Rudy & Grusec, 2001; Su & Costigan, 2009). As youth view their family's warmth and values their feelings of connectedness may also increase which promotes familial cohesion and further support for youth.

### **Challenging Experiences at Home**

From the existing literature there are three themes concerning what newcomer youth want to improve their experience within the home environment. These topics include greater autonomy, better communication and increased parental support.

**Greater autonomy.** Immigration requires a change in environment that often means experiencing contact with different systems of values and beliefs. These values can reflect standards that are placed to guide behaviour, people and events, which greatly shape one's behaviours and interactions. In the process of immigration, newcomer parents carry their pre-established values that allow them to interact with their children in a particular way (Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000). The forms of socialization vary among families where some families may hold more collectivistic values versus those that may be considered individualistic.

***Finding a balance between cultural identities.*** In collectivist cultures there is a strong focus on interdependence among group members and an emphasis on obeying elders through expectations and obligations. In contrast individualistic cultures emphasize the need for autonomy from and equality amongst parents and have less expectations from and obligations to the family unit (Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000). In relation to

newcomer families, who are likely to experience a clash between the cultural values they carry and those of the host country, youth have found difficulties integrating their ethnic identity with national identity. Ethnic identity has been found to be a positive contributor to the psychological and social well-being of newcomer youth (Sabatier & Berry, 2008); however, the imbalance between ethnic and national identity can cause difficulties with sociocultural adaptation (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006).

As youth are encouraged by their parents to maintain their ethnic identity and obey the values and expectations of their cultural heritage, it may become a source of conflict if youth decide to adopt individualistic values and beliefs that collide with their collectivistic values (Dennis, Basanez, & Farahmand, 2010; Wang, Kim, Anderson, Chen, & Yan, 2012; Wu & Chao, 2011). During adolescence youth begin to experience value conflicts with parents as they strive for greater autonomy (Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2013). Intergenerational conflict has the potential to be more prominent among newcomer families. Gaining greater autonomy within a less individualistic culture may create conflict within newcomer families, which can, as a result, decrease cohesion and affect communication of values (Dennis, Basanez, & Farahmand, 2010; Wang, Kim, Anderson, Chen, & Yan, 2012).

***Distribution of authority.*** In addition to the need for greater autonomy among youth, issues around decision-making within a hierarchical family structure have also been found to be a difficulty. Especially as the family becomes nuclear, there may be struggles introduced through negotiations between parents and children that no longer carry the weight of adult extended family members to reinforce the presence of cultural authority figures in their lives (Dennis, Basanez, & Farahmand, 2009; Kwak & Berry,

2001; Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006). Differences between newcomer and non-newcomer youth and their parents evidence greater generational discrepancies among newcomer families when it comes to parental authority compared to non-newcomer families (Kwak & Berry, 2001). A possible reason for this may be due to a “rapid weakening of strong traditional family ties and of extensive kinship network” (Kwak & Berry, 2001, p. 160), which could decrease traditional perspectives of authority.

***Gender differences in seeking autonomy.*** This greater need for autonomy has been evident in gender differences among newcomer families. A study looking at intergenerational conflict regarding gender, ethnicity and acculturation (Chung, 2001) found that females were more likely than males to have parental conflict regarding dating and marriage. Parental expectations and standards of female youth contributed to intergenerational conflict as parental practices restricted female youth from their need for individuality and autonomy (Chung, 2001; Kiang, Supple, Stein, & Gonzalez, 2012). A prominent issue is the fear and undesirability of outmarriages among newcomer parents with the relative acceptance of the practice among their youth. Rooted in ethnocentric views and historical stigma, restriction of outmarriages create further stress and conflict between newcomer female youth and their parents (Chung, 2001).

**Better communication.** There is a lack of literature on the communicative strengths and positive factors experienced by newcomer youth in the home. There does seem to be, however, greater literature with a focus on the communicative challenges experienced by youth within the household. As seen with newcomer youth, adolescents become more familiarized and exposed to more host cultural contexts than their parents because of the contact they have in school and the community. Newcomer parents are

more likely to be involved in employment sectors where learning English is limited through lack of contact with native English speakers, which only allows them to gain a basic understanding of the English language (Ong & Hee, 1994; Tseng & Fuligni, 2000). Thus, as adolescents become more proficient in English certain conflicts may begin to arise between youth and their parents.

***Shifts in language as creating tension.*** Traditional language holds an honorary position in newcomer families. It defines and communicates authority within the family system. With increased use of English distance may develop between parents and youth decreasing the family's sense of cohesion through the gradual loss of heritage language (Tseng & Fuligni, 2000). The distance may also be fostered by the increasing need for individuation experienced by adolescents (Tseng & Fuligni, 2000). As evident in the work of Tseng and Fuligni (2000), that measured newcomer parent-adolescent language-use and relationships, youth who spoke to their parents in a language other than their native-tongue were more emotionally distant from their parents in comparison to youth who spoke to their parents in the native language. In the process of acculturation there is a language shift that can create tension within the family and restrict communication (Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006).

***Misinterpretations in conversation.*** Reducing verbal communication in newcomer families contributes to a decrease in the rich conversation that usually involves emotional and supportive expressions. This creates a barrier for youth and parents to effectively share experiences with one another and restricts the range of content discussed. As a result, miscommunication between youth and their parents is likely to increase, possibly causing fewer opportunities for proper understanding and appreciation

of the other's viewpoint (Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006; Tseng & Fuligni, 2000).

***Indirect means of communication.*** Speaking honestly and openly with youth is essential for newcomer parents to effectively communicate with their children and allows adolescents the opportunity to have a smoother integrative process by experiencing the support that youth still want from parents (Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006). A study by Cooper and colleagues (1993) explored the familial relationships among newcomer youth and their parents. Parents were found to communicate indirectly with their children and siblings were found to play a large role in communicating their mother's expectations, whereas mothers played a large role in communicating the expectations of the father. These indirect means of communication display language as a barrier to effectively expressing concerns and expectations. In addition, this can lead to further miscommunication and misunderstanding between youth and their parents.

***Increased parental support.*** One of the major shifts that occur as newcomers migrate is the change in the family structure and composition. As the country of origin is left behind, the newcomer family becomes nuclear and extended family is no longer a large aspect of familial support (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Kwak & Berry, 2001; Merz, Ozeke-Kocabas, Oort, & Schuengel, 2009). Newcomer youth have found a decrease in the accessibility and quality of support after immigration as extended family is minimized, which makes the immediate newcomer family system all the more important to aid youth in their development and means of acculturation.

***Impacts on support and cohesion.*** With a loss of personal and social support from the larger family network youth have to rely more on the immediate nuclear family and require further support in order to overcome the difficulties of having to live within a

different culture (Adserà & Tienda, 2012; Merz, Ozeke-Kocabas, Oort, & Schuengel, 2009). However, a large obstacle that is encountered by newcomer families is that parents are typically working menial jobs that require long hours, making it very difficult for parents to be present and available for their children (Gaytan, Carhill, & Suárez-Orozco, 2007). As a possible result of this, the psychological well-being of youth can be affected through the lack of parental involvement in youths' lives, which is particularly greater among female newcomer youth. This can be related to the subjection of females to gender socialization roles that require them to internalize stress and have more cooperative interaction styles, in comparison to males who may be socially taught more active styles of coping (Dawson, Perez, & Suárez-Orozco, 2012; Nolen-Hoeksema & Girgus, 1994).

Youth do seem to understand the daily pressures experienced by their parents. These pressures exist in the work force and often reflect financial concerns. They are also aware of the multiple barriers their parents experience daily, and so become reluctant to ask them for help. In one study (Janzen & Ochocka, 2003) an exploratory analysis of the experiences of newcomer youth found that youth felt that their parent's concerns were impacting their ability to effectively parent and did not want to place any further burdens on them. As a result, youth spoke restrictively about their concerns with their parents (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Janzen & Ochocka, 2003). The limited communication, as a result of perceived parental pressures, impacts the cohesion and interaction between youth and their parents, which also affects the immigration and acculturation process for both youth and parents.

***Greater youth responsibilities.*** Due to the stress and concerns newcomer parents

are likely to experience, the issue of role reversals has also become a concern for youth. Although role reversals can positively contribute to youths' psychological and social well-being (Fuligni, 1998; Trickett & Jones, 2007), expectations, such as having to take care of siblings, can also lead to difficulties experienced by youth. As a result of youths' faster socio-cultural adaptation, parents begin to rely on their children to help with family matters that can include navigating the host culture and taking on parental roles, such as caregiving. Emotional and instrumental role reversals, including the management of family conflicts and helping with domestic-related responsibilities respectively, have been seen to increase in newcomer youth (Titzman, 2011). Emotional role reversal has been found to be the most challenging for youth (Titzman, 2011).

Emotional role reversals may be most difficult for youth to experience as they gain the responsibility to maintain the emotional stability of the family while also having to manage their own emotions, as a result of less familial support. This would possibly cause further overwhelming feelings as it also contributes to the experienced biological, social and psychological changes during adolescence (Adams & Berzonsky, 2003; Titzman, 2011)

Particularly considering the psychological, biological and social changes and transitions experienced during adolescence, newcomer youth have to become responsible for their own internal and external conflicts and those of their family, which can lead to feelings of stress and other mental health difficulties (Hynie, Guruge, & Shakya, 2013; Salehi, 2010; Titzman, 2011; Trickett & Jones, 2007). Youth have been found to display higher psychological distress, poorer academic status, higher levels of depression and lower levels of happiness, more externalizing and internalizing problems as well as



somatic problems as a result of role reversals (Titzman, 2011). Among youth who hold strong family obligation values, role reversals, such as language brokering and translating, seem to particularly have a negative impact on youth's psychological health (Hua & Costigan, 2012). However, for other youth role reversals can lead to higher family adaptability and functioning as both parents and youth begin to work interdependently (Trickett & Jones, 2007).

*Parenting styles.* Parenting style is also a factor in the psychological, emotional and social adaptation of newcomer youth (Chen, Gance-Cleveland, Kopak, Haas, & Gillmore, 2010; Maldonado-Molina, Reingle, Jennings, & Prado, 2011). Particularly among newcomers, parents are found to frequently use excessive discipline with their children, which can impact feelings of support for youth (Johnson-Motoyama, Dettlaff, & Finno, 2012). For instance, certain cultures that have particular styles of parenting, such as cultures that can have high degrees of overprotection and less affection, can experience acculturation difficulties when their form of parenting does not align with that of the host culture (Lim, Yeh, Liang, & Lau, 2009). Considering its impact on newcomer youth, a studies have found that greater parental warmth is significantly related to less experiences of depression and fewer psychological symptoms in youth, along with a positive association between parent-child conflict and youth depression (Kuczyński, Navara, & Boiger, 2010; Parker, 1983; Shucksmith, Hendry, & Glendinning, 1995). More parental overprotection was also associated with higher levels of depression among newcomer youth (Lim, Yeh, Liang, & Lau, 2009). As a part of the acculturation gap experienced by youth and their parents, parenting style can have an effect on the psychological development on youth within a host culture, particularly when individuation and

autonomy are being promoted.

### **Synthesis of the Literature and The Present Study**

Although there is only a modest amount of literature on newcomer youth and their experiences within the home environment, what is available suggests that youth are likely to experience both positive and challenging experiences. Positive factors include contributions to the wellbeing of the family with support and resiliency as an outcome of family solidarity. Challenges, evidenced by the identified needs of newcomer youth, include obtaining greater autonomy, openness of communication and parental support. A major limitation of the existing literature is that few of the studies have explored the topic of youth wellbeing at home from the perspectives of the youth themselves and fewer have explored the potential positive aspects of home life on acculturation and adjustment among newcomer youth. The present study explores positive factors faced by newcomer youth within the home environment in addition to the needs of youth in order to improve their home experience.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The purpose of the study was to identify the strengths and needs of newcomer youth within their home environments. Research questions were asked during focus group interviews with newcomer youth and their responses were analysed using Concept Mapping (Trochim, 1989). Concept Mapping is a quantitative analysis of qualitative data. Concept Mapping is introduced as a mixed method approach and described in this chapter, followed by a description of the procedures that were employed in the present study.

#### **Mixed Methods**

Mixed method studies are typically grounded in a pragmatic philosophy where the research problem is placed at centre and the choice of approaches utilized, including quantitative and/or qualitative aspects, depends on what is judged to provide the most useful answer for the intended application of findings (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Mixed approaches involve the use of positivist and constructivist elements. Positivism underlies the traditional scientific method with a focus on rational and empirical truths expressed as cause and effect. Observation and measurement are used to predict outcomes. Constructivism takes human experiences as the focal means of knowing (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Social construction is reality. There are several mixed methods designs that incorporate the use of sequential or simultaneous quantitative and qualitative independent studies that complement each other and together answer a question that neither could independently answer.

#### **Concept Mapping**

Concept Mapping is a quantitative analysis of qualitative data in which both

approaches are used to represent the range of responses made to a focal question (Kane & Trochim, 2007). Concept Mapping was originally developed for use in the context of program planning and evaluation where ideas could be organized and displayed visually to be better understood. Patterns between variables were compared to identify salient program and outcome characteristics that would assist evaluators to determine the most appropriate evaluation strategy (Kane & Trochim, 2007).

The method has also been employed in the context of participatory research. Concept mapping involves collecting, analyzing and interpreting qualitative data through the use of quantitative analytical methods. It represents the way a particular group perceives a particular topic (Burke et al., 2005). Each unique contribution made by a participant is included in brainstorming and sorting (Kane & Trochim, 2007).

Brainstorming can be done as a group to produce a range of responses to the research question that each participant then independently sorts into groups based on similarity. The sorts are analyzed using multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis (Trochim & Kane, 2005). The outcome is a visual representation of the thinking of the group which can then be then used for its intended purpose (Trochim & Kane, 2005).

Concept Mapping has been used in multiple settings, such as public health, in order to better understand the experiences of different populations (Burke et al., 2005). For example, Concept Mapping has been used to explore women's perceptions of relationships between community and intimate partner violence experiences (Burke et al., 2005), to analyze the beliefs and experiences of immigrant women in Canada regarding barriers to mammography and the possible solutions (Ahmad et al., 2012), and to develop community-based programs for Hispanic youth (Ridings et al., 2011).

## **Steps in Concept Mapping**

Concept mapping includes six steps: (1) preparation, (2) generation, (3) structuring, (4) representation, (5) interpretation and (6) utilization (Burke et al., 2005). The preparation step includes the selection of a focal question and participant sample. In generation participants provide responses to the posed question or questions (Burke et al., 2005). Following this step, participants are asked to individually sort all responses into categories (Burke et al., 2005). This is followed by the representation step in which the categories identified by participants are analyzed using multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis. Interpretation is the step during which decisions are made about the most appropriate number of concepts in the map and the best labels for each concept. In the final step, the map is used for its intended purpose (Burke et al., 2005).

## **Procedure**

**Step 1: Preparation.** Participants were recruited for the study from a community centre in South London, as it is representative of the demographic profile of the London, Ontario region. Participants were recruited via word-of-mouth, posters and through a London-based agency. They were individuals between the ages of 15 to 18 years who had migrated to Canada within the last 2 years. Only youth with parental consent took part in focus group interviews. Two focal questions were posed to the participants during a focus group, including: “What do you like at home?” and “What would help you at home?”

**Step 2: Generation.** The participants worked in small groups of approximately 3 youth each, with Research Assistants as scribes. After each small group recorded their responses on flipchart paper, the flipchart papers of each small group were posted around the room and discussed by the large group. Clarifications were made to responses that

required more detail and additional responses that emerged through this process were added.

There were 12 youth participants. They ranged in age from 15-18 years and were in grades 9-12 in their first Canadian school within two different secondary schools in adjacent neighborhoods. They all lived with immediate and extended family. Each was born outside of Canada in Singapore, Syria, Columbia, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, or United Arab Emirates. They had been attending school in Canada from between 1 month and 2 years. English was a second language to all participants. Their first languages were Punjabi, Arabic, and Spanish.

**Step 3: Structuring.** Participants interested in contributing to the process of sorting collected data were asked to return several weeks later following the initial focus group interview and were provided with identical lists of statement responses developed by participants on a set of cards. All but 2 of the youth who participated in the first group meeting attended the second meeting where each was asked to independently group together the responses made by the group at the first meeting. Excluding redundant responses, there were a total of 27 responses for “What do you like about home?” and 15 for “What would help you at home?” Participants were asked to sort the statements into groups for each question.

**Step 4: Representation.** Concept mapping was used to analyze the sort data, which included the use of multidimensional scaling and cluster analyses. Multidimensional scaling results displayed the relationships between responses by proximity. Based on a similarity matrix that represented how often responses were grouped together by participants, each was placed on a X-Y map (Kane & Trochim,

2007). The distance between each response represented how frequently each was grouped together with the others on the map. The closer the points were on the map, the higher the frequency with which the responses were grouped together by the participants. The further away from one another any two responses were on the map, the less often those two responses were sorted into the same group together by participants. Multidimensional scaling also produced a bridging index for each response, which was a value between 0.0 and 1.0. Values between 0.0 and 0.25 signified that the response was only grouped with other responses that were closer to it on the map. However, values between 0.75 and 1.0 indicated that the response was grouped with responses both nearby and further away on the map. Cluster analysis was performed on the multidimensional scaling data. Cluster analysis placed the responses into clusters. The process started with each response as its own cluster and at each step, placing two clusters together until there was only one cluster (Burke et al. 2005; Ridings et al., 2011).

**Step 5: Interpretation.** In order to determine the appropriate number of clusters for the concept map different solutions were created and reviewed by the writer and her advisor. For the first question, “What do you like about home?” concept maps of 8, 7, 6, 5, and 4 were reviewed before determining that the 5-concept solution fit the data best. For the second question, “What would help you at home?” concept maps of 4, 3, and 2 were reviewed before deciding that the 3-cluster solution fit the data best. The decision about the most appropriate number of concepts was based on qualitative and quantitative data. For each map the contents of each cluster were reviewed to determine their degree of conceptual similarity within the clusters and conceptual difference from responses in other clusters. Average bridging indices for the clusters were also reviewed. Average

bridging indices less than 0.25 reflected very consistent grouping of responses within that cluster by participants, and average bridging indices over 0.75 reflected inconsistent grouping of responses within that cluster by participants. An example of this would be that participants often grouped responses in that cluster with responses in other clusters.

Once the final decision was made about the most appropriate number of concepts the concepts were given labels by the researcher and her advisor. The decision about appropriate labels was based on comments made by participants during the task and a review of the contents of each concept.

**Step 6: Utilization.** The resulting concept maps are described in detail in chapter 4. In Chapter 5, the maps are used for the intended purpose: to compare and contrast the perspectives of youth who participated in the present study with the results of existing research on the topic.

### **Summary of the Procedure**

The purpose of the study was to identify the strengths and needs of newcomer youth within their home environments. During focus groups with newcomer youth they were asked: “What do you like at home?” and “What would help you at home?” Unique responses to the questions were recorded and presented to the youth at a second meeting where they independently reviewed and sorted the responses to each question into groups. The sorting data were analyzed using multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis. The results of these analyses were concept maps that provided a visual representation of the youths’ perceptions of the needs and challenges they face as well as how they grouped them together. In the next Chapter, the concept maps are presented and



described.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

The purpose of the study was to identify the strengths and needs of newcomer youth within their home environments. During focus groups with newcomer youth they were asked: “What do you like at home?” and “What would help you at home?” Unique responses to the questions were recorded and presented to the youth at a second meeting where they independently reviewed and sorted the responses to each question into groups. The sorting data were analyzed with two statistical procedures and results were used to construct concept maps, which are included in Figure 1 and Figure 2. Each figure is followed by its list of responses and corresponding bridging indices, which are included in Table 1 and Table 2.

### **What do you like about home?**

This concept map consisted of 24 unique responses provided by youth in response to the question, “What do you like at home?” Responses were independently sorted by participants into groups. These sorts were analysed using multidimensional scaling and cluster analyses. A 5-cluster map seemed to represent the data best.

Each point on the map represented a response. The distance between points reflected the frequency with which they were grouped together by participants. Responses close to one another on the map indicated that those responses were grouped together by participants often. Responses further away from one another on the map were rarely grouped together by participants. Within concepts, responses with the lowest individual bridging index were more central to the content of the cluster because they were less likely to have been sorted with responses other than those nearby on the map, while responses with high individual bridging indices were often sorted together with

responses in other areas of the map.

Figure 1: Concept Map for Question 1

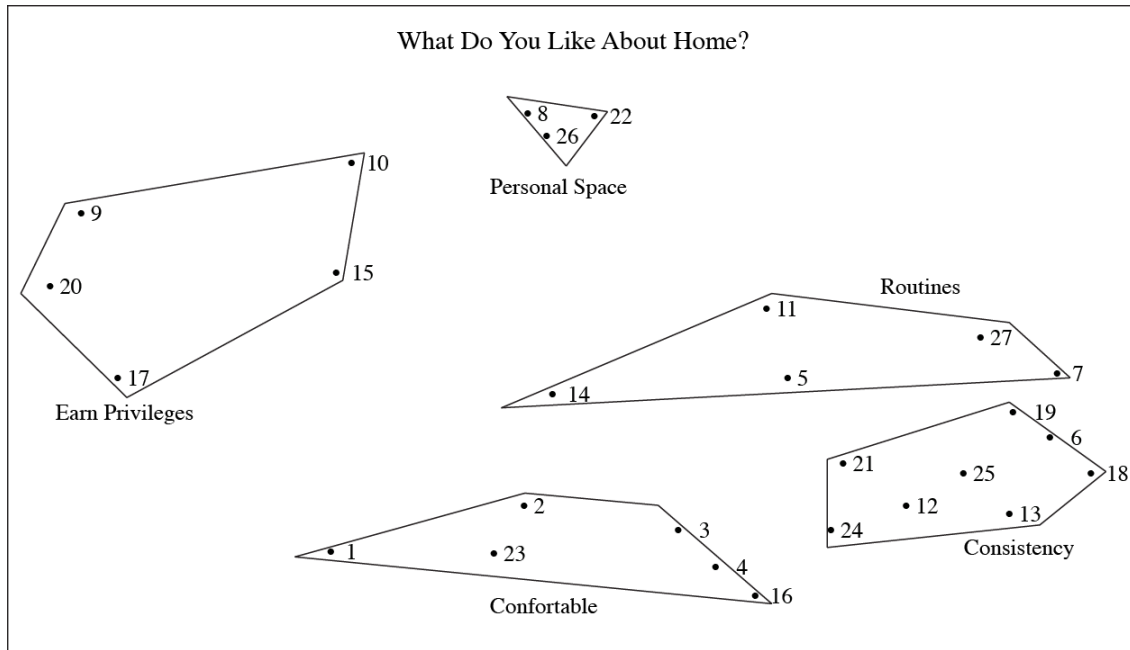


Table 1: Concept Items and Bridging Values for Concept Map

Cluster and Statement	Bridging Index
Comfortable	0.45
1. security	0.88
2. self-secure	0.44
23. parental advice when unsure what to do	0.64
3. homemade meals / home cooking	0.23
4. eating same food as back home	0.22
16. speaking mother tongue in front of others and with parents	0.31

Routines	0.41
5. freedom from parents	0.31
11. time management	0.57
14. setting limits	0.47
7. family time	0.27
27. playing and talking with siblings	0.42

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Consistency	0.12
6. love and positive feelings at home	0.13
19. get along more	0.11
13. talking about your day with your parents	0.13
18. family ties	0.12
12. open communication	0.11
24. shopping with mom feels safe	0.17
21. house is always clean because mom is there	0.10
25. Skype with family back home	0.07

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Personal Space	0.01
8. electronics	0.00
26. playing videogames	0.00
22. listening to music at home	0.02

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Earn Privileges	0.59
9. CTB money	0.37
10. driving	0.32
15. sleeping over at friends' house	0.53

17.	culture and language only changes outside the home	1.00
20.	bigger house	0.70

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**Comfortable.** This concept referred to the degree of comfort and safety youth felt at home. The bridging index for this concept was 0.45 which was moderate, and indicated that there was a variance in how consistently responses were sorted together with other responses in the cluster. The responses that were more central to the concept were “homemade meals/home cooking”, “eating same food as back home”, and “speaking mother tongue in front of others and with parents”, which spoke about the youth’s ethnic identity. These responses had bridging index values of 0.23, 0.22, and 0.31.

Other responses also revolved around youth appreciating the feeling of safety within the home environment, although “self-secure” had higher bridging index value at 0.44, respectively. Additionally, youth felt that having parental advice when they were unsure of what to do was important to them, although this response also had a moderate bridging index value of 0.64. Finally, the response “security”, while similar in content to the other responses in this concept had a high bridging index of 0.88 indicating that it was often sorted by participants with responses in other areas of the map.

**Routines.** This concept focused on the routines the youth experienced with their families. The concept had a moderate average bridging index of 0.41 indicating that some responses were sorted with responses in other clusters. Youth seemed to appreciate the “family time” they had with their parents as well as the “freedom from parents”. Both responses had lower bridging indices at 0.27 and 0.31, respectively, indicating that they were central to the content of the concept. Youth seemed to appreciate the quality time

spent with their family, while also benefiting from autonomy and in particular, “playing and talking with siblings”, which had a moderate bridging index value of 0.42. Youth also appreciated the structure offered at home as evident in the responses, “setting limits” and “time management”. These responses were less central to the content of the concept with bridging indices of 0.47 and 0.57, respectively.

**Consistency.** This concept referred to the dependability of family members and their interconnections with one another. Responses in this concept focused on the warm communication within the family, including the “love and positive feelings at home”, “getting along more”, “talking about your day with your parents”, “family ties”, “Skype with family back home”, and “open communication”. These responses had bridging indices that ranged from 0.11 to 0.13.

Feelings of consistency were implied by the response, “house is always clean because mom is there”, not only because this role may have been imported with the family from their country of origin but because the predictability of having a tidy place to live was important to youth. This response had a low bridging index of 0.10. In addition, feeling connected was suggested by the response, “shopping with mom feels safe”, which had a low value of 0.17. All responses within this concept had low bridging index values, which resulted in the second lowest concept average bridging index for the concept map of 0.12 and suggested that the responses in this concept were rarely sorted with responses in other concepts on the map.

**Personal Space.** This concept focussed on physical space and possessions as positive aspects of home for newcomer youth. Youth valued their personal space for “playing with videogames” and “electronics” as well as “listening to music at home”. The

concept had a very low bridging index of 0.01, which was also the lowest average of all concepts in this map. Clearly participants did not sort the responses in this concept with responses in other concepts.

**Earn Privileges.** This concept referred to the opportunities that youth felt they had to earn. The youth described the potential for them to earn “driving” privileges as well as “CTB money” (child tax benefit) that their parents received and could choose to distribute some of the money to them. These two responses had the lowest individual bridging indices suggesting that they were most central to the content of this concept, at 0.32 and 0.37, respectively. In addition, the youth appreciated the chance to earn the opportunity for “sleeping over at friends’ house”. This response had a relatively higher bridging index of 0.53.

The youth also spoke about the privilege of living in a “bigger house”, in comparison to living conditions from their country of origin. This response had a relatively high bridging index at 0.70 suggesting that it was sorted with other responses in other concepts. Additionally, the appreciation that youth had for the opportunity to keep their culture and language intact, at least at home, was suggested by the response “culture and language only changes outside the home”. This response with a maximum bridging value of 1.00 was clearly related to all other responses on the map according to the youth. Overall the concept had a moderate average bridging index of 0.59, which suggested that the youth did sort some of the responses in it with responses in other concepts on the map.

### **What would help you at home?**

This concept map consisted of 15 unique responses provided by youth in response

to the question “What would help you at home?”. Responses were independently sorted by participants into groups. These sorts were analysed using multidimensional scaling and cluster analyses. A 3-cluster map seemed to represent the data best.

Figure 2: Concept Map for Question 2

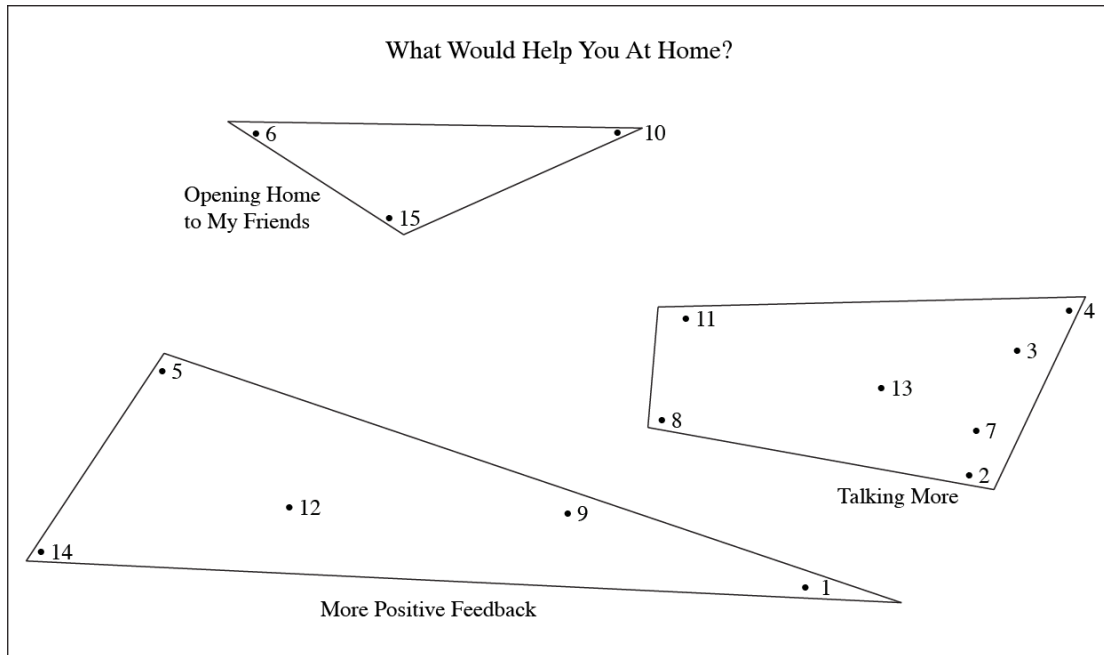


Table 2: Concept Items and Bridging Values for Concept Map

Cluster and Statement	Bridging Index
More Positive Feedback	0.58
1. encouragement	0.48
9. love	0.23
5. family time	0.73
12. values	0.46
14. rules	1.00



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Talking More	0.15
2. comfort and support from family	0.22
7. patience from parents	0.11
3. active listening	0.20
4. open discussions	0.33
8. more respect	0.05
13. more understanding	0.00
11. no judgment	0.15

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Opening Home to My Friends	0.56
6. friendship	0.70
15. same interests	0.41
10. welcome their friends	0.57

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**More Positive Feedback.** This concept focused on improvements to the family climate and context of more positive feedback. The youth noted that “love” was fundamentally important and needed to be communicated to them. This response had the lowest bridging index for the concept at 0.23, suggesting that it was central to the content. In addition, the youth spoke about the desire to hear and have their family’s “values” and “encouragement” in their lives. These responses had moderate bridging indices at 0.46 and 0.48 respectively. Although the remaining responses had high bridging indices, at 0.73 and 1.00, they were important needs communicated by the youth concerning the importance of having “family time” and “rules”. While these responses were not central to the content of this concept they were identified by the youth and are important needs

that should be recognized. Overall, this concept had a bridging index of 0.58 indicating a moderate level of conceptual consistency among responses.

**Talking More.** This concept focused on youths' needs for more communication with family characterized by mutual respect, support and listening. The most central content for this concept was apparent in the response, "more understanding", which had a bridging index of 0.00. The youth clearly saw the need for communicating to be bi-directional and not one-sided. In addition to having "more respect" and "patience from parents" was the desire to have "no judgement" and "active listening". These responses had low bridging indices ranging from 0.05 to 0.20. It should also be noted that the response, "comfort and support from family", reflected a need that youth had to generally have closer, more open and influential relationships with their parents. This concept also had a low bridging index of 0.15, which was the lowest average bridging index of the concepts on the map.

**Opening Home to My Friends.** This concept had a focus on the inclusion of friends from outside of their home and possibly outside of their culture, into their home. Youth talked about the need for their parents to recognize that they had the "same interests" as other youth that their parents did not know, and that they wanted parents to "welcome their friends" so that they could continue their "friendship" with them outside of school and in the community. The responses in this concept had moderate bridging indices including 0.41, 0.57 and 0.70 respectively, with an average of 0.56 indicating that the responses may have been sorted by youth with responses in other concepts.

### **Summary of the Results**

In this study newcomer youth in focus groups were asked two focal questions

including “What do you like about home?” and “What would help you at home?”

Following the collection of responses, the youth were asked to voluntarily take part in sorting the data independently during a second meeting. The sorts were analyzed using multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis, which resulted in the creation of two concept maps.

A total of 24 responses were provided by participants for the question, “What do you like about home?” which were sorted into the following concepts: Comfortable, Routines, Consistency, Personal Space, and Earn Privileges. The first concept consisted of responses regarding feeling secure at home and the comfort of maintaining cultural heritage. The concept of Routines consisted of information on having autonomy but also spending time with family. Consistency was a concept that focused on family communication and connection, along with security. Personal Space dealt with enjoying personal luxuries. Finally, Earn Privileges focused on having luxuries such as driving and having sleep-overs.

In response to the second question, “What would help you at home?” there were 15 responses from participants that were organized into the following concepts: More Positive Feedback, Talking More, and Opening Home to My Friends. The concept More Positive Feedback contained responses of needing more encouragement, praise and feedback regarding rules and values. The concept of Talking More consisted of information regarding greater communication and understanding from parents. Lastly, the concept Opening Home to My Friends focused on welcoming outside friendships into the home.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of the study was to identify the strengths and needs of newcomer youth within their home environments. The responses to two focal questions were collected through focus group interviews with newcomer youth who, at a later meeting, independently sorted all responses made. The sort data were analyzed using concept mapping, which included multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis. In response to the question, “What do you like about home?” there were five concepts, including: Comfortable, Routines, Consistency, Personal Space, and Earn Privileges. In response to the question, “What would help you at home?” there were three concepts, including: More Positive Feedback, Talking More, and Opening Home to My Friends. In this chapter results of the present study are compared and contrasted with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Following a summary of the main similarities and differences between the present study and the literature, implications for both research and practice involving newcomer youth and their families are presented. Finally, the study’s limitations are described.

### What Do You Like About Home?

**Comfortable.** Feeling comfortable at home characterized the youths’ views of their families as sources of security, reliability and support. The youth also appreciated the maintenance of ethnic identity within their homes. Consistent with the literature, first generation newcomer youth viewed their families as sources of support that allowed them to feel security, especially about seeking parental advice when they were unsure of a decision (Adserà & Tienda, 2012; Merz, Ozeke-Kocabas, Oort, & Schuengel, 2009).

This sense of security also extended into the presence of maintaining one’s

cultural ethnicity. By continuing behaviours, such as retaining the language of origin and maintaining interest in food and media of their heritage, family cohesion further developed to create a greater sense of security and esteem within individual youth and in their relationships (van Geel & Vedder, 2011; Sabatier & Berry, 2008; Su & Costigan, 2009; Stuart & Ward, 2011). Additionally, the transmission of cultural knowledge by parents, and the willing acceptance of this transmission by newcomer youth by the ‘doing’ of cultural practices, allowed for effective and healthy integration for youth and their families (Kuczyński, Navara, & Boiger, 2010).

**Routines.** Within this concept newcomer youth expressed appreciation of the balance between autonomy and spending time with family. Different from literature that found newcomer youth having great difficulties with the ‘protectiveness’ of parents and the limitations on their freedom (Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2013), youth in the present study were comfortable with the balance between the freedom they had and the limits set by their families.

Youth also felt comfortable with the family time they had and time they spent playing and conversing with their siblings. Indeed, the family routines identified in this concept were extended in the second question for the present study to which the youth reported a desire for more family time. This is discussed later in the Chapter. Therefore, while the literature dictates that independence and autonomy produce great tension between parents and youth (Kwak, 2003), youth in the present study seemed more satisfied with the freedom they had and more importantly, greatly appreciated the family time they had with their parents as well as siblings.

**Consistency.** Participants described the consistency of communication within the

family system and presence of positive feedback at home. Youth described the open communication in their relationships with parents as part of the consistency they appreciated. The communication and consistency contributed to positive feelings that helped the family members get along.

Although the literature identified the presence of acculturation gaps that lead to intergenerational conflict between parents and youth (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Brenick, Titzmann, Michel, & Silbereisen, 2012; Hynie, Guruge, Shakya, 20012), discrepancies in acculturation seemed to depend on mutual values. In line with the results of the study, youth appeared to appreciate the closeness they experienced at home with their families, which spoke to the willingness to preserve values among newcomer youth, such as family loyalty and responsibility, family centeredness and relatedness, and respect for parents (Kuczyński, Navara, & Boiger, 2010).

In addition, maintaining family ties and Skyping with family back home appeared to contribute to the development of family bonds. Particularly as extended family were likely left in the country of origin, consistency in maintaining family ties with them contributed to development of ethnic identity and family solidarity (Adserà & Tienda, 2012; Merz, Ozeke-Kocabas, Oort, & Schuengel, 2009).

**Personal space.** Responses in this concept centered on a place to be with their possessions. The youth mentioned possessions including electronics, videogames and music at home. Responses in this concept implied the appreciation by youth of privacy and personal possessions commonly enjoyed by other adolescents. Personal possessions have been found to be a source conflict for youth who felt that their siblings invaded their personal space, which seemed to reinforce the importance that youth attach to their space

and possessions (Campione-Barr & Smetana, 2010).

**Earn privileges.** The concept of earning privileges indicated youth's appreciation for opportunities outside of their home, such as driving and sleeping over a friend's house, which were facilitated by having money, such as the Child Tax Benefit money their parents receive and possibly pass along to them, as well as having a bigger home. Other research has found that newcomer youth believe their parents should have authority over moral and conventional issues (Campione-Barr & Smetana, 2010), such as welfare and fairness, which was apparent in youths' responses to the second question, "What would help you at home?" discussed in the following section. However, enjoyment of privileges, such as driving and having a bigger house, suggest that the youth wanted control over personal space and opportunities to enjoy similar privileges as their peer reference group.

Unlike, yet similar, to the literature, the response of only having language and culture change outside of the home may not directly cause conflict, as suggested in the literature, but rather, demonstrate appreciation of one's ethnic identity while having the opportunity to explore Canadian language and media outside of the home. Youth may also find that bicultural identity adds a valued dimension to their lives (Kuczyński, Navara, & Boiger, 2010).

### **What Would Help You at Home?**

**More positive feedback.** Newcomer youth wanted greater support and more expressions of love and care with clearer expectations and obligations from their family. The youth also wanted more family time and encouragement from family members, especially their parents. From the literature there were different reasons for a lower than

desired level of parental involvement within the home. As newcomers, extended family was often left in countries of origin causing a greater need for familial support because of the decrease in accessibility and quality of support after migration (Anisef & Kilbride, 2003; Kwak & Berry, 2001; Merz, Ozeke-Kocabas, Oort, & Schuengel, 2009). Along with the differences in parenting styles, there was variance in the amount of time spent with family, and the amount of parental warmth and encouragement that was available and expressed (Johnson-Motoyama, Dettlaff, & Finno, 2012). Newcomer youth's experience with non-newcomer families where more direct forms of praise, warmth, love and affection may also be evident in the homes of friends (Kuczyński, Navara, & Boiger, 2010).

Unlike the literature, however, youth in the present study did not receive clear expectations and obligations from their parents. Although first generation youth were more likely to seek out their family as a means of support than their second generation counterparts (Merz, Ozeke-Kocabas, Oort, & Schuengel, 2009; Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu, & Tatla, 2004), newcomer youth, who have recently migrated to a new country, may need more family influence in their lives. Indeed, positive feedback, such as love, encouragement and family time, is not enough and may have a negative effect on their communication. Families with adequate, directive, and quality communication have been found to have high levels of family cohesion, adaptability and satisfaction (Barnes & Olson, 1985). Thus, by having greater communication of values, expectations, and obligations, further within the context of warmth and encouragement, family cohesion can be promoted for newcomer youth.

In addition, during youth development communication becomes an important



contributor to youths' abilities and willingness to take on different roles within the family and to strike a good balance between their needs for autonomy and connectedness with family members (Barnes & Olson, 1985). Therefore, through this mutual understanding of what is being expected from newcomer youth, accompanied by feelings of connectedness, youth may experience an increase in positive feedback and acceptance of family values and rules.

**Talking more.** This concept related to literature on changes in hierarchical family structures and the lack of communication present within the parent-child relationship, in addition to changes in the process of disequilibrium during youth's development. Youth in the present study wanted greater respect, more active listening from parents, more understanding, less judgment, and more open discussions at home. From the literature it was evident that there were difficulties when changes in power dynamics within families required more discussion, negotiation, and compromise between parents and their youth as a possible result of the changes to the family following migration (Dennis, Basanez, & Farahmand, 2009; Kwak & Berry, 2001; Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006). Thus, with fewer opportunities for communication the creation of emotional distance within the family was increasingly likely.

Many family conflicts are the result of different perspectives on culturally pertinent issues such as academic achievement, appropriate social behaviour, parental respect and familial obligation (Qin & Han, 2010). Although these conflicts may be a result, newcomer youth in the present study wanted more opportunities for richer conversations, along with comfort and support from their families. In addition, there is a greater presence of arguments and conflict between parents and children during their

teenage years, which is typically accompanied by a reduction in closeness and the amount of family time spent (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). As a result, the need for open discussion, greater understanding and active listening may work in relation to changes the youth experience. This change may later involve less conflict and autonomy-striving, particularly in parent-youth relationships that are more egalitarian and active in effective discussion (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). As a result, the call for greater family support and effective communication may allow youth and families to grow into stronger units of resilience and resourcefulness.

In addition, more positive feedback and open discussions held with compassion, understanding, patience and respect can strengthen emotional bonds. This increase in cohesion could minimize misunderstandings rooted in cultural and/or language shifts, acculturation difficulties, and/or intergenerational difficulties among newcomer families with youth.

**Opening home to friends.** This concept focused on youths' needs to build friendships outside of the home, to include these friendships into the home environment, and to find a central point where both parents and youth share similar interests. Parallel to the literature, it was evident that youth wanted to create a balance in their acculturation process (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006) by integrating their friendships into the home while maintaining an appreciation for their ethnic identity and culture of origin. The first research question, focused on what youth liked about home, led to responses of enjoying the speaking of one's mother tongue in front of others. In comparison, the second question, focused on what would help youth at home, revealed that integration of interests outside the home, such as opening the home to youths' friends, is desirable for

youth. The mechanisms for how this could be done in ways that are most appropriate and considerate of all family members' needs are beyond the scope of the present study, but the youth, consistent with the literature, spoke about openness to the host society as an aspect of positive and effective sociocultural integration (Sabatier & Berry, 2008).

Additionally, peer relationships allow for the greater development of self-esteem and a decrease in social challenges that cause stress for newcomer youth (Chuang, Rasmi, & Friesen, 2010; Thomas & Daubman, 2001). Particularly as they are in the process of re-establishing their social networks as newcomers, allowing for opportunities to invite friends into the home and allowing these friendships to grow would foster a sense of belonging, emotional support, as well as practical assistance and information when it cannot be readily available at home (Chuang, Rasmi, & Friesen, 2010).

### **Discussion Summary**

There were similarities between the literature and responses provided by participants in the present study. Similarities centered on the concepts of Comfortable, Routines and Consistency in response to the first question, "What do you like about home?" Consistent with the literature, newcomer youth viewed their families as sources of security and relied on their support, especially after migrating to a new country. Additionally, youth appreciated the maintenance of their ethnic identity which was consistent with the literature regarding the need for youth to have a balance between national and ethnic identity in order to better acquire healthy integration into the host country.

Similarities between the experiences of youth in the present study and the literature in the concept of Routines evidenced youth's need for autonomy as well as their

appreciation of family cohesion. This was rooted in the newcomer youth's need for adolescent autonomy and their need to maintain family centeredness and relatedness, which is also evident in the concept of Consistency. This maintenance of family ties was not only apparent in the home but was also acknowledged through the ties they maintained with extended family in the country of origin.

Differences between the literature and the results of the study were apparent in the literature's portrayal of tension between parents and youth regarding the amount of autonomy entitled to youth. Responses, particularly in the concept of Routines, indicated that there was an appreciation of both freedom and family rules and limitations, with autonomy as an aspect they liked and appreciated about home. In addition, although similar to the literature in the sense that newcomer youth sought a greater integration with the host culture than parents, Earning Privileges indicated that youth wanted the opportunity to explore Canadian culture outside of the home while also appreciating the consistency of their ethnic identity within the home. Therefore, although the literature characterized this need for autonomy and family time as a source of conflict between parents and youth, newcomer youth in the study valued this bicultural opportunity.

Similarities were also apparent between the literature and the experiences of youth in the present study in response to the second question, "What would help you at home?" in the areas of Positive Feedback, Taking More, and Opening Home to My Friends. The youth indicated a desire for more praise and warmth at home, which was related to the effects of lower parental involvement, different parenting styles and/or loss of extended family (Gaytan, Carhill, & Suárez-Orozco, 2007; Johnson-Motoyama, Dettlaff, & Finno, 2012; Kuczyński, Navara, & Boiger, 2010; Marks, Patton, & Coyne,

2010). Similarly, youth sought greater communication in terms of discussion, negotiation and active listening. This was related to the changes in family structures and parent-child dynamics (Dennis, Basanez, & Farahmand, 2009; Kuczyński, Navara, & Boiger, 2010; Kwak & Berry, 2001; Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006). However, in comparison to responses to the first research question, youth also found that being able to open their home to their friends added to the balance they wanted to develop between ethnic and national identity.

Differences were also apparent between responses of youth in the present study and the literature in the area of what would help. The concept of having more positive feedback indicated that youth did not receive clear outlines of family expectations and obligations. Although the types of obligations and values are not specified in this study, these responses differed from the literature that highlighted newcomer youth as knowing their family's values and resisting obligations. Thus, gaps were also evident between the literature and the experiences of youth in the present study given the types of communication required and needed by youth at home, such as the communication of values as well as styles and approaches used when communicating. Youth in the present study preferred less judgment, open discussions, active listening and greater respect.

## **Conclusion**

Under the lens of contextualism it is integral to view newcomer youth within the family communal context in order to better grasp an understanding of the significant needs within the home environment. Within this context one is also able to view the dynamics within the home that are beneficial as well as those that can be improved to better make the home a safe space that can further foster individual and communal

growth. As documented in this study, newcomer youth appreciate their family relationships, cultural upbringings and heritage, as well as sense of family security and safety. These aspects spoke very well to the valuing of cultural and ethnic traditions and beliefs, along with of family cohesion. However, newcomer youth wanting greater positive feedback, comfort and support, and familial understanding also reflected upon the importance of family cohesion in promoting encouragement, greater communication and discussion, as well as further sociocultural integration. Taking this into consideration, it is integral to understand that newcomer youth can be similar to youth whom have resided in a host country for a longer period of time. In addition to the multiple cultural, social and systemic barriers introduced to newcomers, youth are involved in a process of deciding their place in a new and unfamiliar society. Thus, viewing a cohesive family unit as an integral means of preventing the possibilities of a stressful integration into the host country can deter greater experiences of mental and emotional health difficulties.

### **Implications**

Newcomer youth experience both positive and challenging aspects in their home life. Although challenges may be intimidating, strengths and challenges can work in unison to develop resilience against risks and/or hardships encountered within multiple communal systems. Through knowing what is needed by newcomer youth one may understand the challenges experienced, along with the supportive aspects that may be considered protective factors. Thus, from a clinical standpoint, it is appropriate to state that this study has implications in terms of promoting adequate understanding of the dynamics present in newcomer families. Clinicians can have a greater understanding of

the challenges and strengths experienced and harboured by newcomer families and their youth, which would allow workers in health services to approach families and their youth with understanding, sensitivity and openness in knowledge. Such knowledge provides information, and would encourage clinicians to explore more research in this topic that can aid workers to understand where possible issues and gaps may arise and what newcomer families may need. Through these considerations clinicians can come to know that newcomer youth can also have similar and differing experiences in comparison to immigrant individuals that may have resided in a host country for a longer period of time. However, knowledge that family unity and solidarity is also an important asset and need for newcomer and immigrant youth can aid clinicians in understanding the factors that can hinder and foster youth development in a new host country.

These implications can also be manifested through research. By developing greater information on the needs of newcomer youth, researchers can advocate for the development of greater project and service funds for newcomers. This not only would have implications for newcomers at a local level, but can impact the services and clinical approaches at national and international levels within school, communal and social systems. Therefore, by having an impact on newcomer youth this research may also be used to develop further research on parenting difficulties and strategies for newcomer families. For example, researchers can further explore the differences and similarities of mental health of youth who may have a balance in having family and individual needs met versus newcomer youth who may have an uneven balance between having family and individual needs met. As a result, parenting strategies used among these groups can be analysed to further provide information in regards to the factors that also hinder and

foster a unified family system and healthy integration into the host culture.

As a result of additional research, policies can be amended to better fit the needs of newcomer families and youth. As illustrated in the Canadian Constitution, all Canadians are entitled to equal status, rights and privileges, which speaks to the understanding and respect of the diversity present within Canada in order to ensure welfare and equity in social, cultural, economic and political life. Policies can, thus, ensure better access to services, within multiple systems, in order to better meet the needs of newcomers who seek for better opportunities. Particularly in the form of mental health services, policies that prioritize the mental health needs of newcomer youth as a foundational aspect of the integration process can ease the stress and difficulties experienced by youth in order to ensure success in the host country. With research demonstrating the stressors and barriers that can be experienced by newcomer youth escalated difficulties in the host country can be prevented, further impacting the ways the healthcare system is utilized.

### **Limitations**

Aside from the strengths of this study, such as the mixed method approach, there were limitations. The use of a small sample from a specific population in a medium-sized Canadian city does not allow for the generalization of study results to a wider newcomer youth community. In addition, the diversity of the newcomer sample population used in the study may not be as diverse as necessary in order to nationally generalize to other newcomer communities. A final limitation to this study would be the inability to provide in-depth responses through the use of concept mapping, which would have allowed for greater understanding and implications for the study. As a result of this, many resulting



concepts overlapped and may not have allowed for a clear description of provided responses.

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