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Supporting Refugees with High Needs to Settle in Manitoba:

Family Dynamics 2013/2014
Program Evaluation

By Zoë St-Aubin

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Supporting Refugees with High Needs to Settle in Manitoba: Family Dynamics 2013/2014 Program Evaluation

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Executive Summary

Family Dynamics approached the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives—Manitoba (CCPA-MB) to undertake a study of the Family Dynamics Family Supports for Refugees Program with participants, support coordinators and collateral service providers. This report offers insights to the effectiveness of the Family Supports for Refugees Program offered by Family Dynamics by evaluating how Family Supports for Refugee Program supports refugees and assists in their integration into Winnipeg. The report also illustrates the program’s role in assisting other service provider agencies in working with high-needs refugee clients.

The research indicates that the Family Supports for Refugee Program is an effective program in supporting high-needs refugees and assists in their integration into Canadian society. Findings also show the program is a welcomed asset to assisting other service providers with their high-need refugee clients. The initial step of developing trust between program support coordinators and clients is an important component to the program’s success. Two key strengths of the program are the length of time allocated for clients and its holistic approach to service delivery. Together these strengths cultivate trust

between support coordinators and their clients and provide a more in-depth support structure required by high-needs refugees. Findings from the study show the program increases their client’s knowledge and access to services, increases their access to services, improves their navigation skills, contributes to their understanding of Canadian laws and societal norms, cultivates independence, addresses isolation issues, assists in advocating clients rights, and assists clients to achieve English language skills and other educational goals.

In terms of assisting other service providers, the program complements service provider’s ability to serve their high-needs clients by following up with clients, mediating conflicts, and coordinating services to ensure there is no duplication. The collaborative approach used by the support coordinators creates a comprehensive and efficient service delivery structure required to ensure all service providers involved with high-needs refugees are better able to address their client’s needs. This research illustrates the limitations of other service providers to accommodate their high-needs refugee clients. Because of this, many high-needs refugee clients can fall through the cracks. Findings show

that the Family Supports for Refugees Program are better able to provide the type of service required by this population. The program's intermediary role serves to address systematic gaps in service delivery, assist high-needs refugees in their attempts start a new life in Winnipeg,

and offers a much needed innovative approach to settlement service delivery. The Family Supports for Refugees Program cultivates an environment where the most vulnerable also have an opportunity to successfully integrate into Canadian society.

Introduction

Immigration trends in recent years has shown that Manitoba's overall share of permanent residents to Canada has increased from 2010 (5.6%) to 2011 (6.4%). Of those who immigrated to Manitoba 8.2% were refugees (444 Government assisted refugees; 795 privately sponsored). In response to these trends proper and effective support systems need to be in place in order to assist in the successful integration of newcomers immigrating to Manitoba. Integration, as defined by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), is the ongoing process of mutual accommodation between an individual and society (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012). Although there are programs designed to assist newcomers with their settlement needs, few are able to offer intensive ongoing support required by some refugee families. The Family Supports for Refugees program, operated by Family Dynamics, fills this gap in settlement service delivery. There is a great need for the services offered in the program. In 2013 the Family Supports for Refugees Program assisted 139 families, 40% of cases were opened within the past year.

Family Dynamics approached the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives—Manitoba (CCPA-MB) to undertake a study of the Family Dynam-

ics Family Supports for Refugees Program with participants, support coordinators and collateral agencies. This report offers insights to the effectiveness of the Family Supports for Refugees Program offered by Family Dynamics. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of Family Supports for Refugee Program client's integration into Winnipeg in terms of building the clients' confidence, trust, and independence. This study also examines the program's role in assisting other service provider agencies with refugee clients and developing other service providers' awareness of high-need refugee population as a whole in Winnipeg. Lastly, the study aims to obtain data from which to make policy recommendations.

The report discusses the findings of the evaluation and illustrates the program's approach to service delivery specifically the role of developing trust with their clients. It highlights the in-depth level of supports, offered through the length of time allocated for clients and the holistic approach of the program. The report illustrates the effectiveness of the program in assisting high-needs refugee's integration into Winnipeg, through its ability to increase program client's knowledge of services available,

increase their navigation skills, increase their understanding of their responsibilities in a Canadian context, assist their clients with crisis management, advocate for their rights, cultivate client's independence, addresses isolation issues, and assist clients with their English language and educational goals. The report also discusses

the program's role in assisting other collateral agencies to service high-needs refugees. The report concludes with recommendations for Family Dynamics and collateral agencies, as well as policy changes that address systemic barriers and cultivate a more comprehensive delivery of settlement services.

Family Supports for Refugees Program

Although there are programs to assist newcomers with their settlement needs, few are able to offer intensive ongoing support required by some refugee families. The Family Supports for Refugees Program fills this gap in settlement service delivery. Operated by Family Dynamics since 2008, the program provides case management and support for refugee families with multiple barriers searching for support. Services provided to families include assessment, planning, service coordination, supportive counselling and advocacy. The program is available to refugee families that have moved beyond the initial settlement supports that they received upon arrival in Manitoba but continue to face a variety

of challenges. A large part of the coordinator's role is to work with refugees to navigate Canada's complex social service system. The program applies a holistic approach to assisting clients by supporting clients with a wide range of challenges and working in collaboration with a variety of service providers. The program also provides the services of in-home family support and education workers who come into client's homes and help with household tasks, childcare, and teaching Canadian parenting skills and household management skills. The goals of the program are to facilitate successful adaptation and integration of refugees and to support refugees to 'live hopeful lives as Canadians.'

Settlement Barriers for Refugees

Studies have shown that an early training and integration supports have a positive effect on newcomers and their long-term functioning in a host country. In order to benefit the long-term functioning of newcomers, integration strategies must reflect their diverse needs. Refugees are a particular vulnerable population. Refugees face additional challenges in comparison to other classes of immigrants. These challenges include not necessarily choosing or understanding their destination, experiences of persecution and trauma, susceptibility to mental and physical health problems, arrival without identity documents or evidence of qualifications, in addition to adjusting to their new surroundings.

Housing is a particular challenge for refugees as they generally have larger families than the average Canadian family. In Winnipeg there is a lack of affordable larger housing accommodations (Carter et al., 2008). As of April 2012, the average rental vacancy rates in Winnipeg increased by 1.2%, however despite this increase, Winnipeg has the second lowest vacancy rate out of all Census Metropolitan Area (CMHC, 2012). In addition to the supply issue of suitable housing units, refugees may not be aware of their rights and responsibilities as tenants. This

may lead to eviction notices or other conflicts with landlords.

Another barrier that refugees experience is employment. Refugees have difficulties obtaining jobs with reasonable wages and advanced potential due to their lack of Canadian experience and references, credential recognition, limited education, and poor English or French language skills (Wilkinson, 2008). In comparison to Canadian-born and Immigrant-born youth, refugee-born youth had lower rates of employment and were least likely to achieve post-secondary education (Wilkinson, 2008). Refugees are least likely to know English or French before their arrival to Canada which compounds the barriers they experience for education and employment opportunities.

Health is another key area that presents particular challenges for refugees. Many refugees arrive with acute and complex health problems. Refugees experience many challenges in receiving adequate and appropriate health care such as language barriers, and lack of health provider experiences with health ailments from other countries such as malaria and mental health issues as a result of war (Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Research and Evaluation Unit, 2010).

In addition to the stressful nature of the resettlement process, refugees may also suffer from mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), psychosomatic disorders, eating disorders and substance abuse (Parsons 2005; Miller and Rasco, 2008). The lived experiences that cause refugees to seek asylum are known to produce an increased likelihood of more serious health concerns than

other immigrants (Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Research and Evaluation Unit, 2010). The trauma experienced by refugees from war-torn countries makes them vulnerable to mental health issues, which are compounded by experiences of loneliness and isolation in their new surroundings. Unaddressed health issues have the potential to exacerbate social disparities and contribute to lower health status.

Methodology

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three cohorts: service providers, program staff also known as support coordinators, and program clients. The interviews with staff from service provider agencies and organizations were conducted with those that have connected with the program on behalf of their clients (such as schools, health care facilities, government agencies employers, legal aid, and others). Interviews with program support coordinators provide an in-depth understanding of the successes and challenges of program delivery. Interviews with program clients provided another perspective of the impacts of the program on high-needs refugees as well as provide a description of their experiences with the program and its staff. Incorporating different perspectives allowed for a

more comprehensive understanding of the logistics of the program, its implementation and its effectiveness. In total twenty interviews were conducted: five program support coordinators, seven service providers, and eight program clients. The service providers included in the study consisted of government agencies, non-profit organizations, and newcomer-specific agencies. Program clients in the study were from various countries, cultural backgrounds, and had different levels of English language skills. Overall the program client's average length of time residing in Canada was 32 months. The majority of program clients had children living at home with an average of three children currently living at home. All names provided in this report are pseudonyms.

Findings

The research indicates that the Family Supports for Refugee Program is an effective program in supporting high-needs refugees and assists in their integration into Canadian society. Findings also show the program is a welcomed asset to assisting other service providers with their high-needs refugee clients. The initial step of developing trust between program support coordinators and clients is an important component to the program's success. Two key strengths of the program are the time allocated for clients and the holistic approach. The length of time allocated for program clients and the holistic approach of the program cultivates a trusting relationship between support coordinators and their clients. Findings from the study show the program increases their client's knowledge and access to services, increases their access to services, improves their navigation skills, contributes to their understanding of Canadian laws and societal norms, cultivates independence, addresses isolation issues, assists in advocating

clients rights, and assists clients to achieve English language skills and other educational goals. The holistic approach used by the program compliments its ability to address the many needs of their clients by providing a more in-depth support structure required by high-needs refugees. In terms of assisting other service providers, the program provides services to high-needs clients other service providers cannot due limits in service scope and time limitations. The Family Supports for Refugee Program complements service provider's ability to serve their high-needs clients by allocating a greater length of time for each client, following up with clients, mediating conflicts clients may have, and coordinating services to ensure there is no duplication. The collaborative approach used by Family Dynamics support coordinators creates a comprehensive and efficient service delivery structure required to ensure all service providers involved with high-needs refugees are better able to address their client's needs.

The Role of Trust

The Family Supports for Refugee Program’s initial step of effectively supporting clients is to develop trust between the support coordinators and their clients. Developing trust with program clients is required in order to fully understand the challenges they are experiencing and to address these challenges. Findings indicate that the time allocated by program support coordinators for their clients and the holistic approach of the program facilitated trust and were key components in effectively connecting their clients with supports. This aspect of the Family Supports for Refugee program was also reiterated by other service providers. As one service provider explains;

“It’s only when you’re dealing with high needs refugee families it’s only through that establishment of trust that they you can really provide the kind of support they need. So I guess by saying all these things can boil it down to that level of trust that you’re able to build by providing more sort of support and hours and face time with the family” (Service Provider 7).

The role of trust cultivates open communication between support coordinators and their clients. Support coordinators explained that as their clients begin to trust them they start to disclose

more personal information. Attaining this information assists support coordinators in identifying issues that may hinder high-needs refugee’s ability to engage with services and develop life skills such as mental health challenges, learning disabilities, or domestic violence. The information attained by support coordinators contributes to their ability to advocate for their clients, coordinate services, and mediate conflicts with other service providers. As one support coordinator explains;

“Some {service providers} they know but they really don’t know in detail. And they don’t know that there are some roots that are really deep in this family or in this person. ‘I didn’t know that this problem was going on with this family’ because that family does not disclose the information to the school or to somebody else. But since they trust us, so they tell us more than they do outsiders.” (Support coordinator 3).

Program clients also spoke of the trusting relationship with their support coordinator. The most common description by program client’s relationship with their support coordinators were feelings of safety. Program participant’s explanations of the support they received in

the program describe the support coordinators as cooperative, reliable, competent, and friendly. The majority of program clients interviewed stated that their support coordinator is reliable and would respond quickly to their inquiries. The quick response rate, successful coordination of services, and level of engagement by support coordinators contributed to program client's willingness to trust their support coordinators. The availability and level of engagement offered by the support coordinators contributed to the program client's feelings of reassurance and support. Yazmine, who has been in the program for

two years, shares her opinion of the program and how it helps refugees;

"Like especially I think the newcomers because the Family Dynamics or Family Centre before they most, most maybe I say most people they help they are newcomers. And they have many problems to be newcomers or refugee you have special situation. And you need special people to understand you...and {my support coordinator} takes care. We feel like we are in safe hands. She tries to ask. Find solutions." (Yazmine, mother of six, residing in Canada for 3 years).

Ways the Program Assists in Supporting High-Needs Refugees

1. Increase Knowledge of Services

The program serves as a means for program clients to understand Canada's highly complex service delivery system. Prior to their involvement in the program, clients expressed frustration and feeling overwhelmed in their attempts to navigate the different services. Findings show that many program clients did not know of the different service providers, and/or misunderstood the requirements to be eligible for the services. The lack of knowledge and understanding of service providers contributed to their struggles to maintain their daily lives in terms of housing, food, and health services. The lack of knowledge or engagement with services by refugees was also reiterated by support coordinators when asked of some challenges that they see with their clients.

“Even if your family is here for three years or simple thing again about the food bank they have no idea. And then some people say you have to go to the church to get. The location is at the church but it's not the actual church. So some people are not getting. They are not aware. And we found many families oh really ok I heard that people were getting food form the church but we're not Christian. We're not

belonging to the church so why should we go. Then we have to say it s not the church it's the location.” (Support coordinator 5).

Explaining the different types of services available contributes to the program client's access to services. The holistic approach used in the program provides program clients with a rich amount of information. The majority of program clients interviewed used the program as an information hub; a central source to receive help with various challenges they experience. Having access to a support coordinator who can assist with various challenges was appreciated by the majority of program clients interviewed. Program clients viewed their support coordinators as helpful in coordinating all the services they need. The resourcefulness of the program and the benefits of its holistic approach are illustrated by the following statements from clients:

(As told through an Interpreter): “Because it's going to be a waste of time looking for help everywhere and you won't get any results. Not like going straight to a person that you know is going to help. Its saving time and you get whatever you're looking for. But if you don't have such services you can just go there and there

and there and finally maybe you won't get the results that you wish to. He said it's really the way that they do it here it's really organized" (Marta & Armand, family of five, residing in Canada for three years).

"If they come here they will get, they will contact with many other sources. If they have a house problem they will be told to go to New Journey or something. And about if they have clothing, food or some problems they will be told. If they have want to attend the work language and they didn't attend the Entry program they will get the information." (Abe, family of four, residing in Canada for two years).

"It's good company. It can help in everything. Like from register because the newcomer need first may want to help them to register health card. To register the school. To register in day cares. To register like everything. Family Dynamic can find people to help. This is very good." (Yazmine, family of eight, residing in Canada for three years).

Many program clients are not familiar with the logistics of accessing and applying for services. This is compounded by limited English skills. Unfamiliarity and lack of English skills hinders their ability to engage in services on their own and apply for services correctly. The research indicates that support coordinators would work alongside their clients to complete their paperwork. Support coordinators assist their clients regarding paperwork in terms of how to fill out applications, translations of documents, and further explaining documents they received from the government or other service providers. In some cases where program clients had health issues support coordinators would meet their clients in their homes to assist with their paperwork. In these cases, findings show over-time this type of guidance contributes to the program client's knowledge of how to apply for services. Abe, who attained a high level of English language skills, explains the complexities of

filling applications for services his family needs and the effectiveness of the program in meeting his families medical and financial needs;

"Whenever there are problems I run to her. To fill forms and many things. She will help me... When we want something there are many papers. If there is this paper for example I can understand some but some of them I didn't understand. About tax or something. Whenever I have a problem I run here. She helps for filling the forms for child benefits. She is very cooperative. Very cooperative. A lot of Pharmacare because it was covered first because {my son} takes many medicines or something then they stopped it. Then we pay about \$100 or something per month. So she helped us to find the agency called Pharmacare. She picked up the form." (Abe, family of 4, residing in Canada for 2 years).

Another program client expressed the competency of the support of support coordinators in assisting them with required paperwork.

"Every time I'm stuck with Daycare renewal or subsidy of the daycare there is no single day I've come to Family Centre look I need this paper work done. I don't know how to do it. Can somebody guide me? They are always there. Applying for travel documents. I went to {service provider}. They gave me wrong information. They gave wrong documentation. I sent them to Ottawa and then my application was rejected. So when I came here to {my support coordinator}. She was like oh no that's not what you're supposed to do. So for me I found that there is competence here. People know what they are doing you know?" (Jolene, single mother of two, residing in Canada for two years).

Part of developing program client's knowledge of the Canadian service provider network includes increasing their understanding of the policy and regulations of each of the service providers. The time spent by program support coordinators with their clients benefited client's understanding of

other service provider's guidelines, application process, and the options available to them.

We have requirements that they need to meet. And they often don't know how to meet them and need assistance to meet them...Rather than me just kind of tell someone well you go there. If they are referred to an agency like Family Dynamics they can then take them to those particular agencies and get more, much more involved (Service Provider 1).

The time spent by support coordinators with their clients included developing the client's understanding of their responsibilities when using social services. Support coordinators would explain the client's mistake to them, how to avoid the mistake in the future, and the necessary steps to correct their mistake to avoid discontinuing of services they require. Explaining consequences helped program clients understand their situation and the challenges they were experiencing. As explained by one support coordinator;

"And they don't really know where to go and which is the right way to address to address things. So when they have us or when they bring us letters or mail we help them to go through the system in a smooth way. So we have to help them understand that. We have to work together with them to understand that this is your part that you're supposed to do and this is the EIA otherwise there's consequences." (Support coordinator 3)

2. Increase Navigation Skills

The holistic approach of the program and the time allocated for clients contributed to the client's navigation skills by developing their awareness and understanding of the services available to them. Changes in the client's ability to navigate the system were shown through client's explanation of things they are able to do themselves now that they could not do before. When asked about any changes participants had seen

in their abilities since starting in the program, participants expressed a sense of independence through the knowledge they attained working with their support coordinators. One program client's explanation of her experience of working with her support coordinator illustrates the benefits of the program and how it contributed to her knowledge and navigation skills.

"I can work. I can move around. I can able to look for specific places. I know where to go for specific information and I'm able to tell and talk to other people about what Family Dynamics help and where they can be helpful. Yeah I have benefited from that. I was not how I was before... Intellectually. You know. Now I feel like somehow I fit in the Canadian society. I'm you know everyday its learning. There are new things I learn every day. But I don't feel like the way I was." (Jolene, single mother of two, residing in Canada for two years).

3. Increase Understanding Canadian Laws and Societal Norms

The holistic approach and in-depth support of the program also assists in increasing client's knowledge of Canadian laws and societal norms. The time support coordinators dedicate towards their clients provides a learning environment needed for program clients to have a comprehensive understanding. The majority of program clients in the study expressed their lack of understanding parenting in Canada and how this can cause difficulties within their families. Some program clients were unaware of Canadian child welfare agencies and the responsibilities of schools and community agencies involvement with children's well-being. One client, Jolene, explains the guidance she receives from her support coordinator regarding parenting skills and the benefits of this knowledge;

"The disciplining way here it's so different from where I come from. The cultural. So Family Centre provided me with the coaching. Parental

coaching. Come home tell me what are the challenges and then I tell her and she'll, we'll go through different ways. This is what you have to do in Canada. This is what you have to follow you know like the children rights and your rights you know. Because {My support coordinator} understands the Canadian culture and she understands our culture back home too. So she tries to balance the two you know. They have helped me intellectually, emotionally, being a good parent, how to fit in this society and how to feel good." (Jolene, single mother of two, residing in Canada for two years).

The programs in-depth support assists program clients to understand acceptable parenting skills in Canada. In some cases this is a pro-active measure to avoid difficult situations with social service agencies. Understanding of Canadian laws and societal norms was expressed by program clients as an important part of adjusting to Canadian life. Some program clients felt they would benefit from more workshops regarding Canadian laws, parenting and multi-culturalism.

4. Assistance with Crisis Management

Another way the program assists high-needs refugees is through crisis intervention. Support coordinators described interventions regarding domestic violence, Child and Family Services (CFS) child apprehension, and youth involvement with gang activity and other highly complex cases (see appendix 1.3). In cases where there are difficulties within families, support coordinators provide guidance and support to their clients through highly stressful situations. The crisis intervention aspect of the program assists client's ability to manage difficulties and to engage with services they need. One support coordinator describes their role when a client experiences a crisis;

"So when something happens like that especially with the CFS if already involved

already. We are part of the family because they are panicking and they have no idea what is going on because it's a different context...The crisis comes. OK don't worry about this we can go together and got to the meeting together. The school or CFS meeting. Again the family don't understand. OK it's my child why are they taking and doing whatever. So you have to educate them about the law here. Ok this is the law we can't go against the law. Everybody has to report when they see this kind of thing. But again if you are willing to change you are willing to improve if you say this kind of thing then you can take your child back. Yeah again it's very hard for even the families. So when something happens they call us." (Support coordinator 4).

Support coordinators assist their clients in understanding the crisis, the factors that created the crisis, and the steps they need to take to deal with the situation. Throughout this process support coordinators ensure that their client feels supported. This level of engagement practiced by support coordinators assists in the client's ability to cope with the crisis and provides clients with a resource to rely on in times of crisis.

5. Advocate for Rights

The Family Supports for Refugee program assists clients by advocating on their behalf regarding their rights to ensure they receive services they are eligible to receive. High-needs refugees may need assistance to voice their concerns because of lack of confidence, fear of government or legal institutions. The majority of participants interviewed described situations where they were unable to communicate with other service providers and adequately explain their situation. This miscommunication would lead to the disruption of services. Upon the program client's request support coordinators commonly accompanied their clients to appointments with other service providers. The support coordinators assisted in facilitating better communication between the

service provider and their clients. Findings show that program support coordinators advocate on behalf of their clients in order to explain their client's situation, clarify misunderstandings, and ensure clients continued receiving services they were eligible to receive. Claudette's description of her experience with communication problems involving a service provider illustrates the vital role her support coordinator played in advocating for her rights;

"{Service Provider} stopped to give me money and say who helped me to get money to pay to go to Africa. And they did like two months no pay rent, house for me, food, and I came here I spoke to {my support coordinator}. And {she} helped me to go there and talk, she talked with them. She understands her than me. Because with me I went there to talk with them but they don't understand me. They say we don't know how you find money to pay that but when I came here and I talked to {my support coordinator} and {my support coordinator} take me there. We went there....They understand {my support coordinator}. They give me money. They paid the rent for two months. They continued to give me money for Food. "(Claudette, single mother of 4, residing in Canada for 1 year).

6. Cultivate Independence

The time allocated for program clients and the holistic approach of the program assists in developing independence. Findings show that program clients learned to various degrees how to making appointments, communicate with service providers, perform daily tasks, perform upkeep of their housing units, improve time management skills, and in some cases complete required paperwork. Family Dynamics incorporates a role modelling approach to teach needed integration skills. During appointments with their clients, support coordinators role model how to interact in public, communicate with service providers, use transit systems, and develop time management

skills. Support coordinators practiced with their clients until they could perform tasks on their own. As explained by one support coordinator;

"I will role model let's make an appointment. That is a huge issue. So for them to make an appointment and be on time or the appointment and don't go over their appointment it's so hard. We coach them to call Revenue Canada there are some security questions that are a pain if you don't know any English. It's so hard for people who don't understand English. So we will coach them to be able to answer the questions and to get to that point where 'my interpreter will talk to you.' Because we have to make them feel confident enough to be able to do these things on their own. So yeah maybe you'll go with them the first three, five, fifteen times if necessary but at some point you know they'll be able to do it on their own." (Support coordinator 1).

The level of engagement practiced by support coordinators recognizes the various challenges experienced by high-needs refugee population. The dedication of support coordinators to help their clients practice daily tasks provides the reassurance and guidance high-needs refugees require to become independent. The effectiveness of role-modelling was also noted by some service providers;

"I would say clients who are not in the program with the Family Dynamics will have less chances, less opportunities and will have more difficult time learning because there is not a guide that will be consistent with what they need and how to do it. There will be no person showing them how." (Service Provider 4)

7. Addressing Isolation Issues

Findings show that the amount of communication and engagement by caseworks decreased program participant's feelings of isolation. Feelings of isolation and homesickness were common amongst participant's explanation of the challenges they experience in Winnipeg. In some cases the regu-

lar communication plays a vital role in program participant's mental health and their willingness to be resilient. Through an interpreter Pauline explains how the daily interaction between her and her program support coordinator increases her self-esteem in order to connect with her surrounding community in Winnipeg;

(As spoke through an Interpreter) “{Support coordinator} provides and everyday she calls to know how {I am} doing and all that. It's something good for {me} because {I am} getting again {my} personal esteem. ... They help {me} with, {I} was feeling alone and so they helped {me} everything to get in contact with people because it was something {I don't} doesn't want to do. Because {I} wanted {my} husband to be with {me}. {I} was feeling alone and all that. So where {I am} right now it's because of the services that {I} received at Family Dynamics.” (Pauline, residing in Canada for ten months).

The degree of communication between support coordinators and their client's provides a much needed emotional support for program clients. The majority of program clients interviewed express that the level of engagement by their support coordinators contributed to their sense of belonging and provided the emotional support they needed to continue in their efforts of integrating into Canadian society.

“The change that I've had is I don't feel so alone anymore. I feel trusted now that I have someone that is on my side to help me. That I don't feel frustrated anymore with answers like no it's not possible. I feel now with this I will be able to achieve many things. Yes because if we are a good example of what Family Dynamics is doing with us and other people will see and other people will see that we're getting the moral support that we need in this new life.” (Louisa, single mother of two, living in Canada for 2 years).

“You know from the time {my support coordinator} visited me there is no single week

has pasted without calling to say how are you guys. There is that constant follow up...Giving me hope when you have somebody who cares for you, who is there for you. You know it's a huge support and that's what I need. Somebody to give you a call just to check on you. How are you guys? How have you been?” (Claudette, single mother of four, residing in Canada for two and half years).

Support coordinators also address isolation issues by encouraging their clients to engage in small talk with their neighbours and community. Support coordinators would connect their clients with services in their area such as art programs for their children or other after school activities as a means to encourage their clients to interact with their community and their neighbourhood. This type of encouragement was also promoted as a way for clients to practise their English language skills.

8. Assists with English Language/ Educational Goals

The program assists clients' ability to increase their English language skills by incorporating services to meet their family responsibilities. Using a needs assessment tool, support coordinators address the challenges that interfere with program client's ability to engage with English as Additional Language (EAL) classes, educational pursuits, and in some cases the labour market. All participants interviewed expressed the desire to be employed however many had limited English language skills. Therefore the program's ability to increase their client's access to EAL classes assists their client's efforts of working towards their employment goals. Barriers to attending EAL classes experienced by program clients included: housing, child care, and health issues. The closure of EAL classes would require clients to relocate to another school and in some classes clients were transferred to schools where only part-time EAL classes were offered. Support coordinators address this barrier by exploring

other agencies that offered full-time EAL classes. Support coordinators collaborated with their clients to find more suitable EAL classes in order to assist them in attaining their English Language goals. Louisa, whose goal is to achieve a level 6 benchmark and begin working in a technical career, explains the role of her support coordinator is helping her achieve her goals:

“I have to thank {my support coordinator} because she helped me to, she helped me to study every day. Because the school that I was in before, enrolled in before they closed it down. They were going to send me to another school where I’d only be going to twice a week for an hour and a half. So she helped me get into the other school where I will be there more and longer.” (Louisa, single mother of three, residing in Canada for two years).

Another barrier the program works to address for program clients is access to child care. The majority of program clients interviewed expressed difficulties in accessing EAL classes or other educational courses because they do not have the support network to assist supervising their children in their absence. Jolene, a single mother of two young children, explains the role her support coordinator played in assisting her to achieve her educational goals which then lead to her employment;

“So I when I came I was stuck with my two kids. I had no one to help me with the kids. I felt like I was being useless you know. They helped me with the day care. Applying to the day care you know... Family Centre, Dynamics looked for arranged they paid somebody to stay with my kid for those two hours. You know they facilitated me everything and that gives me courage. I did my course. I got an A+. And After I completed my course I got jobs. I past my interview and I got my casual job!” (Jolene, single mother of two, residing in Canada for two years).

Support coordinators also assisted in overcoming participants barriers to education by coordinating services that address their health needs. The coordination efforts by support coordinators of ensuring proper services were in place allow program clients to attend EAL and other educational goals. Many program clients interviewed had various health issues within their family that hindered their ability to attend schooling. One program client, Abe and his wife, were not able to attend EAL classes or other educational pursuits because of the medical condition of their son requires permanent care. Their support coordinator assisted in addressing this barrier by coordinating supports for their son. As explained by Abe;

“Because someone needs to be at home to take care of the child. If both of us are then nobody can work. It helped her much. I think she got a benchmark. I think some like three... Then after sometime with help of {my support coordinator} and the social worker we told them every problem. We can’t do anything because one has to be here. We can’t work or attended class. That’s why I canceled this but after many things many meetings there then they accepted my son. Then I applied. So that was a big thing.” (Abe, family of four, residing in Canada for two years).

The efforts of the support coordinators addressing the various barriers experienced by high-needs refugees English language and educational goals. Support coordinators’ observations of their clients independence levels were most commonly aligned with their clients success in mastering the English language. The development of literacy and language skills were celebrated by support coordinators with clients which helped to encourage program clients to stay focus on their English language and educational goals.

Ways the Program Assists Other Service Providers

1. Resolving Service Providers Time limitations

The research indicates that the Family Supports for Refugees Program assists with mediating other service providers' time limitations. The time allocated by the program for their clients is beyond the timeframe structure commonly in place with other service providers. The time structure limits of their programming hinders their ability to ensure their high needs refugee clients have a comprehensive understanding of their responsibilities. It also hinders service provider's ability to ensure their clients understand the reasoning for service providers' decisions, and what issues the service provider can assist with. In order to minimize the effect of the time limitations, service providers rely on Family Dynamics program support coordinators to ensure clients needs can be address by the service provider's programming. As several service providers explain:

"It's a huge help for me in particular in my caseload because there's a variety of issues that come up with newcomers. Someone can come in and I can talk to them with or without an interpreter but my time is limited as to how much I can spend with them. I can't really

follow up either than talking to them again. We don't take the time or our legislative to do that to have the time to go into someone's home to do anything in more detail." (Service Provider 1)

"A lot of other agencies the thing is their view of problems is very specific and the amount of things they can do is very specific. So suddenly like they can like fix for you housing or budgeting or finances or give you money. But they are not helping you navigate other systems for disability. Other agencies are so limited by their role and we don't have that. We can just go around and call whoever we need and try to provide whatever we need as fast as we need." (Support coordinator 1)

2. Following-up With Clients

The in-depth level of support provided by the Family Support for Refugees Program assists service providers by following up with program clients in terms of ensuring they are abiding by their guidelines and attending appointments. This aspect of the program complements other service provider's ability to work with their high needs refugee clients. The following quotes il-

illustrate the benefits service providers have seen to clients who are in the Family Dynamics Support for Refugees program.

“So we don’t have the capacity to work intensively with a family like Family Dynamics do. In that way we really I mean I see the people, the team at Family Dynamics as my coworkers.”(Service Provider 7)

“So I think it makes us feel more secure in knowing that I mean if they’re sitting with somebody who can show them a map and all those things that maybe we don’t have the opportunity to do...it the one of the big challenges we have here is especially since a lot of our communication with clients happens over the phone you worry sometimes, you know, does this person really understand what I’ve said about the process and how to access emergency food when they need to?” (Service Provider 6).

3. Mediating Conflicts and Misunderstandings

Findings show that program support coordinators role as a mediator assists service providers in understanding their clients situations and the challenges they are experiencing. Support coordinators assist other service providers in managing high-needs refugee cases through mediating any issue or misunderstanding between the service provider agency and the client. The information provided by support coordinators in addition to their mediation skills, assists service providers to better assess their role. As described by one service provider:

“There may be needs that the newcomer have that I’m not aware of. Or {the clients} are unable to verbalize to me or they don’t even have any idea that they could get help with it with that particular issue that they have. So Family Dynamics can clarify it because they are meeting with people over a period of time.

They get to know exactly what’s going on. What I ended up doing with them a lot is problem solving. They let me know what issues are the worker or workers will talk to me about issues in a particular file or situation and we’ll brainstorm as to how best to deal with it. So we use each other. Although I’d have to say I use them more than they use me.” (Service Provider 2).

The multi-linguistic composition of the staff within the program is an important factor to their mediator role. The majority of service providers recognized the program helps them better communicate with their clients and clarify any misunderstandings. Service provider’s ability to converse with high-needs refugee clients was positively influenced by the program support coordinator’s ability to engage with clients who lack English language skills. The uniqueness of this aspect of the program is explained by one service provider:

“But again a lot of the family support workers speak other languages so it’s easier for them to communicate with clients in their home or where it be like if they need to go to a community organization... So definitely having someone who speaks their language who can act as an advocate on their behalf is super super important because not a lot, there isn’t a lot of people they can go to for that service.” (Service Provider 1).

4. Coordinating Services

Service providers described frequent issues of duplication of services for clients before the start of Family Supports for Refugees program. High-needs refugees receive services from many different service providers and in some cases seek assistance with one issue from different service providers. The coordinator role of program support coordinators addresses this issue and serves as a pro-active measure to prevent the duplication of services in order to create a more efficient use of services. The coordination efforts of support coordinators facilitate a collaborative approach

to service delivery. The collaborative approach facilitated a discussion about clients needs as a means to identify each service provider's role in addressing the client's needs which assists in cultivating a comprehensive structure of service delivery. One service provider illustrates how the collaborative approach implemented by the program is unique and how it complements her ability to meet her client's needs:

"I feel like they make my job easier...So because you know sometimes you call people and right away they start putting up barriers and saying 'oh no I can't do this, or I can't do that. I'm too busy or the clients have all sorts of complaints. And it's hard you know when you're trying to help someone and you know you're getting barriers put up. But again whenever I call someone {program support coordinators} are always willing to help me and they are always going to figure out a solution." (Service Provider 1).

The following is a support coordinator's explanation of her efforts to establish bridges illustrates the importance of building a compre-

hensive structure of service delivery by working with service providers;

"But most of my families are falling apart. So picking them up, first building the relationship with other resources which I need them... Very strong bridges with everybody.... I can't afford to make any boundaries given not just my clients but high needs and the same time the client has been here, like I said it takes a village to do everything." (Support coordinator 4).

All service providers interviewed stated they would refer the Family Support for Refugee program to other service providers. This referral frequently attributed to the programs collaborative approach to working with other agencies and the ease of working with the program's support coordinators. As explained by one service provider;

"I guess that's kind of how it is at Family Dynamics you're welcomed into the team to be part of the group that is helping these clients because it's an asset not a detriment." (Service Provider 5).

Recommendations

1. Recommendations for Family Dynamics

1a. Increase access to services on evening and weekends.

To adequately support program clients, hours of operation should be extended to evenings and weekends. The research indicated that extended hours for access to support coordinators would benefit communication with both other service providers and program clients. Some challenges experienced by service providers were a mismatch of the scheduling of program support coordinators hours and the requirement of services outside of Family Dynamics. Increasing access to program support coordinators services will build on the program's strength in addressing other service providers time and scope limitations.

1b. Increase number of program support coordinators

The research indicates the level of engagement by each support coordinator is an effective approach to supporting high-needs refugees and assist in their client's integration into Canadian society. Although this method is necessary to assist high-needs refugees it requires a lower caseload ratio. In order to build upon the pro-

gram's success an additional support coordinator is needed. Increasing the number of program support coordinators would accommodate staff leaves, facilitate a more manageable caseload, and increase the program's ability to support a greater amount of refugees in need.

1c. Promote public awareness of program

Although Family Dynamics is a part of a highly effective referral network in Winnipeg, findings show that there needs to be more public awareness with different ethno-communities and the wider Winnipeg community. An increase in public awareness with different ethno-communities is a means to increase the likelihood of connecting with privately sponsored refugees in Winnipeg. One way Family Dynamics can engage with various communities is through partnering with neighbourhood settlement workers to conduct presentations about the program, engaging with different community events, and using media advertisements. Promoting public awareness of the program will expand the referral network into the public domain, which in turn could potentially be a proactive approach to engage with high-needs refugees before a crisis develops.

1d. Improve Communications with Service Providers

The research indicates that service providers were not aware of when a program client is assigned a new support coordinator. Establishing a protocol for support coordinators take over will improve communication with other service providers. The research shows that the majority of program clients had more than one support coordinator. The high turnover rates of support coordinators can hinder the collaborative approach implemented in the program. However, timely introductions with each service provider when a new support coordinator is assigned to a case can subdue the effect of the high turnover rates.

1e. Continue to develop the multi-linguistic composition of the program

The multi-linguistic composition of the support coordinators was frequently referred to by interviewees as one of the strengths of the program. Continuing to develop this strength will decrease the need for the interpreters from outside of the program, benefit communication with a wider range of refugees, and assist in the mediation with other service providers. Funding should be available for language classes for current support coordinators who wish to speak another language used by refugee clients. Additionally, immigration patterns regarding source countries of refugees migrating to Winnipeg should be considered when hiring new support coordinators in order to be pro-active in reflecting the needs of the refugee population. Funding should also be available to create a pool of trained interpreters for the program. Given the programs holistic approach and interaction with various service providers is reasonable grounds to establish their own pool of interpreters. The creation of this type of resource will benefit support coordinators, program clients, and other service providers.

1f. Increase the amount of client workshops

Many interviewees stated the need for more

workshops regarding Canadian laws, parenting in Canada, and multi-culturalism. Interviewees also suggested workshops to be separate for children/youth and their parents. Delivering workshops for youth focusing on laws and multi-culturalism was seen by some interviewees as a way to address any cultural conflicts they may be experiencing. An increase in these types of workshops would assist in program clients to understand their new country and support their integration into Canadian society. Developing workshops that are aimed at youth would contribute to the program's holistic approach to service delivery.

2. Recommendations for Collateral Service Providers

2a. Promote services and programs in a way that is more accessible to high-needs refugees

The research indicates that although service providers have developed programs focusing on newcomers there is a lack of recognizing the various classes of newcomers. High-needs refugees experience more challenges than other classes of newcomers, such as economic class newcomer. Developing programs that recognize the numerous barriers experienced by high-needs refugees would decrease the likelihood of discontinuance of much needed services. In order to be pro-active in anticipating the challenges of this population, service provider's delivery of programs requires more flexibility.

2b. Improve cultural competency and awareness of refugee issues.

Some improvements within the social service provider sector have been made. However, the research indicates there is a lack of understanding of the impact of culture shock in general, and the barriers experienced by refugees in their attempts to settle into Canadian society. A greater awareness is needed to recognize that Canada

service sector is highly complex and how this complexity can act as a barrier for high-needs refugee population. Working with Family Dynamics to offer workshops and requiring employees to attend will assist in a more effective approach to service delivery amongst collateral agencies.

3. Recommendations for Policy Makers

3a. Develop affordable housing strategies to accommodate large families

The research indicates that all program clients struggled to find housing that adequately met their needs. The majority of program clients interviewed had large families with young children and require housing with more than two bedrooms, which is in extremely limited supply. Overall, there is a lack of affordable housing units available for refugees who have a very limited amount of financing available. Many program clients described using food banks as a way to ensure they had finances available for

housing costs. Developing housing strategies that accommodate large families would assist in the successful settlement of refugees in Winnipeg.

3b. Provide long term funding for programs

The research indicates that the Family Supports for Refugee Program is an effective service for assisting high-needs refugees with their challenges and contribute to their integration into Canadian society. A government commitment to stable long-term funding for the Family Supports for Refugees Program is required in order to create stability for this effective approach to providing support for high-needs refugees in Winnipeg. The program's success is a key component to ensuring the collateral agencies services reach the refugee population effectively. Stable long-term funding would assist in the development of the program in terms of providing support coordinators with job security, and hiring additional staff, in order to meet the demands of their services and further complement the effectiveness of their program.

Conclusion

The Family Supports for Refugees Program is an effective, innovative program that supports high-needs refugees in their integration into Canadian society. The program plays an important intermediary role in assisting other service providers to meet the needs of their clients. Testimonials from program clients and other service providers illustrate that the Family Supports for Refugee Program is better equipped to work with high-needs refugees. The Family Supports for Refugees Program is successful in providing services for children such as daycare and parent coaching, increasing program client's access to services, advocating on clients behalf, helping with documentation, forms, and letter writing. The services provided by the program increase program clients' knowledge and understanding of the social service provider sector, develop their navigation skills, cultivates independence, and address isolation issues. Furthermore, pro-

gram clients felt the program plays a significant role in developing their sense of belonging and sense of security. The trust between support coordinators and their clients is a key component of the Family Supports for Refugees program's success and is a reflection of the commitment and in-depth support delivered by the program support coordinators. The Family Supports for Refugees Program provides a much needed innovative approach to settlement service delivery in order to cultivate an environment where the most vulnerable also have an opportunity to successfully integrate into Canadian society. This is well stated by this closing quote:

"I would say that as long as we still having people coming here the refugees. Among those who will be coming, will be having the high need refugees as well who need our help."
(Support Coordinator 3).

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Appendix 1.0

Interview Questions: Program Clients

1. Where were you born?
2. When did you arrive to Canada?
3. What is your marital status?
4. Do you have any children? If so how many?
5. Have you attended school? If so what level did you receive?
6. Can you tell me about your experiences when you first arrived in Winnipeg?
7. How did you first hear about Family Dynamics?
8. What is your helpers name at Family Dynamics? Who has helped you at Family Dynamics?
9. What problems/troubles were you facing when you started at Family Dynamics?
10. Tell me about your relationship with your helper? How would you describe your relationship? What was it like to work with them?
11. Who do you talk to when you are overwhelmed or worried? (Prompt if needed with list — Money, family, lawyers, children, English language, government).
12. In what way has the people at the program helped you?
13. Of the following types of services I'll read to you, how important do you think the programs offered at Family Dynamics are to refugees? (Scale of importance — Not Important Somewhat Important / Very Important).
 - help/support with your children
 - Money problems
 - Basic Needs
 - Understanding Canadian culture
 - Job information
 - Health Issues
 - School
 - Daycare
14. If the supports being offered at Family Dynamics is there anything that you think could be better?
15. What programs do you wish Family Dynamics offered?
16. What offices do you know about in Winnipeg that you can access?

17. Have you tried to find help or support from other offices other than Family Dynamics?
18. If you knew somebody who was new to Canada would you tell them about Family Dynamics?
19. What changes in yourself have you noticed since coming to the program?

What kinds of things can you do yourself now?

20. What advice would you give to other newcomers who have just arrived to Winnipeg?
21. What do you think your life would be like if you didn't use the program?

Appendix 1.1

Interview Questions: Collateral Agencies

1. How did you first hear about the Family Supports for Refugees Program?
2. What are the benefits for your organization in having the program involved with clients you work with? How does the program help you meet the needs of refugees?
3. What benefits do you see for the clients in having the program involved?
4. Have you seen a difference between high needs clients who are in the program and other high needs clients who are not?
5. What are the factors beyond the scope of the Family Supports for Refugees Program that affect the lives of refugees in Winnipeg?
6. In your opinion how does Family Dynamics program assist with the lives of refugees in Winnipeg?
7. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?
8. Would you refer other service providers to seek assistance from the case works of the program? Why or Why not?

Appendix 1.2

Interview Questions: Program Support Coordinators

1. How does the program fit within the wider context of refugee services available in Winnipeg?
2. From your perspective, what are the most important services offered by the program?
3. What services if any could be improved upon and how?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?
5. How does the program use a holistic framework?
6. How does the program assist in supporting other service providers who do not have the expertise or capacity to handle the complex issues and challenges of the refugee population?
7. What steps do you find useful in developing trust with refugees?
8. What approaches do you implement in order to assist this unique population towards integrating into Canadian society?

Appendix 1.3

Case Study

The following case study of an actual client at Family Dynamics illustrates the complex realities facing refugees immigrating and integrating into Canadian culture and society. The services of Family Dynamics were essential to supporting this client to deal with a number of inter-connecting issues including domestic violence, child welfare, housing, and accessing health services.

March 2014

Ita, her five year old daughter Ella, and her older sister, Valerie, arrived in Canada as government sponsored refugees in 2011. When the family arrived in Winnipeg, a marriage was arranged for Ita through a local community in Winnipeg. Taking the advice of the community elders, Ita married a man many years older than she was and moved into a small apartment with her new husband, daughter and older sister. Soon after the marriage, Ita was pregnant and gave birth to a son. Ita and her sister speak an uncommon dialect. Few others in Winnipeg speak this language and no trained interpreters are available in their language. Ita has very minimal English language skills. Both Valerie and Ella have medical conditions. Valerie suffers from numerous chronic health issues. Ella has chronic cough-

ing and breathing difficulties. The family became quite isolated in Winnipeg due in part to their language, ethnicity and religious affiliation.

Prior to arriving to Canada, Ita, a single mother at the age of 19, was required to work outside her village to earn money for the family. Ita had received some formal elementary education in her home country. Ita and her sister lived in a remote village before arriving to Canada and had no prior experience of living in an urban setting or managing modern systems.

The family became known to Family Dynamics Family Supports for Refugees Program through a referral from a member of Ita's community. Ita and Valerie had confided to the community member that there were relationship tensions within the family including domestic violence issues. Ita, accompanied by the community member, met with a Family Supports for Refugee program support coordinator, however, communication at the initial meeting was challenging because of Ita's uncommon dialect. Program support coordinators were able to identify an interpreter whom Ita trusted and another meeting was arranged. Through a lengthy conversation with the interpreter, it became apparent that abusive behaviour had been occurring by the husband

towards Valerie and Ita's children. A report to the Child Protection agency (CFS) was required. The program support coordinator assured Ita that while it was required by law to report the allegations, she would be supported and guided through the process of reporting and subsequent investigation of the case.

The support coordinator contacted the head of the "Newcomer Initiative Program" at CFS to describe the case. Outside of CFS standard procedures, CFS agreed to identify a specific agent and work together with the program support coordinator to arrange for the reporting and investigating process in this case. Program support coordinator accompanied Ita to meetings with the CFS agent to ensure that Ita understood the situation and to assist in explaining the laws about abuse and reporting obligations in Canada.

The CFS agent worked alongside the program support coordinator to initiate the investigation process and develop a safety plan for Ita's family. Through the Family Supports for Refugee program's assessment process the support coordinator identified the issues regarding housing, her daughter's school, communication issues with her doctor, health issues, barriers to accessing EAL classes, and a lack of understanding of parenting in Canada. When asked about her goals and priorities, Ita stated "I need help with everything. I don't know what to do. All I want is to live a peaceful life with my children and my sister." The support coordinator in collaboration with other service providers and Ita, developed a strategy for Ita to overcome barriers she experience. The program support coordinator was able to assist Ita in the following ways;

- Ita had received information from their landlord that they were going to be evicted. She did not understand why she was being evicted as she was unable to read the notices she had been receiving. The support coordinator reviewed all of the letters that had been received from the landlord and contacted the landlord to discuss

the issues. Miscommunications were clarified, policies were explained and the eviction notice was cancelled. The support coordinator also assisted Ita in obtaining tenant's insurance, as per the landlord's requirement. The support coordinator assisted Ita in applying for rent aid and to apply for subsidized housing. The support coordinator also advocated on Ita's behalf for the landlord to address some needed repairs in her apartment.

- Ita felt ineffective in being able to communicate in English and felt overwhelmed and frustrated. This language barrier was most evident in her dealings with her daughter's school, landlord, and with their family doctor. The support coordinator made arrangements for an interpreter to attend important meetings, such as with her daughter's school and regarding the ongoing child protection issues.
- Ita wanted to attend school and improve her English however her husband would not allow her to attend EAL classes. Ita did not have any income of her own and instead was completely dependent on her husband's income. To avoid conflict with him, she would avoid asking him for money including for basics such as food, clothing and medicine. The program support coordinator connected with the Immigrant Women's Counselling program to address issues involving Ita's husband. The support coordinator along with an interpreter attends appointments with Ita to help her understand the dynamics of abuse, what her rights and responsibilities are, and to understand and consider the choices she has for herself and her children. The support coordinator is following up to assist Ita in obtaining legal advice, housing, custody issues, reporting requirements,

following through on safety plans, and personal counselling.

- Communication with their family doctor is difficult because of language barriers. The doctor does not use an interpreter consistently. Being rushed in appointments has resulted in miscommunication and confusing health care treatment for all members of the family. Despite many visits to the family doctor, the health concerns of her family members have not improved. The support coordinator attended several doctor's appointments with Ita and her family to help her understand the treatment plan that the doctor was prescribing. A variety of medications had been prescribed with no clear understanding of what the medicine was for, how to take it, how long to take it, etc. With enthusiastic agreement from Ita and her sister, a referral was made to another family doctor and a pediatrician. The support coordinator accompanied Ita's family to their medical appointments. Each member of the family received a comprehensive medical assessment. Referrals were made to various specialists,

a dietician, and pediatrician. The children's vaccinations were updated and a diagnosis of asthma was determined for Ita's daughter. Prescriptions were ordered in "bubble packs" to assist Ita and Valerie to with taking their medications properly. This led to a significant improvement in Valerie's and Ella's health. Their new doctor readily accessed interpretation support for follow up appointments and treatment plans. Ita and Valerie now go to doctor's appointments on their own. The doctor's office advises the support coordinator when there are follow up appointments or special instructions required to ensure that Ita and Valerie understand what they need to do.

- Ita felt powerless because of her language barrier and wanted to understand the social service systems, her rights and responsibilities, and a greater knowledge of services she can access. Ita and Valerie have been participating in a one-on-one positive disciplining program offered through Family Dynamics where Ita has been learning about her responsibilities as a parent in Canada, as well as developing new skills in positive parenting.



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