

# PCHS Community Needs Assessment Report

## 1.0 Background

A Family Forum event on October 4, 2014 gathered survey data from participants to identify self-reported community barriers to achieving 'Happy Healthy Successful Families'. This theme was introduced and framed through an insightful, inspiring and moving keynote delivered by Mr. Baldev Singh Mutta, a pioneer in providing culturally competent services to the Ontario South Asian (SA) community for 25 years. The subsequent passionate and engaged round-table discussions affirmed how deeply Mr. Mutta's articulation of the community's challenges and experiences resonated for the audience. While some of the content was an insightful eye opener for a few, many more stated Mr. Mutta had incisively captured and articulated the plethora and profoundly culturally imbued struggles, issues and nuances inherent in their daily lives: be they a new immigrant or second generation; the young, a parent or a senior.

## 2.0 Methodology

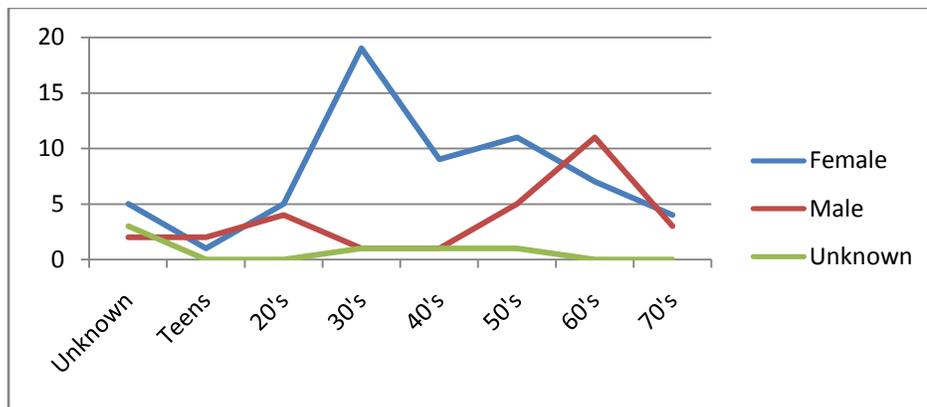
Using Participatory Action Research (PAR) methods, PCHS Calgary engaged with the community to solicit needs assessment. With an attendance of approximately 200 (with childcare provisioned):

- 96 survey forms were collected
- 160 participants were engaged in robust round-table discussions.

Additionally resource tables were setup by 14 existing mainstream agencies, manned by 20 staff disseminated resource and service information.

## 3.0 Demographics

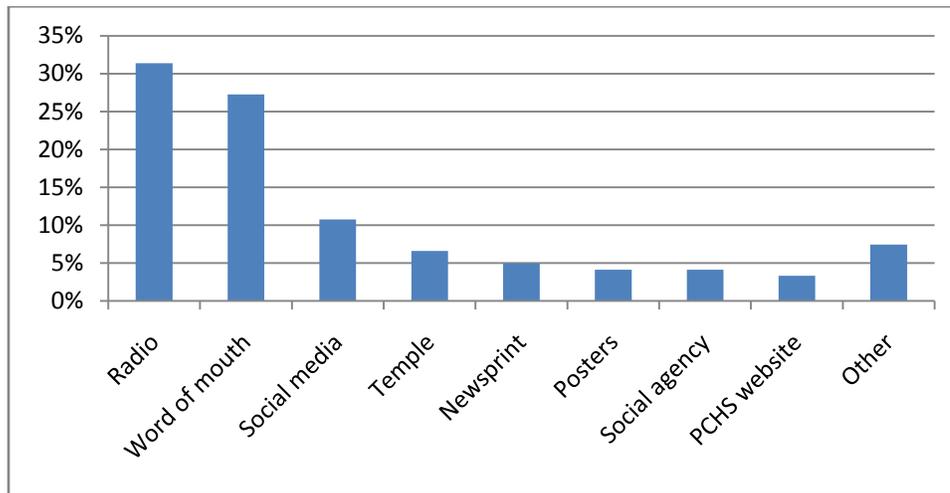
Completed surveys were collected from 60% of the 160 adult participants. Of these 73% were in English the remaining 27% in Punjabi & Hindi. The majority of participants were females in the age range of 20 to 50. Male participants ranged in age from 20 to 70, with greater numbers in the 45-65 ages.



Demographic Numbers and Participant age ranges

#### 4.0 Effective Communication Methods for South Asian Communities

It was evident from survey results that multicultural radio is an effective media to reach the SA community, followed by word of mouth.



How participants heard about the event

'Other' category includes: inter-agency email, social service agencies, seniors' groups.

#### 5.0 Barriers identified to building Happy Healthy Families

Round table discussions were facilitated in Punjabi, English and Hindi, based on the following two questions:

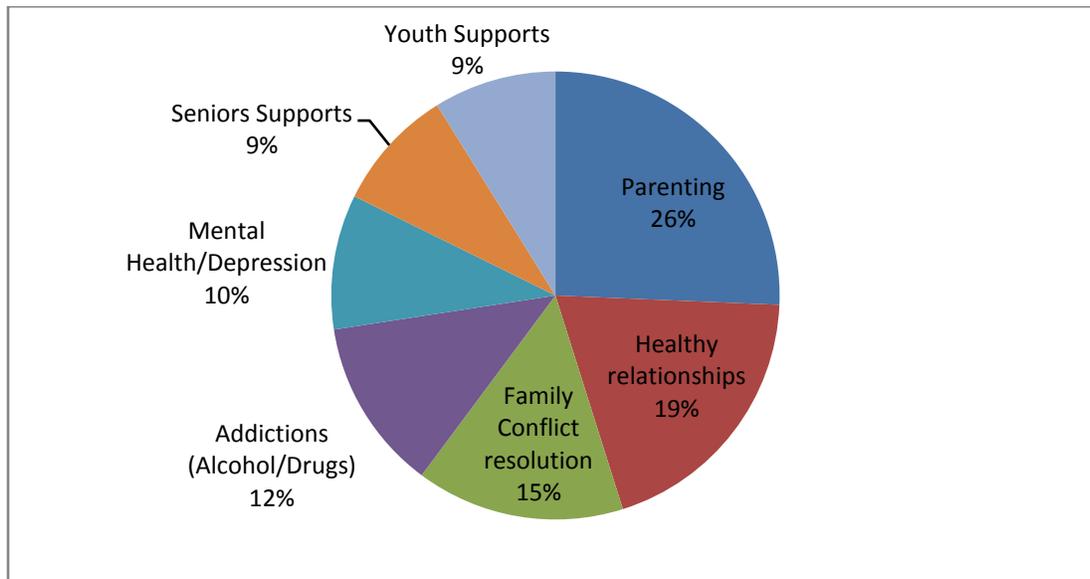
1. What are some general characteristics of a happy, healthy, successful family, and in your experience/family what has worked for you? What would you keep doing? What would you change? What new things will you be willing to try?
2. What are some general challenges/barriers to having a happy, healthy, successful family, and in your experience/family, what are your concerns? What would you improve to overcome the challenges? How would you change the situation? What new things would you be willing to try?

Participants identified the following barriers in response to Question 2:

- Lack of linguistically and culturally appropriate services
- Lack of awareness in the community about some issues, while others are ignored or not talked about, such as child sexual abuse, mental health and addictions within the SA community, parenting issues, men's counselling and healthy relationships.
- Postimmigration issues, culture shock and lack of extended family support, as well as gender role reversal.
- Intergenerational issues especially whilst living in multi-generational families.
- Lack of skills to access formal services and resources
- Lack of skills in relationship building and cross-cultural parenting

## 6.0 Prioritized Needs of Service

Participants categorized and prioritized services needed in the SA community on the survey forms and in answering question 1 in the round-table discussions.



**6.1 Parenting Support:** The top identified service was parenting support for parents and grandparents, for their children schooling within Canadian cultural norms. Parents amongst participants recognized their need for skills and tools to help children handle peer pressure, and to identify mental health and behavioral issues with their children. Some parents identified issues raising children with visible Sikh identity i.e. wearing 'patka'. Many suggested PCHS engage more youth in programs, and the need for services for youth.

**6.2 Healthy Relationships:** It is very evident from the event feedback that the community is deficient of and eager for support with skill building for healthy relationships, especially within the SA cultural context of extended family households. All generations of participants identified the need for skills and tools to strengthen family relationships, in achieving 'Happy, Healthy and Successful Families'. They clearly identified healthy relationships as foundations for successful and thriving families, ultimately leading to thriving communities.

**6.3 Service Access:** Participants identified the need for support in connecting with the most appropriate and effective services, based on the family's cultural and socio-economic factors. It's imperative to understand, that when families' needs are not appropriately served by service providers, word of mouth within the SA community has significant negative and or constructive ripple effects in reaching for outside help.

## **7.0 Community Asks**

- Participants requested more programs, services and ongoing events provided in the South Asian cultural context, to maintain continuity of awareness building.
- Participants urged PCHS to establish and start delivering programs and services. To support South Asian families in addressing the identified issues in a timely manner, before they escalate into bigger issues.

## **8.0 Implications for PCHS**

It is evident from the feedback and surveys collected that PCHS is being entrusted by the community, to leverage the momentum built through this event and to commence roll out of acutely needed prioritized services. Together with the abundant support from the community, PCHS received 26 volunteer applications. PCHS Calgary intends to use this community feedback and support for program development. As a first step PCHS will train volunteers to provide Integrated Supportive Counselling services to the South Asian community. To address the identified barriers and gaps PCHS has embarked on building partnerships with other Human Service agencies, to more effectively serve the South Asian community in a holistic manner.