

***“Navigating the Spaces Between”***

## **Cultural Brokerage in the Disability, Health and Social Services Sectors**

Presented by: Traicy Robertson  
Society for Manitobans with Disabilities

# Society for Manitobans with Disabilities (SMD)

- ▶ SMD is a family of organizations that are working together to improve the lives of persons with disabilities in Manitoba

# SMD Services

- ▶ Case Management/Counselling Services
- ▶ Therapy for Children
- ▶ Communication Centre for Children
- ▶ Children's Leisure and Recreation Services
- ▶ Employment Services for Adults
- ▶ Life Skills Programming for Adults
- ▶ Services for Individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- ▶ Wheelchair Services
- ▶ Ethno-Cultural Program
- ▶ Community Inclusion and Support Services

# Ethno-Cultural Program

- ▶ The Ethno-Cultural program works with newcomers with disabilities, whose first language is not English, and helps them navigate the health and social services systems.

# Program Focus

- ▶ Refugees and Newcomers who have a disability
- ▶ Adults, children and their families
- ▶ Rehabilitation
- ▶ Quality of life challenges

# Our Team

**8 Cultural Resource Facilitators** (AKA Cultural Brokers)  
work with individuals from  
Ethno cultural Communities

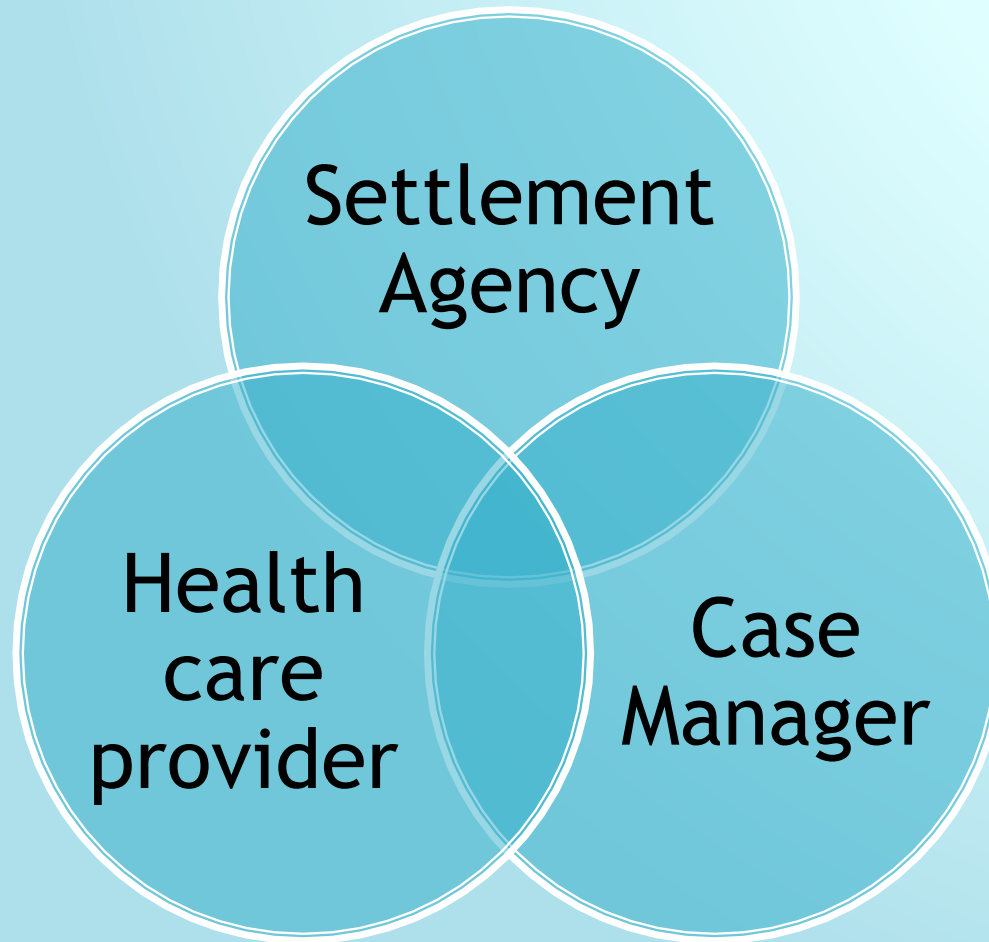
<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>China</b>	<b>Ethiopia</b>	<b>Philippines</b>
<b>India</b>	<b>Somalia</b>	<b>Sudan</b>	<b>Vietnam</b>

# Program Goals

- ▶ Persons with disabilities from ethnic communities will have equitable access to programs and services they need to maintain their independence
- ▶ Service providers will be sensitive to the needs of individuals with disabilities of ethnic origin and the related needs of their communities
- ▶ Ethno cultural communities will be more aware of and more understanding of the resources and services available to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, who are members of their communities



# Community Partners





# Who/What is a Cultural Broker

## Liaison and Advocate

- ▶ Communicates and liaises between clients and service providers
- ▶ Advocates for individuals and groups

## Cultural Guide

- ▶ Guides service providers in the process of incorporating culturally and linguistically competent values and practices and clients in understanding of and adapting to new cultural values and norms

Source: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004. Diversity ERAA Training, Barb Dixon 2015

# Who / What is a Cultural Broker

## Mediator

- ▶ Negotiates meaningful relationships and/or services between clients and providers

## Change Agent

- ▶ Initiates the transformation of organizations by creating inclusive and collaborative settings for both service providers and clients

Source: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004. Diversity ERAA Training, Barb Dixon, 2015

# Characteristics and Attributes

## Abilities

- ▶ Respects different views, values and beliefs
- ▶ Builds and retains trust and respect of the community and service providers
- ▶ Tolerates ambiguous roles and functioning at margins of various systems
- ▶ Takes risks
- ▶ Respects privacy and confidentiality

Adapted from: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004. Diversity ERAA Training, Barb Dixon 2015

# Characteristics and Attributes (cont)

## Knowledge

- ▶ Understands a community's traditional health beliefs, values, and practices and changes that occur through acculturation
- ▶ Understands how a diverse community's culture differs from the mainstream service system's culture
- ▶ Understands personal wellness, safety and ethical/legal responsibilities

Adapted from: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004

# Characteristics and Attributes (cont)

## Skills

- ▶ **Intercultural Communication:** Can explain cultural nuances of both verbal and non-verbal communications of one culture to another culture
- ▶ **Networking:** Adept at building meaningful relationships between providers and clients

Adapted from: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004. Diversity ERAA Training, Barb Dixon, 2015

# Characteristics and Attributes (cont)

## Skills

- ▶ **Assessment:** Solicits full information and help clients identify their own strengths and problem-solving abilities
- ▶ **Mediation:** Establishes and maintains systems of interaction, mutual support, and communication between cultures
- ▶ **Advocacy:** Promotes increased use of services within communities and advocates effectively with others so that clients receive needed care
- ▶ **Mentorship:** Models behavioral change to reduce biases that exist in service provider settings and with individual clients and communities

Adapted from: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004. Diversity ERAA Training, Barb Dixon, 2015



# Characteristics and Attributes (cont)

## Skills

### **Negotiation:**

- ▶ Negotiates with service delivery systems and communities

### **Conflict Management:**

- ▶ Mediates and resolves conflicts between clients and service providers

Adapted from: Bridging the Cultural Divide: Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs, NCCC, 2004. Diversity ERAA Training, Barb Dixon, 2015



# Challenges for Brokers

- ▶ Boundaries
  - ▶ Time Management
  - ▶ Professional Recognition
  - ▶ Professional development
  - ▶ Professional Isolation
- 

# Benefits and Applications

## Health Sector

Especially in complex medical sectors such as:

- ▶ Cancer care
- ▶ End of life care
- ▶ Genetic counselling
- ▶ Childrens Health
- ▶ Elder care
- ▶ Community Heath

(Ad infinitum)

# Benefits and Applications

## Social Services

- ▶ Children's service Coordination
- ▶ Community Living Disability Services
- ▶ Independent Living
- ▶ Child and Family services
- ▶ Homecare and elder care outreach programs
- ▶ Youth Programs
- ▶ Manitoba Child and Family Services Newcomer Unit

# Benefits and Applications

## Settlement

- ▶ **GAR intake organizations** (such as Welcome Place and Accueil Francophone in Winnipeg)
- ▶ **PSR groups**
- ▶ **Settlement housing** (Such as IRCOM, New Journey housing)
- ▶ **School Division Settlement Support**
- ▶ **NISWS**
- ▶ **Etc.**

# Thankyou!

For more information on our program please  
contact:

Traicy Robertson  
Ethnocultural Program  
Society for Manitobans with Disabilities

[Tr Robertson@smd.mb.ca](mailto:Tr Robertson@smd.mb.ca)

Tel 204 975-3121