EXPLORING THE GIFTS AND DREAMS OF SEWING CIRCLE MEMBERS: SKILLS MASTERY AND PEER SUPPORT AS VEHICLES FOR INCREASING SELF-EFFICACY AMONG WOMEN WHO ARE NEWCOMERS (IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES) TO CANADA

by

Judith Williams

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
The University of Manitoba
In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

Faculty of Social Work
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg

Copyright © Judith Williams 2015

Dedication

To my parents, grandparents and great-grandparents who immigrated to Canada with a quest for a better quality of life for themselves and future generations. To my Grandmother Beatrice (Bea), thank you for planting the seed for my love of community and my love of sewing.

Beatrice Brown

Christian Mothers Sewing Circle
Winnipeg, Manitoba 1933 - 1939

Beatrice Brown was the Secretary of the Christian Mothers Sewing Circle. Meetings were held at the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary Convent on Jarvis Avenue in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Members of this sewing circle were from the Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, France, Syria (Lebanon), Czechoslovakia, America and Guiana. There were also French Canadian and Metis members. Sister Isry led the circle showing women how to take apart and recycled old clothing into useful items for community members.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the people that assisted me through this project over the last four years. Without your support, guidance, patience and encouragement I would not have completed the report you see today.

I truly would like to express my deepest thanks and gratitude to the participants who made the time and effort to meet with me to share their gifts, dreams and to explain their personal connection with the sewing circle at the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre (WCPWRC). I hope that the community resource information we exchanged made a difference for you, as it did for me.

I am appreciative of the staff members at the WCPWRC, Sally Wai, Melrose Koineh and Aminata Sillah and the board members for being excited about this study. Thank you for the documents and information you provided. Thank you also to Kathy Mallett and Tom Simms Co-Directors of the Community Education Development Association (CEDA), the founding organization of the WCPWRC, for your support and approval to conduct this research study. I look forward to discussing and utilizing the study's findings with the board and staff members at the centre.

Thank you to my advisors for being a part of this project. Dr. Michael Baffoe, working with you has been a joy. I appreciate your advice and patience. It has been a pleasure getting to know you over the last few years. Kim Clare, I missed showing you the final product. You had been a mentor to me when I first entered the University of Manitoba's Inner City Social Work part-time degree program in 2004. It is because of your support through the Bachelor's program that I went on to graduate studies. Dr. Eliakim Sibanda, thank you for being part of the team to review

this report. I have appreciated your support and words of wisdom. Dr. Régine King, thank you kindly for joining the advisory team on short notice.

I would like to thank the management team at Taking Charge! Inc. for being supportive of my quest for academic growth. Thank you for accommodating my work hours and responsibilities when I decided to attend school as a full-time student.

To my brother Gerry Atwell who read my thesis thoroughly and with interest, thank you for providing the editing support. Your writing skills and encouragement were greatly appreciated.

Thank you to our children, Sean and Carla and our daughter-in-law Angela for lending an ear when I really needed it, for understanding when I could not commit to every family event and activity and for the extras you did when I could not be there. I would like to say a very special thank you to our first grandson Caleb. When you were little you would offer to highlight my work just to crawl up on my lap. I am sorry my schooling took so much time away from being with you.

Thank you to Paul, my husband and partner, for always being there, 100% behind me, supporting me through long hours focused on this research project and the Master of Social Work program.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of women who have migrated to Canada and were members of a Sewing Circle in Central Park, Winnipeg. It was aimed to discover if involvement at the women's centre increased levels of self-confidence and perceived self-efficacy for members. The study involved conversations and interviews with twelve women. The study was conducted between March and November 2012. Using qualitative research methodology, questions were asked to shape a better understanding of the circumstances that led participants to seek membership with a sewing circle and what membership in such a program had meant for them. The interview design included identifying some of the gifts, assets, resources, interests, skills and abilities the women had pre-arrival to Canada. Participants were asked to share goals and dreams they held for themselves in this new country. The feminist approach used for the study's framework set the tone for a conversational style interview process, with time set aside for the interviewer and participant to exchange ideas. The collected data identified that all of the participants who had migrated as adults had skills-specific training, careers they enjoyed and/or were entrepreneurs in their home countries or countries of refuge. The main themes that emerged from the data described how the economic realities of learning and mastering the skill of sewing were of value to participants. Peer support, feeling like a part of something and finding a sense of family in the host country were also reasons for membership. The findings from the study show a need for policies that support interventions focused on building more inclusive communities and societies. Communities where academic qualifications, skills specific training, employment and entrepreneurial experience accumulated in other countries provide trajectories to a more direct path forward for people as they transition into the Canadian economy and integrate into Canadian society.

Table of Contents

Dedication 2
Acknowledgements 3
Abstract 5
CHAPTER 1 11
Introduction 11
Rationale for this study 13
Researcher Background and Interest 15
Employment Facilitation 16
WCPWRC Board Membership 17
Sewing 17
History of the WCPWRC 18
Research Questions 20
Thesis Structure 21
CHAPTER 2 22
Review of the Relevant Literature 22
Introduction 22
Section 1: Definitions 24
Refugee Status 24
Immigrant Status 25
Section 2: Relevant Literature 25
Migration and Integration Issues 26
Resource Centers 28
Non-Involvement and Involvement 29
Women's Career Development 30
Women and Entrepreneurial Training 31
The Protean Career 32
Section 3: Theories & Research 33
Perceived Self-Efficacy 33
Skills Mastery 35

Self-Esteem 36
Empowerment 37
Peer Support 39
Social Capital 39
Summary of the Literature Reviewed 40
CHAPTER 3 42
Methodology 42
Introduction 42
Qualitative Research Methodology 43
Researcher Reflexivity 44
Theoretical Framework 46
Research Study's Theoretical Framework 48
Research Questions 49
Sampling/Recruitment 49
Sampling Criteria 50
Participant Profile 50
Data Collection Process 51
Methods 51
Interview Structure 52
Follow-up 52
Transcription and Member Checking 53
Data Analysis Procedure 55
Unit of Analysis 55
Data Analysis 56
Interpretation and Presentation of Findings 56
Strategies for Validating Findings 57
Study Limitations 58
Summary 58
CHAPTER 4 60
Emerging Themes 60
Introduction 60

Emerging Themes 61
Theme One: Trauma and loss 61
Theme Two: Issues with systems in Canada 63
Theme Three: Finding a sense of family in a new homeland 67
Theme Four: Reasons or goals for attending the centre: 68
Summary of the Emerging Themes 75
Chapter 5 77
Analysis of Data and Discussion of Findings 77
Introduction 77
Research Questions: 77
Emerging Themes 78
Theme One: Trauma & Loss 78
Theme Two: Issues with systems in Canada 82
Theme Three: Finding a sense of family in a new homeland 85
Theme Four: Goals for membership 87
Perceived Self-Efficacy 92
Theoretical Framework 93
Summary 94
Chapter Six 95
Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion 95
Introduction 95
Research Questions: 95
Sewing Circle Members Gifts (skills, abilities, interests) 97
Skills Pre-Arrival: 97
Dreams 99
Implications and Recommendations 104
Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre 104
Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre and organizations serving new Canadians: 104
Policy Recommendations 115
Further recommendations for Social Work Practice and Government Policy Makers 124
Future Research 129

Conclusion 130
On a Personal Note 131
REFERENCES 133
Appendix A: Script of telephone conversation 144
Appendix B: Letter of Invitation 145
Appendix C: Consent Form 147
Appendix D: Interview Guide 150
Appendix E: PLEDGE OF CONFIDENTIALITY 154

Table of Figures

Figure 1 - Burke et al. (2009, p. 118S) 35
Figure 2 - Source: Perkins & Zimmerman (1995, p. 570) 38
Figure 3- Researcher Reflexivity (Williams, 2012) 45
Figure 4 – Participant Profiles 51
Figure 5 – Participant Profiles Career/Training 55
Figure 6 – Photograph of fashion show wedding dress (Williams, 2012) 75
Figure 7 - The Dreams of Sewing Circle Members 103
Figure 8 - Participant's Businesses 107
Figure 9 - Five Key Program Elements 113
Figure 10 - Five Key Elements for Program Design 122
Figure 11 - Embroiders sheets: Photo J.W. (2013) 123

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This exploratory qualitative study aims at understanding the lived experiences of women, newcomers to Canada (immigrants and refugees), who are members and users of the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre's Multi-Cultural Sewing Program. This study will seek to understand if participation in this sewing circle is of benefit to newcomer women who are its members economically and socially, variables critical to integration. It can be argued that skill building programs, a safe and welcoming environment, access to resources and a network of peers will influence increased levels of perceived self-efficacy.

Moving to a new country can be very challenging, especially with few or no family supports, leaving family, friends, homes and careers behind (Agier, 2008, Congress & Kung 2013). Settlement in a new country can be more difficult when you are not able to communicate in the language of the host society (Chiu, Oriz & Wolfe, 2009). Through settlement referral systems, religious communities and word of mouth, newcomers discover supports in the community, such as neighbourhood resource centres. Resource centres can provide opportunities to access information and resources, network with like-minded people, get involved in volunteer roles, acquire new skills and learn about your new community. Women's resource centers offer programs and services that help to break the isolation many women face when they are searching for personal life changes; parenting on their own; new in a community; seeking like-minded peers; and under and unemployed. Valtonen (2008) explains that when a newcomer becomes involved with community organizations it can speed up the integration process with the new community.

> …participation in voluntary associations can potentially generate a number of socially valued skills such as habits of co-operation, solidarity and public spiritedness which in turn suggest the creation of a more tightly knit community (p. 52).

The Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre (WCPWRC) in Winnipeg, Manitoba was the setting for this study. This women's centre is located on Edmonton Street in downtown Winnipeg. It offers a range of family focused programs and services which include the Multicultural Sewing Program. It would be valuable to know why newcomer women have become members of this sewing circle program, what keeps them coming back and the true meaning of the experiences for them. The gifts and dreams of the women members of this sewing circle program will be explored to help discover the women's past and present interests, skills, values, gifts, abilities and desires, in various contexts, primarily income generating.

It is hoped to discover how skills mastery, peer support and the interventions and activities at the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre actually impact upon the newcomer woman's lived experiences. During the data analysis of this study it was difficult to find criteria that would directly measure increased feelings of perceived self-efficacy as questions in this regard were not initially asked during the interview process. The criteria used to recognize increased perceived self-efficacy are statements from participants where self-sufficiency; skill mastery, economic empowerment; career, training or entrepreneurial plans; expanded social and resource networks are discussed. As well, feeling that are shared of increased optimism, self-worth, increased self-confidence and belonging will also be considered as evidence of increased self-efficacy. It would be important to comprehend if and how being a part of this women's centre program has changed a participant's life in anyway.

Rationale for this study

This study aims to address three critical issues:

1. the lack of documented stories that describe newcomer women's experiences,
2. the abundance of skills, abilities and gifts these women hold, and
3. the need to identify these hidden or untapped skills and to provide the option for newcomer women to market and utilize these skills and gifts in this new society. .

Summary of the Problems and Rational for this Study

Problems	Rational for this research study
Gaps in stories of newcomer women's experiences (Sohng, 1999)	Newcomer women, members of WCPWRC, will share their lived experiences
Newcomer women are un and under-employment, have language, literacy and credential barriers, plus lack Canadian work experience (Valtonen, 2008)	Newcomer Women are utilizing the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Center's Sewing Circle as meeting place for skill-building, peer interaction and to access community resources and information
Un-tapped and under-utilized skills and abilities newcomer women hold	This study's in-depth interview approach will document and seek to identify skills, gifts, abilities and dreams of the participants, exploring this disconnect to employment opportunities (Yakushko, Backhaus, Watson, Ngaruiya & Gonzalez, 2008)

This qualitative study will hear from 12 women who were interviewed in 2012. Participants were from Bhutan, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Sudan. The women were all newer Canadians who had lived in Canada from 2 to 15 years. At the time of the interviews, five of the women were permanent residents. The other women were in the process of seeking citizenship to Canada. Four had arrived as government assisted refugees, one woman was an economic immigrant status, and one had immigrated through family class. One woman, who has since been extradited back to Nigeria, came here through the Live-in Caregiver program. They were past and present members of the sewing circle. Some of the women were

attending school and/or employed. All participants attended a Church or Mosque on a regular basis.

It was important for me to take the time to listen to each participant's story and to let the story unfold as needed. Sohng (1999) points out the need for more women's voices to be heard. She says,

> One must remedy the lack of knowledge about women's lives, past and present, through a new approach that recognized the firsthand experience of women. In making the invisible visible, feminist scholars and activists assert that knowledge building should reflect female-centered thinking, action and experience" (p. 201).

The process of telling one's story and sharing life experiences can help to connect people with others on a deeper level (Smitherman, 1977). The interview questions were only used as a guide for data collection, as I wanted an authentic discussion with each participant. I had the desire to build a deeper connection with each woman to better understand the stories they selected to share. Houston and Davis (2002) report that sharing conversations with one another "is one way that African American women express the ethic of caring" (p. 80). Houston and Davis quote Smitherman (1977) in their discussion of the narratives' value and place in an 'ethic of caring' and explain,

> Smitherman defined the form of narrative she called 'testifying' as Black people's 'lifelike' retelling of personal experiences during everyday conversations; testifying is no 'plain and simple commendatory but *dramatic* narration and a *communal reenactment* of one's *feelings* and experiences… [through which] one's humanity is reaffirmed by the group and his or her sense of isolation diminished" (p. 80).

Listening to the participants' stories and acknowledging their hidden and untapped skills was of interest to me with my career counseling background. People can become "de-skilled" (Valtonen, 2008) when they experience long term loss of a skill and become out of practice, through un-employment or underemployment in their previous occupations (p. 90). Indentifying

and listing the hidden skills of participants could prove beneficial for various reasons as you explore training, employment and business opportunities.

Conducting this research study was very important for me. I was interested to understand what women gained from membership in the sewing circle program. My past involvement with women's counseling and employment programs, my love of sewing and my interest in the concept of social enterprise were driving forces for me to pursue this research. In the following section I will describe what inspired me to conduct this study in more detail.

Researcher Background and Interest

It is important to locate myself in the research and to describe my interest in this project. Locating myself in relation to this study and the study participants will help with the reflexivity process needed to conduct a qualitative research project (Creswell, 2007). Salzman (2002) contends, "Only honest disclosure of the researcher's 'position' will allow the reader to assess the substance of the ethnographic report" (p. 807). I am a black woman, third generation Canadian on my mother's side, whose family came to Winnipeg from St. Paul's, Minnesota in 1905. My father immigrated to Canada from Trinidad in 1949 to attend university. Both of my parents completed university degrees and my six siblings and I were encouraged to do the same. Through the years, with a background in graphic arts and human resource management, I gravitated into work as an Employment Facilitator with organizations that support women. For the last 20 years, my paid and unpaid work history has been mainly with women's organizations. I have worked and/or volunteered as a Crisis Counselor, Employment Facilitator, Board Member, Volunteer Coordinator and Sewing Instructor. I align myself with feminist values. I am intrigued by women's untapped skills and potential and also driven by a desire to increase women's economic footprint in our society.

Employment Facilitation

As an Employment Facilitator, I have assisted people to identify and document their career and educational goals. At Taking Charge! Inc., I worked with participants completing a one year English Language program called the *Work Prep English Language and Literacy Program*. I provided career assessments, facilitated career exploration activities and developed transition plans with the graduates of this program. Participants would generally transition to short-term skills specific training, off-site work experiences placements and/or employment.

The *Work Prep Language and Literacy program* was an English language skills based and career focused program that was developed to address a gap in services for women who had immigrated to Canada, found long term employment in the garment industry and were then laid off, as Winnipeg companies moved production off-shore. Through a process of self-reflection, participants would be asked to identify and list their "gifts". These gifts would include skills and abilities, personal and work values, personal aptitudes and traits, interests, previous education and training and all their paid and un-paid work experiences. This process for career exploration included exercises to help identify your "dreams" or goals. At first, we found it was difficult to learn about people's dream jobs or jobs that would interest them or be more satisfying and more rewarding. Many of the participants had been laid off from factory work and described employment as a "job" for sustenance only. It was often hard for people to imagine or even think about having a job they might love. I would work one-on-one with participants to discuss possible jobs and/or training options using highlights from the interests they would share. I would also use a collage process asking participants to select pictures from magazines and paste them together to help describe the dreams they held for the future for themselves and their

families. The portrait that was produced would help to start the conversation with participants about their "dream jobs" and future educational, career and/or personal goals.

WCPWRC Board Membership

In 2008, after completing my BSW field placement with the CEDA, Central Park Office, I was asked to be on the board of the WCPWRC. I was the scribe for three years and requested a leave of absence in 2011 to conduct this research project. I was interested in getting to know the women who were members of the sewing circle program at the WCPWRC. I wanted to understand their reasons for joining and being members of this sewing circle. I also wanted to work with these women to identify the skills, gifts, interests and aspirations they hold in regard to their future plans and dreams. I had an interest in understanding how the members' attributes and aspirations might support the startup of a social enterprise at this women's centre. At this time, the board believed that having social enterprise at the women's centre would provide the organizational stability and sustenance.

Sewing

Sewing is a passion of mine. I learned to hand sew as a child. My mother and grandmother shared their sewing skills with me. They taught me how to use the Singer treadle sewing machine that has a distinct place in my home today. I entered "Home Economics" in Grade seven with the dream of becoming a Home Economics' teacher. My instructors lacked the passion for cooking and sewing I had expected. I became disillusioned and I changed career paths. Through high school, my parents paid me to sew clothing for family members. Later, I sewed clothing for both of my children to save money and to create unique pieces. I completed the Apparel Design Level 1 Certificate program at the University of Manitoba, as I was

interested in understanding how to design, create and make alterations on patterns and clothing. Working as the Volunteer Coordinator at the North End Women's Resource Centre (NEWC) in 1990 was a turning point for me. I worked with the Program Coordinator and helped to coordinate the centre's Sewing Program and Clothing Club. When women in the sewing program started to create Traditional Star Blankets, members who were not keen on learning how to sew became drawn to the idea of creating these Aboriginal quilts from scratch. I witnessed the positive, self-esteem raising effects of sewing skills being mastered, with the creation of the "Star Blanket". Women were proud of their new sewing skills and abilities as they showed their work to their families and to other sewing program members.

Later in the 90s, women from the NEWC developed the Northern Star Collective. With the support of local funding bodies this business venture recently became the Northern Star Worker's Cooperative (Champagne, 2005). The Northern Star Worker's Cooperative designs, produces and sells Star Blankets, wall hangings and cushions, internationally. The Northern Star Workers Cooperative is housed at the Neechi Food Coop in Winnipeg, Manitoba (Champagne, 2005). In 1992, with this love for sewing and fabric, I went on to Red River College (RRC) and completed the one-year Certificate in Upholstery training program.

In the next section, I will provide the background of the WCPWRC, how it formed and the programs and services that are currently offered.

History of the WCPWRC

In 2005, a sewing circle started in Central Park, an inner city community in Winnipeg. This sewing circle was the result of the community needs assessment that was conducted by the Central Park Coordinator with the Community Education Development Association (CEDA). The CEDA coordinator went around "door knocking" in the community. Local residents

indicated the need for a resource center as a place for long time residents and newcomers to meet together. The hope was for this centre to provide supports and information to assist newcomer women adapt and integrate into Winnipeg, Manitoba. The CEDA coordinator met with a group of local women who explained the need for a place to meet other women, make new friends and share babysitting responsibilities. Most had recently arrived from African countries and felt house bound in this small community that is predominately high-rise government subsidized housing complexes. The women wanted a facility where they would also have access to a private space to pray each day. Two apartments that complete the second floor of a Manitoba Housing managed high-rise were provided at a reduced rental rate for this women's centre to start-up. Once the facility was opened, the women suggested they would like to start sewing clothing for their children to save money. The CEDA coordinator applied for funding to purchase two sewing machines. She then recruited a sewing instructor. This was the beginning of the sewing circle program. The sewing instructor volunteered her time for two years before this became a paid position. In 2008, the women's center incorporated and the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre (WCPWRC) was formed. Its mission statement reads:

> The Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre is a not-for-profit women and family focused organization providing information, peer support and skills training programs and services to improve the lives of community women and their families (WCPWRC pamphlet, n.d.).

This women's centre, located on Edmonton Street in Winnipeg, offers a range of family focused programs and services which include Child Minding, English Conversation Group, Peer Support Group, Women's Intercultural Craft Group, Toy and Book Lending Library, Home Work Club, Community Garden project and the Multicultural Sewing Club. WCPWRC runs on a shoe string budget, receiving small amounts of funding from private foundations and donations. There are only two paid staff members, the centre coordinator and one sewing instructor. The

centre coordinator's position funding is provided through Community Education Development Corporation (CEDA), their founding organization with a grant from the United Way of Winnipeg. According to the 2012 AGM published financial report; the women's centre's expenses for 2011-2012 were approximately $46,900 (WCPWRC, AGM Report, 2012). These expenses include the salary for the sewing instructor position, administrative and programming related costs.

A fruit bearing tree on the wall of the centre is a visualization of the WCPWRC's core values of "equality, cultural understanding, self-respect and mutual respect, human dignity, empowering employment, community safety and poverty reduction, create independence and quality of life, bridge the gap between seniors and the community" as stated on the WCPWRC Website, are represented in the trunk of the tree. The fruit that bears is labeled to represent the members' abilities "to integrate into Canadian society, to be empowered, to have self-esteem, to find employment and to communicate in English" (WCPWRC website, 2012).

Research Questions

This study aimed to explore the following research questions:

1. How does skills mastery, peer support and the interventions and activities at the women's centre actually impact upon the sewing circle members lived experiences.
2. What are the gifts (formal and non-formal skills, talents, abilities education and knowledge) of members?
3. What are the goals and dreams (personal and career aspirations) of the sewing circle members?

Interview questions (Appendix D) were prepared to help answer the research questions and to understand the role the women's centre played in participant's lives.

Thesis Structure

The first chapter of this thesis report provided an introduction and an overview of the research study. The relevant literature that was reviewed will be provided in chapter two with definitions of the terminology being used in this report and the reasons why these articles and theories had value for this study. The research methodology is presented in chapter three, and includes the profiles of the study's twelve participants. The study design and theoretical approach is discussed, as well as the participant recruitment, data collection and analyzes process is explained. Chapter four will document the narratives from the participant interviews and highlight the four strong themes that emerged from this study. The findings from the study are discussed in chapter five in relation to relevant literature. Chapter six summarizes the findings from this study, where information and discussion on recommendations for the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre and other organizations that provide services to newcomers will be outlined. Recommendations for social work practices and for public policy are provided. Potential direction for future research will be shared. The project with conclude with my final thoughts on this research project.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Relevant Literature

Introduction

The relevant literature reviewed for this study focused on issues facing women settling into new societies. The subjects of migration and integration, women's centres and interventions there in, women and career development, women and entrepreneurial training as well as the concept of the protean career will be discussed. Literature pertaining to theories of peer support, self-efficacy, skill mastery, empowerment and social capital was also explored.

There was slim literature to be found that focused specifically on women organizations with sewing circles programs in current operation. Though, many women's sewing circles or groups exist throughout Canada and the world and have websites that describes their sewing programs. There was little information or details as to their composition and the value or place they have in our society today. Some sewing circle programs operate as social enterprises or as workers cooperatives, providing a source of paid employment for members (Champagne, 2005). The concept of the "sewing circle" is discussed in earlier journals from the last century. They describe that women's sewing circle groups' main purpose was often as a meeting place: an escape from home life. This was a place for women to come to gather together, sew articles for those in need and to converse about societies' issues/problems and the changes needed. Money raised from the sale of these homemade products was often to support economically disadvantages people or groups (Harris, 2009). Many early sewing circles were run by abolitionist/antislavery women's church groups and societies in the United States in the mid 1800s-1900s. They would sew clothing and/or blankets to sell at bazaars or to raise funds to support relief efforts and the underground railroads. Alice Taylor (2010) in an article she wrote

for the publication *The Force of Fashion in Politics and Society*, explained that there were 1000s of charity bazaars held in the United States to aid the antislavery movement. She said "through sewing circles women and girls became aware of their needle as social, economic, political and historical 'weapons'"(p. 119). Taylor explained the bazaars were mainly run by women who besides being the labourers were also, "manufactures, managers, retailers and consumers" and how their efforts provided funding to support anti-slavery organizations in the 1840s and 1850s" (p. 117 &118). Taylor explains:

> Educational aspects of sewing circles most often involved a female member reading antislavery literature aloud while other members 'sewed, knitted, braided, or pieced together articles for upcoming sale…Through these activities, sewing circles fostered tangible relationships between abolitionist women who relied on them both for regular fellowship in their communities and for a sense of a larger group identity. (p. 120)

Mennonite groups in Canada and the United States also have documented information on their sewing circles that were in operation (Mennonite Heritage Portrait Website, Sewing Circles, n.d.). These women's sewing groups would produce clothing and bedding to donate to people in need around the world. Their website reports:

> In 1919, Sewing Circles provided clothing for War Sufferer's Relief, and in the 1920s, as Russian Mennonites migrated to Canada after being expelled from their homeland, Sewing Circles sent clothing. Sewing Circles responded to the prairie droughts of the 1930s by collecting, packaging and sending bales of clothing to Saskatchewan. (Mennonite Heritage Portrait Website).

The Holy Family Sewing Circle formed in downtown Winnipeg in 1933. My grandmother, Beatrice Brown, was the secretary. This sewing circle project was launched when a local Priest approached some parishioners and asked them to help out families in need in the community. Donated clothing items were re-purposed into suitable articles of clothing to be shared in the community. Many women's sewing circles became the women's auxiliary groups

we see today when fund raising strategies expanded and replaced sewing and needle work (Taylor, 2010). It would have been important to have found documentation that discussed the value of the "sewing circle" in more detail. Such as, in gathering of like-minded women; and/or the circle's capacity building components; the ability to provide feelings of productivity and socially inclusion; the ability to support our environment by recycled and repurposing discarded items; and/or the ability increase one economic situation through this social enterprise. This research study hopes to help fill this gap.

We will start this chapter by reviewing the definitions of some of the terms that will be used frequently in this report. Next, we will discuss the topic of migration and integration. An overview of women's centers resources and information on women and career development, women and entrepreneurial training and the protean career will be provided. The last section of this chapter will look at literature on theories and research about peer support, self-efficacy, skill mastery, self-esteem, empowerment and social capital.

Section 1: Definitions

The terms newcomer and immigrant will be used interchangeably throughout this study to describe the women who are first generation Canadians and have migrated with Immigrant or Refugee status.

Refugee Status

The 1951 UN Refugee Convention defines "refugee" as someone who,

> owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (UNHCR, 2011).

The Government of Canada will may also provide refugee status to people in need of protection. The Canadian Immigration and Citizenship(C.I.C.) website explains that also people in need of protection can apply for refuge in Canada:

> A person in need of protection is a person in Canada whose removal to their home country or country where they normally live would subject them personally to:
>
> - a danger of torture;
> - a risk to their life; or
> - a risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment. (C.I.C. website at: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/inside/apply-who.asp)

Agier M. (2008) in a research study that looked at the experience of refugees on an internationally, explained:

> Each displace person, each refugee, carries within them the experience of being undesirable and placeless. A lived experience of the original act of violent persecution, then the trials and complications of exodus, resented by governments that refuse to register or assist populations displaced within their own country. Other governments, more or less obliged to let refugees arrive on their soil, refuse to give them a national status as refugees and try to negotiate their departure with international organizations. (p. 28).

Immigrant Status

According the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, "An immigrant is a person who has chosen to settle in Canada and has been accepted as a permanent resident by the Government of Canada" (I.R.B.C., 2011). For this report I will use the terms immigrant and newcomer.

Section 2: Relevant Literature

In this section, migration and issues that affect people while they navigate settlement services in the attempt to integrate into the new society will be reviewed. We will review some

of the interventions and supports community resource centers have for local residents. Depression is said to decrease with active involvement with others, in a study by Sahu & Rath's (2003). This relationship with group activities and reduced feelings of depression will be discussed. Betz and Fitgerald's extensive research on women's career development was of interest and relevant to this study. It was important to understand some of the theories on women's career decision making. As participants were asked about their abilities, interests and previous education and careers pre-migration, as well as their current career aspirations in this new homeland. Valcour & Ladge (2008) research about the "protean career" describes a career path that may be common for many people who have immigrated. Career paths may have been interrupted by migration, credentials not being recognized, English language levels, income, sole parenting and many other life changing circumstances. Migration could have led to unemployment or under-employment, retraining in other career areas, term and part-time employment, and the like. Wilson, Kickul and Marlino (2007) research, explains the "pull & push" effect and what makes women decide to start a business. We will start of this section by discussing issues related to migration.

Migration and Integration Issues

Valtonen (2008) discusses the upheaval and stress unplanned and even planned migration causes, especially when there is limited information about the new host community. She explains how settlement supports for people coming from refuge need to take into account several factors. Valtonen provides a list of stressors that could affect newcomers. These includes "life events and transitions", issues that occur due to "cultural misunderstands or as prejudiced attitudes", and the element of "loss and separation" from home and family members as well as loss of "cultural milieu, social circles and social status" (p. 136). It would be interesting to understand if any of

these stressors were identified by participants in the stories they select to share during the interview process. It would also be important to understand if barriers exist that make it difficult for participants to access information about the supports in their new community. Both personally and societal barriers are found, Valtonen (2008) explains:

> Individuals needing help are not always ready to seek out formal mechanisms, especially if they do not come from societies with highly organized social service systems and have been accustomed to obtaining help from kin, friends and other close circles. Settlement transitions have brought a break with individuals` original support systems even though new relationships can replace these to some extent. In difficult situations, which are not amenable to the informal level of helping but require direct professional intervention, outreach into communities is a very valuable tool for identifying areas needing intervention. Outreach also allows for a preventative approach to integration problems. (p. 105).

Valtonen explains how newcomers often see education as the route to employment and upward mobility in a new society. She discusses how many newcomers set their goals on re-training, though they have come with education, training and work experience. The issue of social exclusion can play out through prolonged periods of unemployment and underemployment. Valtonen (2008) states that, "An individual`s employment is seen as a prime and well-regarded mode of fulfilling citizenship `duties' to the society" (p. 47).

The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, Fact sheet No. 5 – 2003 provides myths and facts about immigrant and refugee women. One fact is that "only 4% of Canadians are not immigrants or descendants of immigrants" (p. 1). The report also states that "On average, immigrant women have higher levels of formal education than Canadian-born women" (p. 3). This government fact sheet goes on to explains,

> Racism among employers against racialized women and men and people who have certain accents in English and French mean that some immigrant and refugee women have little choice but to take on manual labour, regardless of their level of education (p. 5).

Un-recognized foreign credentials have had a huge impact on newcomers ability to access employment in their field of study and work experience. Many barriers come to play for newcomer's seeking employment (Valtonen, 2008).

Resource Centers

Women's resource centers serve many purposes in communities. The Manitoba Provincial Government, over the years, has provided funding supports to women's resource centers through the department of Family Services, Family Violence program. The Women Resource Centre program was developed in 1984 to address the issue of violence against women. The purpose of the Women's Resource Center program was to, "offer community-based programs and services which support and empower women to make informed decisions in their lives" (Manitoba Women's Resource Centre's Standards Manual, 2013, p. 5). This manual lists some of the interventions at these resource centres. Interventions include supports such as, "crisis prevention and intervention, emotional support through individual and/or group counseling, information and referral, children's services, public education/awareness [and the] recruitment and training of volunteers" (Mb. Women's Resource, 2013, p. 5-6). In Manitoba, there are several women's resource centers and community family resource centers that offer a variety of free daytime, evening and weekend programs and services for community members. Descriptions of various community resources in Manitoba can be found on-line through the Contact Resource Guide that is produced and updated by the Volunteer Centre of Manitoba. The website for Contact Resource Guide is at http://www.contactmb.org/. Hard copy versions of the Contact Resource Guide publication can be ordered from the Volunteer Centre of Manitoba. Resource centres often provide drop-in services, such as free coffee, access to washing machines and dryers, phone and computer usages. Other interventions may include lunch or meal

programs, classes to build computer skills, language skills, sewing, art, craft making, wood working, budgeting and financial planning, as well as recreational activities and sports for different age groups and abilities. Some run programming that is employment based, such as resume writing and self-marketing classes, interview practice, job finding clubs, leadership training and group facilitation. Skills based training is delivered at some resource centers for youth and adults. Workshops and/or short training programs have been provided on topics such as, home maintenance, painting, insulting, basic plumbing, carpentry, gardening, and other cost saving skills for maintaining your home (Contact Manitoba Resource Guide Website, n.d).

Ethnicity based community organizations also have a place in community life, Valtonen (2008) explains how,

> Many ethic community organizations see themselves as serving a bridging function for their immigrant and minority client constituencies. Located outside of the informal circles of family and friends, they are concerned with aspects of settlement and integration on behave of the wider group. Organizations can have highly pragmatic functions, for example, assistance with paperwork, interpreting and so on. They often undertake family counseling and support, and bring to the process the advantage of being grounded in the culture of settling persons. (p. 19-20)

In Manitoba, you will find a variety of local clubs and associations that support various cultures.

Non-Involvement and Involvement

Accessing community resources can be beneficial for people. Peer support and social networks are important issues in the lives of newcomers in host countries (Voltonen, 2008). Sahu and Rath's (2003) study of 120 working and 120 non-working women explored the idea of perceived self-efficacy with "involvement". They looked at the women's involvement in day to day activities in both private and social spheres. The focus was on self-efficacy and well-being. Both groups of working and non-working women were sub-divided into two groups of

"involved" and "less-involved" (p. 187). A positive relationship was found between self-efficacy and involvement, and self-efficacy and wellbeing. The writers said,

> An affirmative sense of efficacy contributes to psychological wellbeing as well as to performance accomplishment. In sum, self-efficacy is not only inversely related to depression but it is also related to health-promoting positive feelings (p. 189).

This study provided information about the value of being active in a social sense that goes beyond being active and productive in the workplace or home setting. It stands to reason that involvement with like-minding people partaking in activities one values would have a positive overall impact on a person's mental health and attitude. Other theorists discuss the importance of social capital in one's life, especially as people age and their social circles reduce in size.

Women's Career Development

Betz and Fitgerald (1987) reviewed various studies that focus on women's career development with a view on career choice and career adjustment. In a publication titled *The Career Psychology of Women*, the authors explain the historical factors that relate to women's labour force participation. Betz and Fitgerald identified that there are "cultural, subcultural, and familial factors that influence women's career choices" (p. 29). They explain how education and career counseling interventions provide a positive influence on women's career choices. Familial factors are still front and center in career decisions women make today. For example, the lack of childcare spaces in Manitoba directly influences a woman's accessibility to educational programs and employment, particularly shift work and part-time work. Farmer (1997) found that there are environmental and personal barriers/motivations that affect women's career or academic success. Farmer explained these barriers or motivations could include issues such as, "fear of success, discrimination in the community/work, resources in the community/work,

family socialization, home-career conflict, sex-role orientation, risk taking behavior, academic self-esteem and vicarious achievement motive" (p. 361). Programming that could provide education and support to women on the issues above could make a difference.

Women and Entrepreneurial Training

Wilson, Kickul and Marlino (2007) discuss women's entrepreneurial career decisions in comparison to men's. The researchers state how "women in particular shun entrepreneurial endeavors because they think they lack the required skills" (p. 388). Knowing that you are a smart and capable person does not mean you feel confident that you have the skills and abilities to start and run a business. Their research conducted with high school students and MBA graduates in the United States highlights the positive value of entrepreneurial education targeted to girls in high school and women in general to increase levels of entrepreneurship efficacy. Wilson et al. (2007) agree with Bandura's (1992) suggestion of the value of relevant "mastery experiences" or "learning by doing". They expressed the impact of the hands-on learning experience of starting and running an actual or mock-up business. Activities could include developing business plans, conducting needs assessment studies, and any functions associated with business startup. These types of experiences would help to increase someone's entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Wilson et al. (2007) explain:

> **The Pull:**
> … the need for independence, self-actualization, financial benefits, and the desire to achieve a more comfortable balance between family and work responsibilities " pull" women into entrepreneurship
>
> **The Push:**
> … unemployment, underemployment, and unsatisfactory work conditions and prospects have more recently "pushed" a growing number of women into their own businesses (p. 399).

Wilson et al, suggest that women are usually pushed or pulled into entrepreneurship. When you are pulled into entrepreneurship these writers explain this comes from "the need for independence, self-actualization, financial benefits, and the desire to achieve a more comfortable balance between family and work responsibilities" (p. 399). I have experience the "push" into entrepreneurship in my life when I needed to supplement our household income by recovering furniture or producing and selling handmade articles at the local farmers market. I was also fortunate to have managed a family restaurant with my partner and two adult children. This was a business we were "pulled" into. I personally found the process self-actualizing, as I had always dreamt of operating a restaurant with my family. .

The Protean Career

Valcour and Ladge (2008) discussed the "protean career", a career path "which is shaped by the individual's values and identity rather than by organizational career norms" (p. 301). The writers explain that women, often fall into this career pattern. Women make decisions to interrupt their work path to have and raise children, care for grandchildren, return to school or training, care for ailing family members, participate in community volunteerism and in self-employment ventures. Some experience short and long term health issues.

The protean career is different from a traditional career path as, "it is characterized by multiple, potentially independent cycles of career exploration, learning and mastery which allow for greater accommodation of family responsibility" (p. 301). Valcour & Ladge (2008) highlight a protean career as "interrelationships between family characteristics, women's career identity, their self-efficacy and their interactions' with others in the home and in the workplace" (p. 301). Women's employment or career path is not always linear, as this study above suggests. Women's career plans could have interruptions resulting from caring for children or family members,

seeking refuge and moving to Canada, issues with credentials, previous training and work experience not being recognized and from issues with English Language skills. Valtonen (2008) explained that, "drawing closer to personal and interpersonal spaces, employment is a prime source of self-actualization, self-development and continuing education and training opportunities (p. 90-91). Participants in this study may acknowledge the loss of a part of their identity, and a struggle to gain footing to pursue their goals for self-sufficiency, self-development and self-actualization having left careers and businesses to come to Canada.

Section 3: Theories & Research

In this section, some of the theories and research that could relate to the women in this study are identified. As a participant's sewing skills are honed to a mastery level, it was wondered if their feelings of perceived efficacy (Bandura, 1977) in certain specific areas would increase. Some research on elements of self-esteem will be reviewed. GlenMaye (1999) and Perkins & Zimmerman (1995) discuss various types of empowerment which will be shared; personal, organizational and community based. Peer support and the value of increasing ones social capital to reduce factors of exclusion will be discussed.

Perceived Self-Efficacy

Bandura (1989) defines "self-efficacy" as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives" (p. 1175). Bandura (1997) explains that much of the reason people take action to accomplish things in their life is based on how they personally feel about their ability to be successful at the completion of the action. He explains how a person's perceived self-efficacy relates to different abilities and the fact that one might feel confident in one's ability to do one thing and less confident to do other things. He described how

perceived self-efficacy can change when situations in someone's life change, such as "moving to a new country". Bandura (1997) discussed how people guide their lives by their personal beliefs in themselves, and explains that, "perceived self-efficacy refers to the beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required producing given attainments" (p. 3). Bandura explains that when people are not self-assured that they can produce the "desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act" (p. 2). Betz, N. (2000) suggests that one's behavior can be an indication of increased or decrease perceived self-efficacy. Betz looks for signs in behavior such as, "approach versus avoidance behavior, b) quality of performance of behaviours in the target domain; and c) persistence in the face of obstacles or disconfirming experiences" (p. 206).

In an attempt to understand if perceived levels of self-efficacy would increase with peer support, social inclusion, skills mastery and/or other interventions at the women's centre, I reviewed the work of Burke, Bird, Clark, Rakowski, Guerra, Barker & Pasick (2009). They discuss ways to increase one's perceived self-efficacy and agree with Albert Bandura (1977) that efficacy is increased from exposure to "a) mastery experience, b) vicarious experience and modeling, c) social persuasion, and d) physical and emotional states" (p. 114-115S). Burke et al. (2009) explain how interventions designed to expand a person's perceived self-efficacy need to consider "cultural divergent interpretations of information, variations in rationality or shifts over time and place depending on context" (p. 115S). The findings from this study by Burke et al. (2009) were as follows:

Self – Efficacy	**Context**
Meaning of self-efficacy and spheres of efficacy	Meaning and the sphere of efficacy focused on the women's ability to care and provide for her family, access resources for her family and information needed for day to day living.
Constraints on self-efficacy	Examples of constraints on the sample group included issues

	with sick children, childcare issues and lack of support from employers or spouses.
Sources of social capital (local, transnational, familial, and extra-familial relationships) and differential access to, and quality of social capital	Social capital was shown by support from family members needed to help access health care and other resources and extended family relationships recreated in the new community by immigrant women (Burke et al., 2009).

Figure 1 - Burke et al. (2009, p. 118S)

Burke et al. (2009) recommend that newcomers seek out people who have been in the host country in order to access information about the "systems" and the new society/community. The authors discuss how self-efficacy can be acquired and then lost with activities, such as migrating to a new country. Burke et al. (2009) suggest the importance of "understanding how the concept of social capital translates into power and efficacy for individual women will improve and strengthen interventions" (p. 126S). Thus, community programs that foster strong social networks have the ability to sustain women in maintaining higher levels of perceived self-efficacy and social capital, explained Burke et al. (2009). This research will discover if members help each other navigate the "systems", by sharing information with about local resources, services and supports that are available.

Skills Mastery

Bandura (1977, 1989, 1992, 1995 & 1997) discussed the value of mastery experiences to help increase a person's perceived self-efficacy in a specific area. Bandura (1977) explains that "mastery experiences are the most influential source of efficacy information because they provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can master whatever it takes to succeed" (p. 80). Bandura suggested a key element to assist people in skills acquisition is "breaking complex skills into subskills and organizing them hierarchically" (p. 80). The sewing circle program provides a beginning, intermediate and advanced sewing and clothing design training. The Learn-to-sew beginner's program has been developed into modules that start off with sewing

machine knowledge and practicing sewing a straight line on bond paper using a sewing machine. The classes advance progressively in skill level. Bandura explains that performance success does not always increase someone's perceived self-efficacy. He explains how, "changes in perceived efficacy result from cognitive processing of the diagnostic information that performances convey about capability rather than the performances per se" (p. 81). This is duly noted. Bandura proposes that people gain confidence in their skills on an individualistic basis. Not everyone will place the same value on a task that they have done well.

Self-Esteem

The following writers explain that the term "self-esteem" is used to describe various things. Brown and Marshall (2006) see self-esteem to have three main faces. They describe "the way people generally feel about themselves [as] traitor global self-esteem" (p. 4). They describe people feelings of self-worth as a type of self-esteem that could raise or decrease pending situations that occur that would cause pride, guilt or disappointment. This type of self-esteem they label as "feelings of self-worth" (p. 5). The third variation of self-esteem that Brown & Marshall describe is similar to self-efficacy whereby you feel self-confidence in your ability to do a task and this self-confidence can be lower or higher in specific areas. They explain that you go through a process of "self-evaluation" to determine your level of self-esteem or self-efficacy within an area (p. 5). For this study, I wanted to understand if people's self-esteem or self-efficacy levels would increase through their involvement with this sewing circle program.

Vonk (2006) completed a longitudinal study looking at whether approval and acceptance by others helps to improve self-esteem. The results, he explained, "Dramatic changes in self-esteem do occur in adulthood, but they are typically associated with major life transitions, such as marriage, parenthood, job loss or promotion" (p. 183). He believes that "when people feel

accepted and appreciated – in sociometer theory, when their sociometer is lifted; in self-determination theory, when their need for relatedness is satisfied – they start to feel safe and relaxed (p. 183)." The migration process, leaving family members, homes and support networks behind, may have an effect on members' self-esteem levels. Whereas meeting other women at the centre and feeling respected and accepted by each other could also make a significant difference in self-esteem. Vonk (2006) believes that "positive regard by others, even if it is only temporary, is the "entrance" to true self-esteem changes. Vonk said that, "When people are accepted and reaffirmed by others, they feel that they are on solid ground" (p. 183).

Empowerment

Perkins & Zimmerman (1995) use Cornell Empowerment Group's (1989) definition of empowerment "as an intentional ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources" (p. 570).

GlenMaye (1999) shares her definition of empowerment as, "Speaking the truth of one's life in one's own voice, and working collectively to create that possibility for all" (p. 35). She goes on to explain that an empowerment model for women can consist of the following:

1. Development of consciousness of self as woman
2. Reduction of shame and self-blame, and acknowledgment of anger as a catalyst towards shame
3. Assumption of personal responsibility for changing self and society (p. 36).

Empowerment can help to foster the potential for someone to take action to make real and notable change. It is hoped that the study results could bring about political and/or systems

praxis. Increased feelings of empowerment can effect changes in individuals, organizations and communities (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995).

Perkins & Zimmerman (1995) explain that empowerment theories "include both processes and outcomes, suggesting that actions, activities, or structures may be empowering, and that the outcome of such processes result in a level of being empowered" (p. 570). The writers provide examples of empowerment process and outcomes as follows:

Examples of Empowerment Processes and Outcomes

	Empowerment for Individuals	**Empowerment for Community Organizations**	**Empowerment at the Community Level**
Empowerment Processes	Participation in community organizations	• Collective decision making • Shared leadership	• Collective action to access government or other community resources, eg. media
Empowerment Outcomes or the Operationalization of Empowerment	Situation-specific perceived control and resource mobilization skills	• Development of organizational networks • Organizational growth and policy leverages	• Evidence of pluralism • Existence of organizational coalitions • Accessible community resources

Figure 2 - Source: Perkins & Zimmerman (1995, p. 570)

The focus on theories of empowerment and self-esteem for this study was based on the presumption that many members who were newer Canadians attending this center were unemployed or underemployed, with little family in Winnipeg and few connects to other resources. Members would likely be attending this centre for needed supports, advocacy and community resource information. It was presumed that involvement at the centre would be supportive and likely encourage an increase in levels of empowerment, for the individuals and the organization. It also seemed important in this research to track or be aware of data that would explain or connect participants' self-esteem levels through their connection with the women's centre, involvement with peers, social inclusion and through mastering skills.

Peer Support

It was hoped to understand what value the social and emotional support of peers has for the study participants. A Canadian study by Hynie, Crooks and Barragan (2011) looked at the impact of social supports and social inclusion in newcomer populations. They explained that often the social support that is received from close friends and family members will include,

> …tangible assistance like child care, food, or money; informational support, which refers to the provision of the advice and information necessary for resolving problems or difficulties; and emotional support, which refers to listening behavior, encouragement, distraction, and other means of easing distress (p. 28).

Hynie et al explain that newcomers have less access to social networks and can face extended periods of social exclusion while settling into their new communities (p. 28). These writers explain that newcomer women often are more "socially isolated" compared to newcomer men. Hynie et al (2011) explain how, "the increased isolation of women newcomers, combined with a greater sensitivity to social isolation, may be a contributor to their elevated risk for developing mental health problems" (p. 29). Hynie et al, 2011 study with 87 women from seven different cultural/languages resulted in five main social network themes. They were "immediate family, transnational family, friendship network, close friends, and community" (p. 35-39). The participants described how their "friendship network" would often "fulfill roles that would have been associated with the extended family in the women's country of origin" (Hynie et al, 2011, p. 36). This is definitely one aspect of peer support we will review in this study.

Social Capital

Putnam (1995) defined social capital as "features of social organizations such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination for mutual benefit" (p. 67). It would be interesting to identify if participants' acknowledge that membership at this center has

expanded their social network. Halpern (2005) discusses the micro, messo and macro configurations of social capital and the indications of elements of "bonding, bridging and linking" that will occur. He describes how on a micro level social capital would be built on networks with family, friends and others you come in contact with (workplace, organizations, institutions), and the relationships norms eg. "loving and caring", are discussed (Halpern, 2005). Sanctions that may occur if problems arise in the different relationships are noted. Halpern explains that social capital at a meso level looks at your networks in the workplace or community at large and the excepted norms of these relationships. The possible sanctions that could take place in these relationships, should something go wrong are suggested. Next, Halpern discussed social capital at a macro level looking at connectiveness on a global scale with positive relations, norms and sanctions at this level (p. 26-17). Halpern (2005) explains that, "psychologists have noticed that individuals with poor health and particularly mental health, generally have significantly smaller social networks" (p 74-75). He goes on to state, "individuals with supportive personal relationships are generally less likely to suffer from depression; show less cognitive decline in older age; and are several times less likely to die prematurely than the socially isolated" (p. 110). Activities to help draw people out from living in situations of isolation and exclusion are needed to increase people's positive mental and physical health (Halpern, 2005)

Summary of the Literature Reviewed

Several of the research studies discussed issues that many women integrating into a new homeland may experience. The slim information found on women's sewing circles was discussed. The function of community centres and women's resource centres were outlined as well as the value of active involvement with others. The various authors (Bandura (1977, 1999),

Betz (2000) and Burke et al (2009) suggest “learning by doing” as an effective way to build one’s confidence while acquiring a new skill base. They recommend “mastery experiences” (Bandura, 1999) to increase one’s perceived self-efficacy in various skill areas, including entrepreneurship. If you feel you are capable to success, you will go forth and be opened to new opportunities. If you feel you are not capable and will not likely succeed at this endeavor, you may hesitate to take this new task on. With higher feelings of self-efficacy and self-esteem you will have the added self-confidence to tackle a task and take on new opportunities with less comprehension (Burke, et al, Bandura, 1999, 1989). In the literature review, empowerment and the support of a peer network was also discussed, as well as the relevance of increased social capital to break one away from social exclusion (Haynie et al, 2011, Putman, 1995).

The next chapter will discuss the methodology used for this research study, the study criteria, strategies for participant recruitment and the data collection methods. The theoretical framework for the study will also be explained.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will describe the methodology that was used for this study. An exploratory approach for this qualitative study was used to help elicit the stories and lived experiences of the participants. Past and present members of the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre's Sewing Circle program were invited to participate. A purposive sample of twelve participants took part. Triangulation was used. Centre documentation was reviewed and a member checking process took place. Participants had the opportunity to review the interview summaries, discuss the emerging themes, make changes to their contributions with omissions, corrections and/or additional information, as well as ask questions for clarification (Creswell 2007). The process of "bracketing" was used to assist with reflexivity (Patton, 2002, Creswell, 2007, Hamill and Sinclair, 2010). The study's approach for methodology and analysis was based on a feminist perspective (Patton, 2002, Collins, 1990, 2000, hooks, 1990, 2001, Denzel and Lincoln, 2005, DeVault and Gross, 2007). Using a feminist lens to study the elements of a "sewing circle" at a women's centre was a natural fit. Feminism's goal of consciousness raising (Hill Collins, 1990, 2000a) directly identifies with women's groups that organically form where ideas simmer and percolate and result in action. Women's kitchen table groups, study groups, reading groups, church groups, auxiliaries and "sewing circles" are examples of hubs where cousciousness raising, planning and social action occurs (Harris, 2009).

Participant's recruitment, selection criteria and profiles are provided in this chapter with details of the data collection procedure. This chapter will conclude with the description of the

study analysis procedure, the validation methods used and the strategy for the dissemination of the findings.

Qualitative Research Methodology

Qualitative research methodology is an effective way to gain a clear and comprehensive understanding of a person's lived experiences. Creswell (2007) suggests that qualitative research methods are effective for exploratory research to help understand an issue or problem within a group or individual setting. Qualitative research methods can be utilized when a detailed understanding of the issue is required and when we need to understand the setting where the people experience the phenomenon. Using this research method as a guide, interviews were conducted individually with each participant to get first-hand information about their experiences. Creswell (2007) states that, "we conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in a study" (p. 40). Creswell promotes the use of various sources of data and different data gathering techniques as well as the importance of flexibility in the research design. He explained how the researcher needs to have the freedom to adapt the way one obtains data and data sources as the study proceeds and new issues and information appear (Creswell 2007). Patton (2002) posits to gain an understanding of the phenomenon,

> … require[s] methodologically, carefully, and thoroughly capturing and describing – how they [the participant] perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others (p. 104).

The study group consisted of 'women only' who had migrated to Canada. The main objective was to investigate, by analyzing the data from the interviews, whether there was

evidence of significant and notable shared experiences amongst the participants. One-on-one in-depth interviewing as well as personal observation of participants during activities at the centre took place. Observing their interaction with others at the centre and in their homes (conducted four home interviews) supported the goal of allowing me to experience the phenomena as directly as possible. Time was spent time with each participant, asking questions to help understand their experiences regarding utilizing the women's sewing circle program. One goal of this study was for the "essence(s)" of their experiences with the phenomenon to appear loud and clear (Patton 2002, p. 106).

Researcher Reflexivity

For qualitative research, Patton (2002), Creswell (2007) and Hamill and Sinclair (2010) suggest the value of a "bracketing" process before starting to gather data. These writers and theorists recommend that the researcher take the opportunity at the start of the research project to document their experience with the topic area and to identify at any "assumptions, judgments, understandings, beliefs, biases, preconceptions and presuppositions" (Hamill and Sinclair, p.20) on each issue. Guided by information on the bracketing process from Hamill and Sinclair (2010) I reflected on several issues including the possible reasons women may have for membership in this sewing circle. The following diagram illustrates some possible benefits and reasons for being a member of this sewing that were identified during the bracketing process.

Figure 3: What Sewing circle members "Gives & Receives".

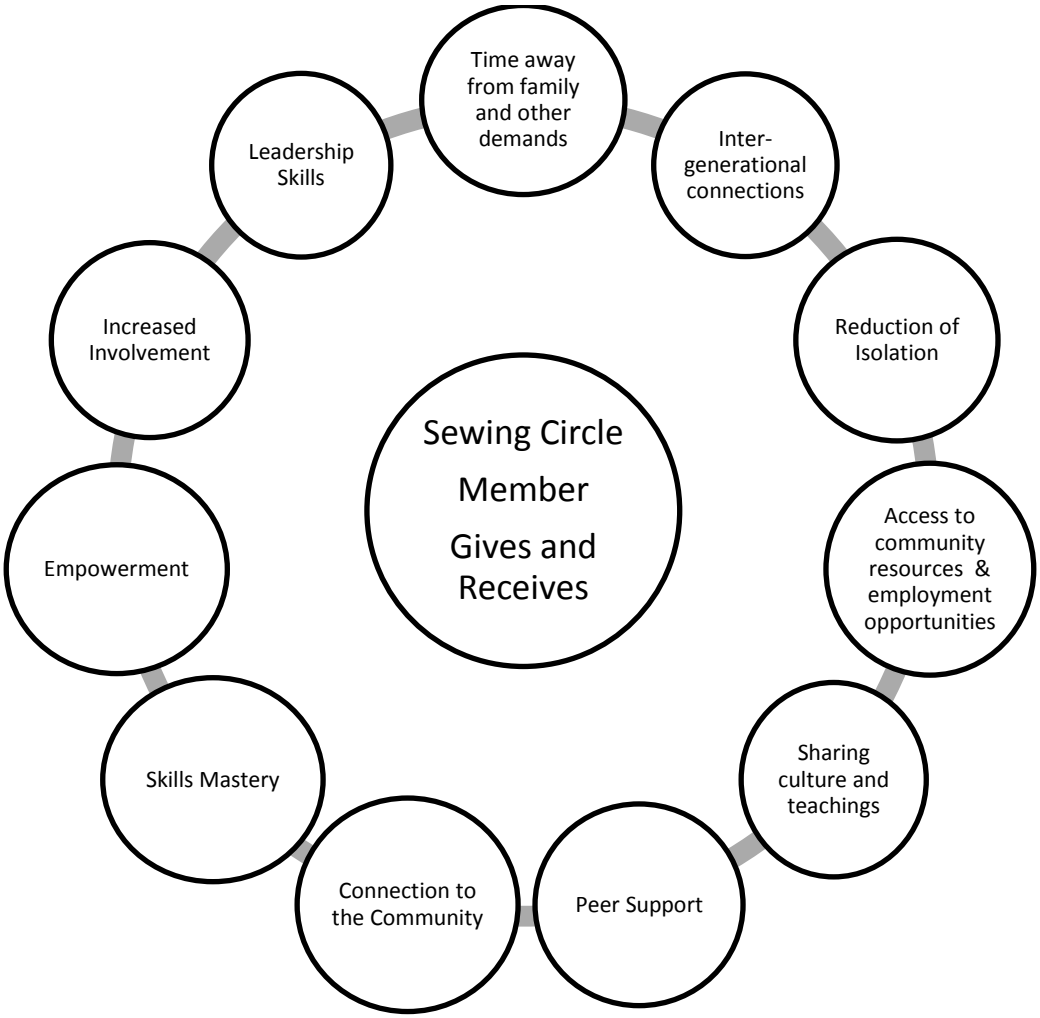


Figure 3- Researcher Reflexivity (Williams, 2012)

Based on personal experience and understanding of supports women's resource centers provide, I initially speculated that some of the reasons participants would have become members of this sewing circle would include: the opportunity to master new skills, peer support, empowerment, increased involvement, leadership skills and inter-generational connections (Sahu, and Rath, 2003). Others may be for reduction of isolation, community connections, including access to local resources and employment opportunities, to share culture and teachings and for time away from family and other demands (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule,

1997). I also looked at my positionality, provided in chapter one. Salzman (2002) proposes, "By being told the "position of the researcher, we can see the angle and the view from which the findings arose" (p. 808).

Theoretical Framework

Feminist theory will guide the approach to the research, its methodology and analysis process. Feminist approach is interested in the researcher's positionality in regard to the research topic to understand the connection the researcher had with the topic being researched. It is important to ask yourself why you are doing this research and what personal investment you have in this project. Patton (2002) explains that feminist inquiry principles include:

- A sense of connectedness and equality between researcher and researched;
- Explicitly acknowledging and valuing "women's ways of knowing" including integrating reason, emotion, intuition, experience, and analytic thought;
- Participatory processes that support consciousness-raising and researcher reflexivity; and
- Going beyond knowledge generation beyond "knowledge for its own sake", to engage in using knowledge for change, especially "knowledge about women that will contribute to women's liberations and emancipation" (p. 129). (Gueriero, 1999, as cited in Patton (2002, p. 16-17)

Feminism also explores the positionality of the woman or study participant. It would be beneficial to hear what is going on for her personally, as an individual. It is important to listen for what was not being said to get a clearer picture of each participant's reality with the phenomena.

It was valuable to use feminist inquiry techniques as part of the approach during the interview. DeVault & Gross (2007) speak about the importance as a researcher to take the time and make the commitment to dialogue with research participants. They suggest that, "rather that viewing women informants as objects of the researcher's gaze, feminists should develop ways of

conceptualizing the interview as an encounter between women with common interests, who would share knowledge" (p. 178). With these values in mind a conversation style dialogue was the approach for the one-on-one interviews with the 12 participants. Participants selected the location, time and date of the meetings. The scripted questionnaire was used as a guideline. The conversation with the women participants was flexible and flowed in the direction led by the participants. The concept of sharing knowledge was important. The interview conversation was designed to include an interchange of ideas about community resources and supports. The research study's theoretical framework includes the value of developing the study methodology from a feminist viewpoint and identified concepts of skills mastery, peer support, empowerment, self-esteem, self-efficacy and social capital.

I have a personal connection to this women's centre, itself and to the members and volunteers from my first visit in 2008. When I entered the space and was welcomed by a row of sewing machines lined up against the walls, I felt I had come "home". For an avid sewer, like myself, I felt a-kin to this program instantly.

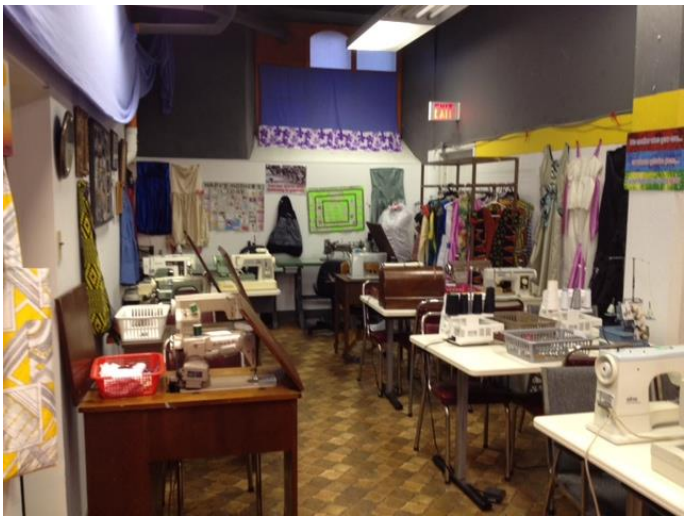


Figure 4 - WCPWRC 2013 facility (Williams, 2013)

Research Study's Theoretical Framework

Feminist theory and practice is the underpinning of this study. Other theories that were explored and make up the theoretical framework were theories of skills mastery, peer support, empowerment, social capital, self-esteem and self-efficacy (see figure 5).

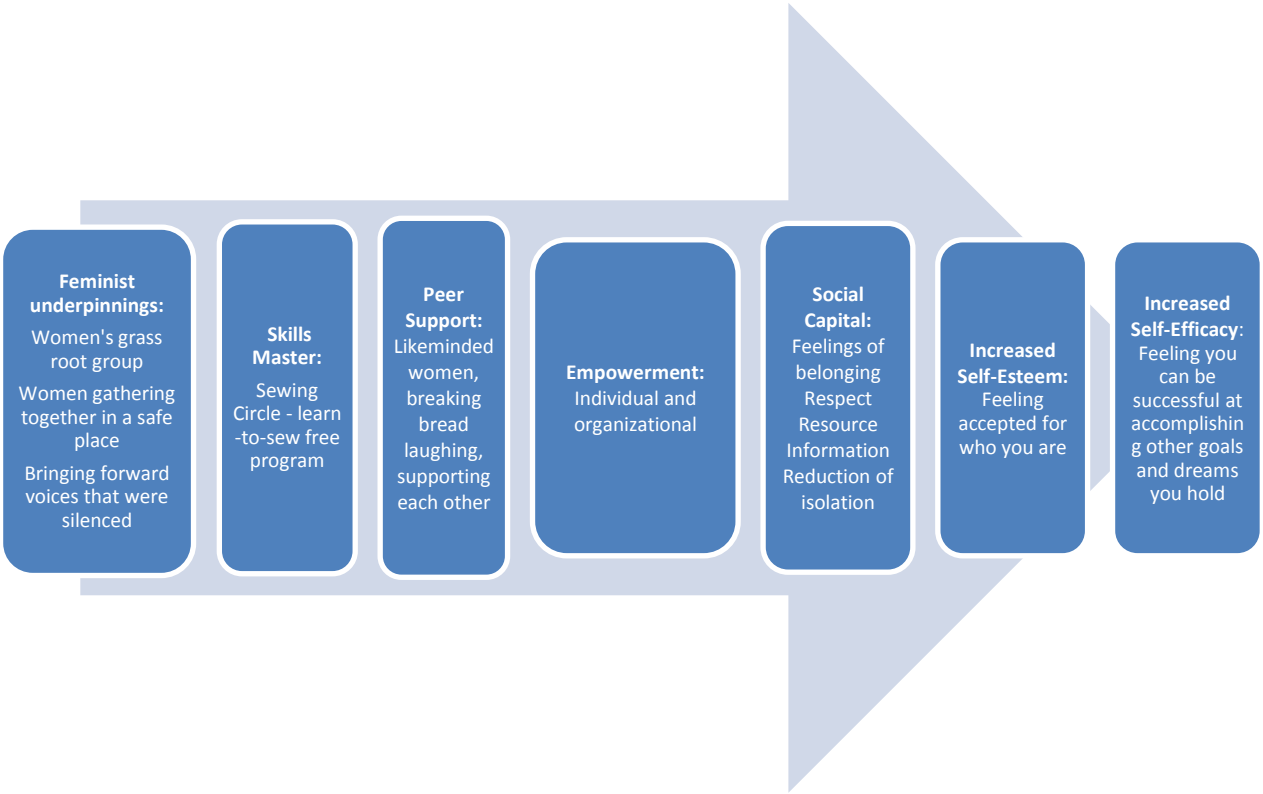


Figure 5 - Theoretical Framework

It is important to use the study results to help inform policy and support programming that would be of benefit to women new in a host society. Programs that could make a newcomer women's life less difficult and more freeing are needed. This report hopes to provide an influential story and will share the verbatim narratives from participants. The guiding research questions will follow.

Research Questions

This study will aim to answer the following research questions:

1. How does skills mastery, peer support and the interventions and activities at the women's centre actually impact upon the sewing circle members lived experiences.

2. What are the goals and dreams (personal and career aspirations) of the sewing circle members?

3. What are the gifts (formal and non-formal skills, talents, abilities education and knowledge) of members?

Interview questions (Appendix D) were developed from the research questions above.

Sampling/Recruitment

During the project planning stage, the women's center coordinator provided me with copies of the member registration forms and sign-in sheets. Contact information was missing on the membership registration forms. Partial mailing and incorrect e-mail addresses had been collected. A potential mail-out list was prepared. There were approximately 120 past and present members' names listed.

Two brief meetings were held with the women's centre coordinator and the sewing instructor to clarify members' names and addresses. All members who were male and/or under 18 years of age were removed from this list, as they would not be recruited for this project. In the end, there were approximately 114 names. Of this list of potential study participants there were only 50 complete mailing addresses. The decision was made not to mail out the invitations to recruit participants for this study. Invitations (Appendix B) would now be hand delivered to past and present members by one sewing circle member. This member volunteered to support this research project. She passed out the invitation letter when people came to the center and

contacted past and present members by phone to describe the study and the invitation to participate.

Sampling Criteria

Past and present sewing circle members, women only, immigrants or refugees to Canada, 18 years of age and over and who had lived in Canada for two or more years were invited to contact the researcher, to arrange an interview.

Participant Profile

Interviews for this study took place over a three month period in 2012. At the time of the interviews, the selected participants had lived in Canada between two and fifteen years. The 12 women participants came from Sudan, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Bhutan. The age range was from 20 to 65 years of age. The wide range of ages in the sample group, between 20 years and senior years, supports the process of sharing knowledge, wisdom and ideas amongst generations. Intergenerational programming is something that presently occurs at the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre. Six participants were active members at the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre. Six women were recent members who had stopped attending for reasons such as, child care and family responsibility, cost of transportation to attend the program and/ or work hours that currently conflicted with the women center's hours of operation. Participant profile information (at the time of this study) is provided in Figure. 5 below:

Profile of Research Participants

Code	Age	Country of Origin	Years in Canada	Marital Status	Current or past member of sewing circle
001	31	Nigeria	2	Married	Current
002	65	Sierra Leone	5	Widow	Current
003	40	Sudan	13	Sole Parent	Past
004	33	Liberia took refuge in Sierra Leone	7	Sole Parent	Past
005	63	Liberia took refuge in Guinea in 1990	15	Widow	Current
006	36	Liberia took refuge in Guinea from 2000 - 2005	7	Married – Husband needs visa to migrate to Canada	Current
007	48	Nigeria	7	Separated	Current
008	41	Sudan	8	Widow	Past
009	37	Nigeria	3	Married	Past
010	36	Bhutan	2 ½	Married	Past
011	29	Nigeria	2	Married	Past
012	20	Nigeria	4	Single	Current

Figure 4 – Participant Profiles

Data Collection Process

Methods

Data gathering methods included, in-depth individual interviews, audio recordings, transcribed interviews, notes, documentation in the form of meeting minutes, strategic plans, program evaluations, annual reports and program descriptions retrieved from the provided printed material and from the organization's website. As well, written correspondence with women's centre staff members, researcher observation and researcher's journal entries were also reviewed.

Interview Structure

When a sewing circle member contacted the researcher to arrange an interview time, the script of telephone conversation (Appendix A) was used. The study screening criterion was reviewed. The participant needed to be 18 or over and have lived in Canada for two years. A meeting time and place was determined. Participants were advised the interview would be approximately two hours in length. Eight interviews were held in a small boardroom at the women's centre. Participants were not scheduled back to back, as to keep this as private as possible. Four meetings were held in the homes of participants. The scripted interview introduction and questions (Appendix D) guided the interview process. First, the study consent form (Appendix C) was reviewed, discussed and signed by the participant. Participants were advised that the intent of the interview was for it to be a relaxed conversation between the participant and the researcher. The prepared interview questions were a guide and we would not need to stick to the questions on the form.

Follow-up

After each interview there would be follow-up tasks to complete, in relation to resource or career information that was discussed. Participants were provided with additional answers to specific inquires about programs and community resources through e-mail and phone calls. This process of "exchanging information" was an integral part of the "reciprocity" element of the research/interview design. After each interview, links were provided to resources that were discussed, such as: Age and Opportunity for computer training, Manitoba Child Care for information on starting a home based child care business; and housing cooperatives in Winnipeg that provide options for adequate and affordable housing. As well, the application process for the

Manitoba ACCESS post-secondary training programs in Social Work, Education and Nursing was discussed with a few participants.

Transcription and Member Checking

For participant confidentiality, all documents were kept in a locked file box in a private room in my home. As the interviews were conducted, the digital recordings were transcribed. Once all 12 interviews were completed and the transcripts were typed and reviewed, looking for themes to emerge (Creswell, 2007). I transcribed all the interviews. This process provided the opportunity to listen and re-listen to the women as they share their experiences as members of the sewing circle. The transcribing process also provided me with the opportunity to interpret other non-verbal messages from the conversations, through their silence, questions, laughter, sighs and/or pauses. Once the main themes had been identified, I prepared a handout for each participant, which included each theme and a list of their individual transcribed narratives I was considering to use in the report. Arrangements were then made to meet with interested participants one-on-one. Eight of the participants agreed to meet for the member checking process, which was stated as a voluntary process to participants. Narratives were grouped into the four main themes that emerged. Each participant received a copy of their narratives sorted by themes. Some members followed up with questions about the process. Participants were interested to know the progress of the study.

The second participant profile table (Fig. 6) below, provides information on the training and career paths of the participants' pre and post arrival to Canada, at the time of the interviews. Education and career plans were interrupted when the participants moved to Canada.

Fig. 6: Profile of Research Participants - Training and Career Paths

Code	**Education pre-migration to Canada**	**Employment pre-migration to Canada**	**Canadian Education /Training**	**Employment Status at Interview**	**Career Plan / Dream**
01	Marketing Degree - Nigeria	Merchandiser	Applied to Red River College (RRC)'s ACCESS Nursing Program	Merchandiser and Youth Worker working with people with physical and mental challenges	Bachelor of Social Work or Registered Nursing /Bachelor of Nursing Degree
02	High School Grade 12, Clerical training in Sierra Leone	Air Lines Clerk	Child Minder Training, West Central Women's Resource Centre	Childminder – casual shifts. Receiving Employment and Income Assistance (Disability)	More shifts as a childminder
03	Nursing Assistant Training program – South Sudan	Nursing Assistant – Outreach health educator, providing health care and leprosy education to families/ communities.	English Language classes. Accepted into Personal Assistant Community Education (PACE) training program, Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC)	Student. Receiving Employment and Income Assistance.	To be a community outreach worker
04	Took refuge – left school at age 10	Entrepreneur	English Language Classes	Student. Receiving Employment and Income Assistance.	To be a translator or home care worker
05	High School, Dietician 1 year program - Nimba County, Liberia	Dietary Aide, Kindergarten Teacher, Cook, Childcare Assistant	Industrial Sewing Training & Health Care Aid	Receiving Employment & Income Assistance (Disability)	To provide childcare or volunteer in a personal care home.
06	High school and Psycho Social Agent Training - Centers of Victims of Trauma – Guinea (refugee camp)	Psycho / Social Aid – counsellor in refugee camp	Dental Assisting Certificate (CDI College),Personal Assistant Community Education (PACE) Certificate (ILRC), and Social Work courses (U of Mb)	Personal Care Attendant Works overnights as a Personal Attendant	To complete Bachelor of Social Work Degree
07	Nurse, midwife and family planner degrees/ certification Nigeria	Nurse, Midwife, Family planner Owned private clinic with spouse/Doctor.	Health Care Aid, RN program (RRC) - incomplete	Casual Work	Would like funding to complete the RN program at RRC.
08	Grade 5 – Arabic school	Family provider/caregiver	English Language Classes	Student. Receiving Employment and Income Assistance	Would like to work in program that helps women.
09	High school Plastering Technician Certification-Nigeria	Family provider/caregiver	Health Care Aid Certificate (Robertson College)	School lunch program supervisor. Family supports.	Would like to start a home daycare
10	No formal school education	Farmer in Bhutan	English Language Classes	Student. Family supports.	Will continue to complete English Language Skills program

11	5year Food Sciences Degree - Nigeria	One year teaching Quality Assurance Officer for Restaurant chain	Customer Service Training program	Employed - Customer Service Representative	Recognition for Food Science Degree and/or complete Cdn. degree program
12	Junior High	Came to Canada as a Teenager	High School & Business Administration Training (Winnipeg Technical College)	Student. Parents supports.	Lawyer or Accountant

Figure 5 – Participant Profiles Career/Training

Eight of the twelve participants who were adults before coming to Canada, had achieved post-secondary training in their homelands, of which three held university degrees in Nursing, Marketing and Food Sciences respectively. However, none of their degrees have been recognized by their professions or employers in Manitoba. Ten of the women who moved to Canada as adults worked in their field of study before taking refuge in other countries and/or moving to Canada. Four of the participants were receiving supports from Employment and Income Assistance (E&IA) at the time of the interviews, which included two study members over 60 years of age, both receiving disability supports. Participants were asked about their dreams or future career goals. This information will be discussed in more detail in chapter six.

Data Analysis Procedure

Unit of Analysis

The individual woman who has experience as a member of the sewing circle program will be the unit of analysis for this research study. Patton (2002) explains that when the individual person is the unit of analysis this will mean “that the primary focus of data collection will be on what is happening to individuals in a setting and how individuals are affected by the setting” (p. 228). For this research study, the researcher is interested in the individual woman’s experiences in the setting of the Winnipeg Central Park Women’s Resource Centre’s Multi-Cultural Sewing Program.

Data Analysis

Creswell suggests adopting the analyzing strategies for a qualitative study from Moustakas (1994), which starts with the researcher taking the opportunity to describe their experience with the phenomenon in detail. The analytical approach will focus upon the identification of "patterns, categories, and themes from the 'bottom-up,' by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information" (Creswell, 2007, p. 38). The collected data was reviewed and significant statements were identified that would help to describe how the women experience the phenomenon. Reflexivity was used throughout this project to help acknowledge any personal views, assumptions and perspectives on issues that surfaced.

Interpretation and Presentation of Findings

The preliminary findings from this study were presented at the Strangers in New Homelands Conference in 2012 at the University of Manitoba. The completed data analysis and the study findings were presented to the board of the WCPWRC in July 2014. A PowerPoint presentation was prepared that provided an overview of the study, the findings and relevant suggestions. Board members asked questions and provided feedback. At this meeting board members had gathered to strategize ways this information could be used to make needed changes and secure funding for on-going and new programs and services at the women's centre. Handouts of the presentation were provided. The board said that they are looking forward to having a copy of the printed and bound thesis. Arrangements will be made to gather participants and other members of the women`s centre to provide the presentation once the thesis has been accepted by Graduate Studies at the University of Manitoba. During the presentation of findings

to the participants, their feedback on the interpretation of the data resulting from this study will be sought.

Strategies for Validating Findings

Validation, according to Creswell (2007), should be "an attempt to assess the 'accuracy' of the findings, as best described by the researchers and the participants" (p. 207). The validation strategies utilized for this study included 1) taking time to get to know the participants, 2) a reflexivity process, 3) reviewing organizational documentation (strategic plans, annual reports and funder's agreements), 4) member checking, 5) narrative audits, and a 6) detailed and in-depth data collection process (Creswell, 2007, p 207-209). I was involved with the incorporation process of the women's centre. I was an original board member and volunteer. Besides attending monthly board meetings as the scribe, I was an active volunteer, assisting with the day to day activities at the centre, getting to know participants and the staff as well as organizations in the community. I feel a-kin to the women members, staff and board and the sewing program on a whole. Members acknowledge me as a peer as we cooked and shared meals together many times. The interview design and process provided the environment for the conversations to be in-depth and detailed. After the interview process, I researched the countries of origin that were discussed. I reviewed the political timelines. I was curious to understand the political and social aspects of events that lead to participants' seeking refuge. A research journal was kept to express my thoughts, reflections, attitudes, decisions or actions that surfaced during this study period. I reviewed documents belonging to the women's centre (board meeting notes, AGM reports, 2009 strategic plan and 2011 program evaluation). The member checking process included eight home visits with participants, where we reviewed the portions of the transcript used for this report. Participants were pleased and most asked if there was any additional information required from

them. Members thanked me for asking them to participate in this report. Feedback from participants on the prominent themes that emerged was a means of validation of research findings. Through the report I used an audit trail of direct quotations from the participants to help illustrate the narratives during the themes that emerged in chapter four and to help describe the analysis process in chapter 5. The findings' validity and reliability were evaluated, and are sound.

Study Limitations

The data collected from the small sample size of 12 participants resulted in findings that will provide implications for social work practice as well as for settlement service providers and government policy makers. If the sample size had been larger, perhaps some additional generalizations could be made. My close relationship as a volunteer and board member to this centre could cause problems with biases or participants inability to feel free to provide information. I feel the bracketing process helped me to focus on listening and dialoging. I hope participants felt in control of the process, selecting the date, time and location of the meeting. I believe that the confidentiality and personal touch with the homemade snacks and tea set a relaxed tone for an exchange of ideas peer to peer.

Summary

This chapter described the research design and processes used to collect and analyze data and present the findings. This exploratory qualitative study referred to feminist theory to help build the framework. The strength of the methodology selected for this study was that it emphasizes the experiences of women. Bracketing was used to assist with the reflexivity process in preparation for the interviews and analysis. 12 women volunteered to participate in the

interviews which happened over three months in 2012. Chapter four will describe the findings from the interviews with the women, focus on themes that emerged and provide excerpts from the participant narratives.

CHAPTER 4

Emerging Themes

Introduction

Qualitative research design stresses the importance of listening to hear participants' voices and also listening for gaps in their stories (Patton 2002; Creswell 2007). As I reviewed the transcripts, multiple times, definite themes emerged from the collected data. The themes that emerged included narratives about trauma and loss, issues with "systems" in Canada, with language barriers to public involvement; finding a sense of family in a new homeland; and inclusion - feeling like a part of something. Economics, skill building and the reduction of isolation were the main reasons participants described for joining and retained membership at the centre.

Feminist and Critical Race theories value the use of participant narratives for true understanding of a person's experiences with the phenomenon. Delgado & Stefancic (2012) explain that the "experience" is the main point of Critical Race Theory. They say, "People of different races have radically different experiences as they go through life" (p. 47). These writers believe that people love a good story and how,

> …well told stories describing the reality of black and brown lives can help readers to bridge the gap between their worlds and those of others. Engaging stories can help us understand what life is like for others and invite the reader into a new and unfamiliar world. (p. 47-48)

The narratives were selected for this chapter to help to illuminate the reader and bring the reader closer into the participant's world, through the lived experiences they discuss.

Feminist theory explores how participant's narratives hold truths. Collin (1990) suggests,

> …talking from the heart captures the ethic of caring, which validates personal expressiveness, emotions, and empathy in the expression and assessment of knowledge claims … every idea has an owner and that the owner's identity matters' is central to the ethic of personal accountability (p. 218).

When the opportunity does come for you to discuss your life and your opinions Collin (1990) describes women's stories as 'authentic'.

Emerging Themes

The following significant themes will be discussed:

1. Trauma and loss
2. Issues with systems in Canada
3. Finding a sense of family in a new homeland
4. Goals for membership - Economic, social inclusion, skills mastery

The following are the narratives from the participants will help to describe the themes that emerged from the interviews.

Theme One: Trauma and loss

"After I lost my dad, everything is backward"

The theme of trauma and loss came through the strongly although the interview questions had purposely avoided this topic. The effects of loss and trauma on each participant's life choices within countries of origin and/or seeking refuge has directly affected the participant's present situation (Valtonen, 2008). Trauma and loss affected relationships with family, employment, financial security, education, decision to migrate, parenting style, marital status, quality of life, and other areas of life.

To help explain their current life situation, six participants volunteered the background circumstances leading up to their arrival in Canada. These stories included experiences of loss and trauma in their home countries under civil war and while seeking refuge. Mollica (2006) suggests that stories of trauma need to be listened to respectfully. He saw storytelling as healing and cautioned that, "a listener's detachment only reinforces the survivor's humiliated feelings, instilled by their aggressors, that they are worthless and their stories meaningless (p. 110-111)". Participants expressed the loss of family members, homes, economic means, language and culture. Loss of opportunities as children for literacy and education, careers and livelihoods were also discussed by participants. The following personal excerpts provide a backdrop for this study. One participant explained:

> *… when I was eleven my dad be forced to go to war for southern Sudan, people there united at that time and they have to join the Army to be fight Khartoum and I lived alone with my siblings and I dropped out of school, of course I didn't have a chance to continue and nobody would take care of my brothers, I started working all kind of jobs…*

This participant explained that her father went to Southern Sudan in 1981 when the civil war broke out and was in the Southern Sudanese Army under John Garant. Her mother was with her family in the Nuba Mountain area at that time and the roads were cut off to travel with no access to return to Khartoum. At 11 years old, this participant left school to care for her younger brothers and spent the next nine years working as a housekeeper and cleaner.

Another participant's father was shot while they were seeking refuge leaving Liberia en route to Sierra Leone. She started our interview session by talking about this experience and explained the following:

> *Cause when we were coming from Liberia to Sierra Leone, we facing so many trauma and my Daddy he used to do gold, diamond, he used to sell those and in Africa if somebody have some... not like so rich, but if you have your own for your kids – people go around you, you know, to drag you down so when this war we walked from Liberia to*

> *Sierra Leone so the gold my dad had for us – so they shot my dad... So at that time I was twelve years old and I was with him then*.

The participant's mother did not know how she would care for children. They had just witnessed their father being killed. George (2012) talks about "refugee resilience" in her study looking at migration trauma and distress. She states:

> Refugee resiliency serves to counter the social construction of forced migrants as victims without agency, and enables refugees, despite their traumatic experiences, to succeed in the new society (p. 432)

At nine years of age, the participant took on additional family obligations when her father was killed. Her mother struggled to cope with the day to day, so this participant took on some of the parenting duties. Grieving needed to take place in a manner where she was still able to function as the care giver for her siblings. Now, this woman is making a new life in Canada. She thanks the counseling supports at the women's centre, peer friendships and her relationship with God and Church to help her keep strong and continue with day to day life.

Theme Two: Issues with systems in Canada

"*But the system is people need to know where these people came from. They came from trauma*"

Participants discussed systems issues that they had to deal with in Canada, such as health care, housing, English Language training programs and skills training, credentials not being recognized, as well as government programs and services through Child and Family Services. One participant explained in detail the compounding trauma she dealt with for the previous two years when her children were taken into the care of Winnipeg Child and Family Services. This participant expressed her thoughts in the following narratives:

> *So Canada is really nice, I love it, I love the law [or Lord], but the only thing Canada making people cry. Let the government leave we then we train our kids.*

> *Let them give we the power, let we put an umbrella on top of our kids, then heck, we don't know, so I mean let the government help me, we're the women, we're crying, we're crying, our kids they are suffering.*

She expressed her thankfulness for the good Canada has offered on one hand and the hardship of living without her children on the other. She feels that parents need to raise their children into healthy citizens and she would like her children back right now to fulfill this role. She believes that her children are suffering equally as wards of the state.

Participants felt that they did not have access to all the information out there around community resources, access to employment, schools, and options for careers. Valtonen (2008) discussed how barriers exist making it difficult for newcomers to access information and supports in their new society. Participants' explained how they feel they were not getting all the details or the correct or needed information. One participant felt pressured to select a low-level job in health care. She explained:

> *Because of the time, when we come, especially immigrants you don't get enough information like most of the people make you feel that if you don't became a nurse or do something in healthcare there is no other way, you know.*

There was an overall feeling of gratefulness that Canada welcomes and harbours people providing access to resources. This included free programs and services such as the ones at the Winnipeg Central Park Women' Resource Centre for community members. This participant said:

> *Because I thank God too, because Canadian people she help a lot. Like when you came single mom, she help you, widow or you single, she help.*

This participant was receiving supports from Employment and Income Assistance (E. & I.A.), and she acknowledged that this aid was not something she would have experienced in her home country. She had lived in a refugee camp before coming to Canada, where she had started a few businesses to sustain herself and her family. She had a restaurant, bakery and wine distillery running. She was very appreciative of Canada for the supports her family had received, which

included her income, housing, education and healthcare. During my visit, she was purchasing a used car with her son, so they would have a more efficient mode of transportation for the family, she explained.

"We need ABCD – to know our rights."

Participants, regardless of their English language proficiency, shared the English language barriers they encountered in Canada. One woman, who had completed a University Degree in Marketing in Nigeria where English is the national language explained:

> *Yeah, I've been to Red River College, but I could not be accepted – we had to do a kind of English test and my score was not really up to their required score – they asked me to go to English classes or something. Right now I'm doing English On-line, just like – cause I know that I can't really say what they want – I studied in English, I did everything in my school, my studies in English?*

This participant explained that Red River College required her to write their English Language Entrance Exam to enter the ACCESS Registered Nursing program. She did not score an acceptable mark; she is now trapped studying English while waiting for an opportunity to re-write this exam. The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, Fact sheet No. 5- 2003, explained:

> Racism among employers against racialized women and people who have certain accents In English and French mean that some immigrant and refugee women have little choice but to take on manual labour, regardless of their level of education (p. 5).

Another participant described her situation when Child and Family Services (CFS) came into her home to remove her children. She requested a translator so that she could understand the situation she was in and be more informed about the documents that people were demanding her sign. Here are a few excerpts:

> *If we make and you don't know your rights and you don't understand English you are in dark! How to remove yourself in dark? You need to stand firm.*

This participant is frustrated with the English language barrier she has faced and she is working hard to acquire English language skills to understand her rights as a Canadian Citizen and also to cope with past and present trauma and loss. This participant goes on to explain:

> *Because in public you can see some white people their whole family can hold a pen writing, what about immigrants? … Number 1, you don't, you don't go to school and you can't speak English you would be confusing for you and when you go to public how can you can even to explain your grief only people coming be ... not easy, it's not easy, we woman we need to put in on ourself, because when I came here I couldn't able even to explain my grief in English.*

Participants shared how they were looking for full-time English Language programs, feeling an intense program would provide the training they needed to access skills training and careers they wanted. A study conducted by the Prairie Women's Centre of Excellence in 2001 that looked at Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, confirmed that English language acquisition was "a key to integration" and reduces social isolation (p. 40). This study stated that:

> Over and over again, the lack of ability to communicate in English posed a strong block to women's ability to identify and address issues. Everyone who was interviewed (service providers, mental health workers and the women) raised the issue of language. Many of the women who were interviewed described their feelings of isolation, loneliness and frustration over not being able to express themselves or understand others". (p. 30)

It seems to be a common situation for immigrants where language acquisition is needed to truly benefit from the supports provided by the host society, but sometimes not easily assessable. Some organizations that provided counseling supports to newcomers in Winnipeg have translators on standby who speak a variety of languages. Translators provide interpretation services to clients, to allow clients to speak in their preferred language during a counseling session. In Winnipeg, Immigrant Women's Counseling Services at NorWest Community Health Cooperative, provide interpreters for clients (http://www.norwestcoop.ca/mind-spirit/immigrant-womens-counselling-services/).

One other participant commented on the fact that is she was back at home in Sudan, she would know all of her neighbours. She was living in an apartment in downtown Winnipeg for 18 months and had become friendly with only one family. She said that in Africa, doors are always open – kids play together and that "you don't babysit your own kids as soon as the kids start walking – it's not yours anymore", she said laughing. Here in Winnipeg, the support that might receive when you are parenting on your own or living with little family around you, could come from community based programs that engage residents to meet and come together (Valtonen, 2008).

Theme Three: Finding a sense of family in a new homeland

"Well, the other women that come to this program, some of them look at me like their mom…they call me their mom."

Finding like-minded people with similar personal experiences in a new homeland was one of the common links the women in this research had to each other. Coming to the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Center has helped break from isolation, worry and stress; centre participants are part of a family who laugh, learn and break bread together. This sense of belongingness at the centre has made their day to day life easier to maneuver (Valtonen, 2008, Sahu & Rath 2003). One participant shares her reasons for coming to this sewing circle program:

> *My reasons are for, 1) I wanted to upgrade my sewing skills and, 2) to be around women, they are like mothers, you can talk to, you can confide in and also it is a social gathering that, it accommodates anybody no matter who you are or where you are coming from, your language everything, does not matter, as long as you're here it's like a home. So, all of these things make me feel like coming here every time I am free, any day that I'd don't have anything that I'm doing I feel like coming to be with the women around.*

The sewing circle program provided a safe, comfortable place for women to meet each other and learn to master a new skill. This was valued. Another participant shared her experience finding a sense of family at the women's center, she explained:

> *Because the family I lost back home - coming here I have a new family… a family that I could talk too, a family that I can confide too, I can tell my story, whatever happens to me I could explain it to somebody, at least I have somebody to talk too. It means a lot.*

Participants explained the importance of having a place to go where you can share your thoughts people that will understand and be prepared to walk with you as you sort things out, make decisions or deal with issues. The next participant talks about the effects of coming to the centre when you are missing your own family, she said:

> *… it can make your day, you go there sad and down, you didn't hear from your family as soon as you start talking and talking to people and meeting other people, it is really nice, I loved it!*

The centre has a role to play in the community as a refuge for comfort and companionship when you need the unconditional support of friends. Writers' Lesser, O'Neill, Burke, Scanlon, Hollis & Miller (2004) in their study on women's support groups, explain how "groups can have a powerful influence on women who are self-sacrificing to the point of ignoring their own needs. Women can recognize this dynamic in themselves and in each other and thereby gently encourage changes" (p. 77). This statement seems to ring true. When we see something happening to someone else we may find it easier to point out that is should stop then if it is occurring in our life. Recognizing the issue and naming it, and dealing with it, can make the difference.

Theme Four: Reasons or goals for attending the centre:

Participants were asked about their goals and reasons for attending the sewing circle program. In addition, they were also questioned on what place the sewing program has in their life and why they continued to attend. Their collective answers to this inquiry had led to three emerging themes. The participants mentioned economics, social inclusion and skill building as reasons or goals for attending this program.

Economic Goals

> *"We are the Mothers, we have the children, if we see our kids clothes look tear we need to sit and sew it instead of take to another place then we give money. We need to receive that money and keep it for tomorrow's issue. Yah, so the sewing really help us."*

The women expressed how learning the skill of sewing was saving them money that could be used for many other things. The economic reasons for membership were evident. Women said that it cost $20.00 to have a pair of pants hemmed by a tailor. One member explains her goals for mastering sewing skills:

> *Well to be self, self, self-sufficient, or I think if I finish the course, or the training I could do a lot of things for myself at home, even with my own dresses, if there is a little dent or something I want to patch I can do it myself, instead of taking to place where I will go and spend $20.00 or more of doing that, just a simple hemming, if you take it to those places they charge you that much. I can do that myself, I can sew for my kids or my grandkids, if they have something I have to patch for them, I can do it myself. I think it's profitable.*

This participant was exploring ways to make a small business from her newly acquired sewing skills. She had witnessed other women during the course of her training, take on small orders for custom made evening gowns and traditional African dresses. Having a home-based business was also of interest to her. Valcour and Ladge (2008) discuss the "protean career", which is a non-traditional career path that many women in this study have in common. Their employment does not define them as their paid work has been interrupted with circumstances and decisions beyond and within their control. When asked, what place the sewing program has in your life, one participant laughed and said:

> *(Laughing) "Old age security" because, like I'd be home and sew my own clothes myself instead of taking it to a professional tailor that would charge me exorbitant fees; I can make simple things for myself.*

It was interesting to hear the participant relate this skill as an investment into her provisions for herself during retirement. More programs that teach older adults the skill of sewing to help save

money would be an asset. One participant had started to use her new sewing skills to alter clothing she imports from Africa to re-sell. She said:

> *Umhum, yeah, and sometimes I bring African dresses and sell them, so I do adjust them too. I get them from home, like if somebody buy it and it is a little bit big I'm able to reduce...*

This participant has started a home import business since her sewing skill level has increased. They have five children and had recently prepared visa papers to invite her husband to come to Canada. The income from this business supplements her full-time work as was a home care worker.

Social Inclusion

"Women need to help each other"

The essence of feeling a part of something and feeling acceptable in the host country was a need expressed by participants. Shakir (2005) posits that,

> Inclusion is an enactment, a process that marginalized groups, communities and individuals need to traverse – and power structures need to be susceptible to – rather than an end itself. Possessing and exercising the right and, more importantly the ability to contest, to re-structure relations of power and ultimately re-imagine Canada is social inclusion. (p. 4)

Shakir suggests that programming with this focus needs the support of governments and policy makers. One participant identified how coming to a new country made her feel like an outsider. She explains how the sewing program at the women's centre helped to change the feelings of societal exclusion she was experiencing:

> *Since I come to this program it makes you feel acceptable. Because when you are coming in to this country you feel, how will I put it, you feel… Umhum, you feel somehow, not that you've not been acceptable, but when you come together with some members and they are loving to you and you feel you are acceptable and then you feel ... I want to use one word for that, I'm trying to... when you are acceptable and then they build love into you they are open to you, you don't, you don't feel* ***neglected*** *or somehow, then you might find it very, very important to you.*

Some women explained how back in their home countries, people would greet strangers and ask about their family as a common gesture of courtesy and good will. It was a very different experience to be newly landed in Winnipeg, with little family and friends and pass people by on the street, sit beside people on the bus and see people in shops without any type of interaction or verbal exchange. This daily experience could easily make you feel excluded from public life.

Participants valued the concept of women working together, as peers, "women supporting other women". One participant expressed this in powerful words:

> *We need to be united. United is important thing in the whole wide world, anywhere – people they don't united and nothing is going to go correct. The person, people understand each other, where they come from, why we're here we come all the way alone, and everybody has their own country he choose, but coming to the end, it doesn't matter. If people, they are united everything go just well, they will understand each other better than that and they know what to do and they going to have a good plan together.*

Being a part of a team including, learning and sharing together was important for members. One participant said:

> *I feel good, because I used to doing team work, so working here as a team is making me to feel good because one person doing something, working alone, one person working alone it doesn't make you feel good when you are working. But if you are working as a team you feel good because you won't miss no fun, you catch up with all the fun in the place, so I like working as a team and not one person working...*

Working as a team at the women's centre, to complete a sewing order or to prepare food for a gathering or event, was valued. Members enjoyed pulling together and working towards a common goal. Study participants expressed how the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre staff members were instrumental in making them feel like they belong to a group. The staff members has made participants feel welcome, at home and helped them stay positive. One participant states:

> *…, I thank God for the Women's Centre, especially Auntie Sally, she always saying if you belief Christ stand firm, don't give up.*

The three staff members at the women's centre had each come to Canada with refugee status. They built the centre to be a supportive place for all women to come to. Outside events were often planned, such as bowling and swimming to help members socialize in the public realm and expand their networks. Another participant described the support at the centre in the terms of expanding her social network.

> *Okay, well, it increased my network, you know, I've meet more people, cause if I probably was at home doing nothing, I wouldn't have met people, so I met people, and I met like-minded people and fellow immigrants too, and most times we share experiences, we encourage each other and all that, so that's been good.*

Building one's social network and increasing one's social capital are recognized as being vital for helping a person maintain good mental and physical health (Halpern 2005). The sewing circle at WCPWRC has brought people with similar backgrounds together that have an interest in sewing and being with other women. Participants described how being home alone would cause them to worry and think about their situation, loss family members and memories of a different life. Spicer, N. (2008) explains:

> Social networks are recognised as important in promoting asylum-seekers' and refugees' social inclusion through the practical support they offer, including assistance in accessing health and other social welfare services, interpretation, and financial and emotional support that may help them to develop confidence and self-esteem and reduce feelings of isolation and depression (p. 493)

Socialization was one of the driving forces for membership at this centre. Most of participants spoke of feelings of isolation, boredom and worry, with too much time alone to think when they were at home by themselves. They described the emotional support they found from the staff and other members mood altering. The kidding around, sharing, eating and working together as the medicine they needed to feel so much better about their life situation. When asked how being a member at this women's centre had affected her life, one participant said**:**

> *A lot, because I'm meeting other people and it's better that way because you talk, make fun and if you're home alone there is nothing important to do accept to watch TV the whole day and sit the same place, you eat, sleep, awake, sleep, eat, eat, sleep, awake and that's not good for our health, we're going to the centre is great for me because every day I meet different people, every day I talk with different people, every day we talk, we laugh, if you have anything in your mine from your home, when you get there, you happy, Umhum, because it is deferent atmosphere.*

The atmosphere in this centre helped to make members feel safe and excepted. Some of the board members of the women's centre lived in the high rise Manitoba Housing subsidized complex this centre was located in. This was also a place where you would find local community leaders who would drop in to say hello and or to have a meal with the participants and staff members. There were usually a few small children, pre-school age, in the child minding area or staying very close to their mothers who were sewing. Children were welcomed and everyone took time to play and give the children their attention.

Skill Mastery

Learning new skills can open doors, add to feelings of increased self-confidence, self-esteem and self-efficacy. Finding a home away from home can provide the ideal environment or "homeplace" for skill acquisition. hooks (1990) says that "homeplace is a site of resistance, made possible by black women who work hard to maintain the sense of faith and solidarity to shelter against the oppressive forces of racism and poverty" (p. 42). One woman talks about the acquisition of new skills from attending the sewing circle program:

> *I think I like it because, like, like, like, for instance most people here [in Canada] I found out that they, they use pattern to cut their dresses, but in that centre we don't use pattern, our instructor introduced us to, to not using the pattern, but using our "head" and the tape rule measurements to cut. I think I prefer that one, and I prefer, and I love it! Sewing without patterns, it's very interesting.*

Three main levels of sewing techniques were taught by the sewing instructor. Level one provided the new sewer with basic sewing machine usage skills and practice threading the machine, and

learning to sew straight, by following lines that were drawn on scrap paper for practice. Once you had mastered the ability to sew a straight line on the paper, you would be given fabric to practice sewing on. Learning how to measure and cut directly on to fabric was the next step. The instructor did not teach anyone the use of paper patterns, like one might learn in a Canadian school based Home Economic class. Every student, as they moved into designing clothing for themselves, would take precise measurements of their own body. These measurements would be used when making other clothing, such as tops, dresses, pants, skirts and any unique pieces. Your personal measurements would be transferred directly to the fabric. Markings would be made and fabric pieces would then be cut out and sewn together to assemble your clothing item. The participants would learn how to take many details into consideration, such as basic clothing construction, darts, seam allowances and other requirements. By the third sewing level, students would know how to design their own clothes from sketches they draw or pictures of clothing from magazines or catalogues. Participants learned how to create items through measuring, designing and transferring markings to the fabric, cutting and then sewing to complete the item. The wedding dress below (fig.7) was being completed by participants as their final outfit for the fashion show event held in 2012. Sewing circle members designed and produced over 100 pieces of clothing items for this fund raising fashion show.

Figure 6 – Photograph of fashion show wedding dress (Williams, 2012)

The funds raised from this event went to purchase sewing fabric and equipment as well as towards a small food budget to provide the lunch meal to members to ensure there is food available for the women each day. This sewing circle, like the Mennonite and abolitionist sewing circles (Harris, 2009, Taylor, 2010) exists as needed skill building, social networking and money saving resource for women.

Summary of the Emerging Themes

The narratives in this chapter document clear and profound messages from participants. The women discussed issues that formed the emerging themes of trauma and loss, issues with systems in Canada, finding a sense of family, peer support and their economic, social and skill building goals for membership and their regular attendance at the sewing circle program at the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre. These themes came through from the interviews and provided connections to the participants' experiences. Another theme that through during this study was the place that organized religion had in all 12 participants' lives. Each

participant shared their connection to religion and attends a Church or a Mosque on a regular basis. Church and Mosques provide a connection to community for members. The additional information participants shared about their lives, many gifts, abilities and their identified skills are included in chapter six. During the interview process, participants were asked to share dreams they held for themselves and their families. The description of dreams that the women hold for themselves and their families focused on career, business ownership and employment, these are also shared in chapter six. The next chapter will provide an analysis of the themes that emerged with reference to relevant literature.

Chapter 5

Analysis of Data and Discussion of Findings

Introduction

Chapter four provided participants' narratives to help explain the themes that had emerged from the interviews. In this chapter, the findings will be analyzed. The research questions focused on gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of women who are newcomers to Canada and who participate in the sewing circle program at the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre in Winnipeg. Interview questions (Appendix D) focused on why women were members and why they continued to attend the sewing circle program. The four themes that emerged from the study will be discussed and analyzed in this chapter. We will also discuss how levels of perceived self-efficacy increased with membership. The relevant literature will be integrated with findings. The rational for this study was to address the lack of documented stories that describe the newcomer women's experiences, to seek an understanding of the abundance of skills, ability and gifts these women hold, and the need to identify these hidden or untapped skills and to provide the option for newcomer women to market and utilize these skills and gifts in this new society. First, we will review the project research questions.

Research Questions:

This study aimed to explore the following research questions:

1. How does skills mastery, peer support and the interventions and activities at the women's centre actually impact upon the sewing circle members lived experiences.
2. What are the goals and dreams (personal and career aspirations) of the sewing circle members?

3. What are the gifts (formal and non-formal skills, talents, abilities education and knowledge) of members?

With the above questions in mind, the interview guide (Appendix D) was developed. The following themes emerged from the interviews. Each of the themes will be discussed individually to provide an analysis of the study.

Emerging Themes

Theme One: Trauma & Loss

Without being asked directly, participants who had experienced unrest in their homelands shared details of trauma and loss, providing some information of what lead to their decision to migrate to Canada.

Questions about careers and education pre-arrival in Canada brought forth stories of civil unrest and the termination of education and careers. Participants described how their education ended when they left their homes with their families to take refuge in neighbouring countries. Some shared how family members were lost and /or killed during the pilgrimage to safer lands. The relevant literature in chapter three by Valtonen (2008) described some of the realities of seeking refuge from countries and seeking asylum from others. (Valtonen, 2008 explains, "Refugees have invariably had to leave close kin behind, often in situations of danger or distress. Most have suffered loss ether through deaths of relatives or as a result of violent uprooting" (p. 13).

One woman, as a nine year old, saw her father shot when their family was en route to Liberia from Sierra Leone. She described how this sadness has made her "creep like a baby" through life. She said her education ended then, at a Grade 4 level. She has been in Canada for seven years, and is in an English language skills program. Her dream is to become an

interpreter, because she loves languages and finds she is a quick learner of them. She speaks four languages now. This same woman went on to explain that she came from trauma and experienced it again in Canada. Before she was able to read or write in English, her husband left her and Child and Family Services (CFS) took away her children. She described the visit from Child and Family Services as horrific as she was yelled at to sign documents that she could not read or understand and her requests for an interpreter were ignored. She stated that many people who immigrate to Canada came from trauma and they came to Canada to be happy. She pointed out how hard it has been for her to grieve when English is not her first language and said that the church is her pillar of strength through difficult times (Prairie Women's Centre of Excellence, 2001). CFS continues to work to bridge a positive relationship with newcomer groups.

Another woman, from southern Sudan shared how at 11 years old she was left raising her two younger brothers. Her mother was away from their family home in Khartoum visiting relatives in the Nubu mountain region when the civil war broke out. Her father had to join the army. She quit school in Grade 5 to find work to care for her siblings and run their household. Today, she is proud of her fortitude and her ability to survive on her own through the war years, but explains how she still struggles to regain her stride with independence and a career in Canada, with this lack of formal school education. Anglican nurses took her under their wing in Khartoum and sent her for six months of training to be an auxiliary nurse. After the health care training she worked as an educator and health care provider for nine years in Sudan. This training and profession helped to embed her love for community service. She found her work, going into communities and finding people with leprosy helped demystify the illness by educating individuals and their families rewarding. With her past work experience, her dream is

to work as a community outreach worker in Winnipeg. She continues to work to increase her English language writing and reading levels.

Another woman explained how when she took refuge in the Gambia, fleeing Sierra Leone, she was not hired within her administrative field. She explained that her experience was that refugees were given “basic jobs” in countries of refuge. For 10 years she worked as a childcare provided a daycare and as a cleaner at a clinic in the refugee camp before coming to Canada.

Another participant who came to Canada as a refugee from Liberia explained that she does not know the whereabouts of two of her daughters. She has had people look for them, to no avail. She said she has asked the Red Cross for assistance to find them through the years, as well as people who live back at home. She said, at 65, that she believes the only thing left to do is for her to travel home to search for her daughters herself.

One other women, age 36, shares that she completed high school living in refuge in Guinea. Her family left Liberia in 1990 during the start of the civil war. She explained that after high school she was trained by the Centre for Victims and Trauma (CVT), an American NGO stationed in the Guinea refugee camp she lived in. This organization selected and trained her to be a psycho social agent and counsel people who lived in the camp. Through her work as a counselor she came to work with people from her tribal group who were the targets for the civil unrest. Her family had escaped early on with no incidences, as she counseled others, she described vicarious trauma she experiences as she bore witness to the traumatic experiences others described. She sought counseling through her organization to support her and continued in this line of work before coming to Canada. Once in Canada, she believed she would look into a social work program with her interest and experience as a counselor.

One woman said her husband had died in the war in Sudan. She lived in a refugee camp called Dadap on the border of Somalia and Kenya. Her schooling was interrupted at Grade 5 level when the war started.

Loss of education, training, opportunities, home, livelihood and family members are only some of the losses people, newcomers to Canada, experience. Through the interviews with the 12 participants, seven of the members had experienced war in their homelands. It was clear from their stories how the displacement of people through civil unrest caused a life-long ripple effect of trauma and loss that impacted individuals and their families causing compounding worry and stress (Congress & Kung, 2013). Many future plans were waylaid, including plans for education and careers, as members scrambled to survive, earn livelihoods and make a new life for themselves and their families. The women talk about how coming to the women's centre helped them to forget about their worries and helped them manage stress. Valtonen (2008) explained how loss and separation may have can include,

> multiple and compound losses after mass violence… [this could include] loss of loved ones, home, workplace, school, pets, emotional and physical safety, comfort in daily life, trust in the future, financial stability, sense of fairness, control, identity, meaning and hope`` (p. 135-136).

Putting the experiences with trauma and loss into perspective and understanding that the memories of war present themselves to the women in their day to day life, helps us understand the value the women's centre has to the women. It provides a place to share their thoughts and pain and/or a place to forget about their thoughts and their pain for a short while. Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence (2001) in a study they completed on post-traumatic stress disorders suggested the need for organizations serving newcomers to build in programs and services that build awareness of issue of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Theme Two: Issues with systems in Canada

The issues that concern participants with systems they encountered in Canada focus on laws, regulations and policies. Issues include self-employment, child and families services (CFS), access to post-secondary training and the lack of information on available resources, including training opportunities (Valtonen, 2008). With more information pre-arrival to Winnipeg, Canada and during settlement on arrival, many concerns and unfortunate situations that occurred for these participants may have been avoided. Issues arose from incorrect-information, lack of information and breakdowns in communication. The women needed to overcome many cultural barriers that were not limited to ethnicity.

Business Start-ups:

Ten of the twelve participants had businesses before arrival to Canada. Two members ran businesses while living in refugee camps. Overall, members were experienced buyers, travelling to other countries to purchase items in bulk, repackaging items; bookkeepers, working with debits and credits; inventory controllers, merchandising (product display); customer service representatives, marketing and selling; and human resource managers, recruiting, training and supervising staff. As the women shared their business start-up experiences I felt that most of the participants had been "pushed" into the reality of self-employment, as per Wilson, Kickul, Marlino, Barbosa & Griffiths (2007). Wilson et al. explained how women's entrepreneurial self-efficacy increases when they are either pulled or pushed into business ownership. Reasons for being pushed include "unemployment, underemployment, and unsatisfactory work conditions and prospects" and being pulled into self-employment include "the need for independence, self-actualization, financial benefits and a desire for a more comfortable balance between family and work responsibilities" (p. 399). Here in Canada, the different regulations for business start-up

were barriers impeding the women from using their entrepreneurial skills and experience for self-sufficiency and independence through self-employment. One participant explained that if she was back in the Gambia today, she would be operating her sewing shop with hired tailors.

Starting a business in Manitoba has several requirements depending on the type of business you are starting, and whether it is home based on not. According to the procedure for business startup on the Province of Manitoba, Entrepreneurship Manitoba website, the steps could include registering your business name, Provincial or Federal incorporation, obtaining a business operation number and GST account through Canada Revenue Agency and obtaining all licenses and permits required for your particular business (Entrepreneurship Manitoba, n.d). There are fees required for the various business start-up procedures. In a 2005 publication by the Canadian Women's Community Economic Development Council called "Developing the Policy Framework for Economic and Social Inclusion: Women-Centred CED in the 21st Century" the entrepreneurial gender gap was discussed. They said:

> The gender 'wage gap' [is] wider among entrepreneurs that paid employers: self-employed women earn 64% of average earnings of self-employed men (compared with 73% among employees). They also own fewer tangible assets. Earnings are particularly low for self-employed women with low formal education (http://site.ebrary.com.proxy2.lib.umanitoba.ca/lib/umanitoba/detail.action?docID=10418529)

It seems like navigating the steps to start a business in Manitoba can be daunting and costly for prospective entrepreneurs, even with previous business experience.

Child and Family Services (CFS):

Winnipeg Child and Family Services (CFS) operate child protection services in Manitoba. This branch of Family Services has a mandate to keep children safe (Winnipeg Child and Family Services, n.d.). One participant started the interview process by explaining that she

was in a lot of trauma, feeling very alone and isolated as CFS had removed her children from her home in 2010, in a manner that left her alarmed and confused. She said when the CFS worker and police came to her home, she did not speak or write or read in English – yet they yelled at her and forced her to take a pen and sign a form. She said she asked for an interpreter as she did not understand what they were saying. This participant said that though she loves Canada, "Canada making people cry. Let the government leave we to train our kids". She felt that CFS needs to understand that people come from trauma.

This participant did not receive any interpretation services to understand why the police and a Child and Family Services worker came to her home, and why her children were apprehended and what this meant (The General Child and Family Services Authority). Feeling forced to sign something that she did not understand was an oppressive action. The participant was pregnant at the time and her newborn baby went directly into care, as well. In October 2013, it was refreshing to hear that the General Child and Family Services Authority of Manitoba made recent changes to their delivery of protection services, specifically to address this type of situation with new Canadian cultural groups. Staff members from the General Child and Family Services Authority provided a presentation called "The New Canadian Awareness and Education Initiative" at the University of Manitoba's Strangers in New Homeland's Conference 2013. During this presentation it was advised that CFS has been engaging with cultural communities in an open forum in Winnipeg. They want to develop a process of communicating that they are in partnerships with families. They hope to help evolve the perception of CFS as an organization that takes children away from parents to an organization that will support children to remain at home with their parents. The focus is on strengthening families (The General Child and Family Services Authority, Strangers in New Homeland's Conference 2013).

Access to training:

Participants described some of the barriers they faced since arrival to Winnipeg. Two participants coming from English speaking countries were held back from entering college programs. Both participants were from countries where English was a national language and where they had attending English speaking high schools and university programs. Both participants had hoped to enter the ACCESS nursing program. They were told they had to complete an English language proficiency test during the application process. One participant explained that she was surprised by the suggestion that she needed to take the test; disappointed by the test results; and overcome with the suggestion by the college that she should upgrade her English language skills and return in six month for a re-test. They recommended that she could use a program, such as *English on Line,* to upgrade her English language skills. The participant was utilizing this language program at the time of the interview. I contacted the Red River College ACCESS Program to speak to someone about this matter. RRC told me that if the participant was from an English speaking country they should not have been asked to complete the English Language Exam. RRC said that the student may have checked off something on the application form incorrectly. The Red River College ACCESS program representative said the participant should contact her in this regard. I passed this information on to both participants.

Theme Three: Finding a sense of family in a new homeland

Participants said that being at the women's centre provided a sense of family for them. Participants found comfort in meeting other women with the similar experience as new Canadians with little family support in this country. The study results showed that half of women interviewed had no family members living in Winnipeg. Teasing each other, kibitzing around and laughing with each other at the centre helped women to leave their worries and stresses at

home. The study by Sohu & Roth (2008) discussed the impact that involvement and non involvement has on women's levels of depression. They found through their study that there was a positive relationship between involvement and reduced feelings of depression. Participants in general spoke about finding a sense of family as a member of the sewing circle. The women's centre was opened from approximately 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday.

In 2010, the centre received funding to run an Ethnic Cooking Program. This funding helped to purchase cooking equipment, buy food supplies for a daily lunch program and to offer a free monthly cultural cooking workshop. The daily lunch was usually prepared by the sewing instructor, who would start her day be prepping for the noon meal. The workshops were delivered by a different member each month and focused on favourite recipes from their homelands. One member spoke about the free meals and food at the centre, she explained:

> *Because of everyone, she eat there. Aminita she make food, a lot food. When you need tea, you need milk, you need juice, all of them there. I saw it with my eyes. Because I opened the fridge and I see everything.*

The end product was the *Multi-cultural Cook Book* produced from the recipes prepared over a one year period. Since that project ended, the women's centre has not received funding for a lunch program. The centre staff members bring food items from their homes and collect products left over from a local food bank. They cart Winnipeg Harvest produce and dry goods to the centre from a neighbourhood Church every two weeks. Members also bring food products from home to share. Some members stay away from the centre on days when they feel pressure to contribute to the meal, and have little to share. Staff members at the women's centre make sure there is food in the fridge and hot food ready at lunch hour for all to enjoy. When I asked if meals and food were important at the centre, I received similar comments like the following:

> *Very, very, very, very important. …so when they're coming here and they have something that will keep their brains going and it makes them have full assimilation of what they are being taught, it is very helpful…*

The availability of food at the centre had a positive impact on membership. Food was shared and no one went hungry. One member said "…empty backs can't stand". She explained how many women come to the program without having eaten a thing that day. This is one place they were sure they would be provided with some food and nourishment. Eating together had a very social, cultural and economical role in the lived experiences for participants in this study.

Theme Four: Goals for membership

"My first reason was to learn how to sew, and also to be part of the community."

The three distinct goals participants had for attending the sewing circle program were:

1) Economic
2) Social inclusion
3) Sewing skills mastery

Economic

Members explained that through the skill of sewing they saved money. Money saved from visiting tailors would be redistributed to other areas in their household budgets. Instead of paying for clothing to be hemmed or repaired they took this opportunity to could learn to do this for themselves and their families. Women saw that they would have access to sewing machines for personal clothing repairs. They understood this program was a learn to sew program and knew they would be taught how to design and produce custom fitted clothing for themselves, their children and other family members. Many members knew these new skills could provide the base for home business sewing clothing, repairing or alternating clothing for others. As reported in the literary review, many circle programs that started in the last century were primarily focused on saving money for members, raising money for social action or producing

goods to donate to others in need (Harris, 2009, Taylor, 2010). Other members coming with sewing skills felt an immediate connection to likeminded women who displayed a love for fabrics and creating clothing items. On my first visit to the women's centre in 2008, when I opened the doors to the centre and saw a row of sewing machines and felt an immediate connection to the space and to the women there. One participant said that this was her "social security", as she had a skill that she could use in to save money and also to make money in the future, as needed. This woman's level of empowerment has increased with the confidence that her sewing skills will save her money in the future (GlenMaye, 1999). This is a "hard" skill she has acquired that cannot be taking away. This woman had a tailor shop in Liberia, where she employed tailors. At that time she did not know how to sew herself.

Social Inclusion

The theme of inclusion, peer support and feeling a part of something in a new homeland emerged and helped to provide an understanding of the participants' experiences as members of the sewing circle program. There was a definite acknowledgement of a reduction of isolation from being with other women at this centre. Valtonen (2008) explained how "social exclusion means not sharing the same opportunities as they majority" (p. 88). Participants described how their membership and involvement with the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre has provided them with feelings of inclusion, feelings that they are a part of something and feelings of support from likeminded peers and staff at the centre (Putman, 1995). They described a safe family orientated space. Members explained how even walking through the doorway to the sewing room would result in peace of mind and feelings of wellbeing, as thoughts and worries were set aside for the time being. Being accepted by your peers increases feelings a self esteem according to Brown & Marshall (2006). The women spoke of how sewing circle members and

the staff members at the centre are mindful of your moods and needs, and are there to support you, engaging in a confidential conversation, teasing and joking or sharing good food.

Members talked about their goal to be around other women for social interaction. A few explained that it was important for them to volunteer somewhere. Some explained how they were so bored being at home "24/7". A few members said that being at home and worrying about family members overseas that you had not heard from would be worrisome. Getting out and coming to the centre seeing your friends and joking around would make you feel much, much better, helped to ease your mind. The women's centre was a place you could enter and leave some of your worries behind. Though, people would be watching you and were there to listen and problem solve with you if you were dealing with something or in crisis. Being involved with other people helps to lower mental health issues such as depression, as described in the study non-involved and involved women by Sahu & Rath (2003).

Social capital is a concept that is being talked about more and more in community development circles. Further research is appearing on this topic as its effects on micro, messo and macro levels of society are being explored (Putman, 1995). Social Capital is a concept that on a micro level places value on people's linkages to other people. Osborne, Sankey & Wilson (2007) explain that social capital often refers to the following functions:

- Bonding connections, which bring together people from a very similar background in close ties, such as family and close friends,
- bridging ties, which bring together people from rather similar backgrounds but more loosely, such as people with a shared interest (a hobby, a job, or living in the same neighbourhood),
- linking ties, which bring together people from dissimilar backgrounds (p. 3).

At the sewing circle members with similar life experiences are forming bonding connections with each other and also forming bridging ties together as they share their interest and hone skills in sewing. Some of the literature on the value of social networks compares your

network of support to your mental and physical health. Halpern D, (2005) explains that, "Large numbers of cross-sectional studies have reported this strong association between the size and quality of people's social networks and their health, with people who are less socially isolated and more involved in social and civic activities tending to have better health" (p. 75). The women in this report discussed repeatedly of how coming to the women's centre and being with peers makes them emotionally feel better than staying isolated in their homes alone, worrying and stressing about their life situations. It would have been interesting to have asked the participants to discuss any improvements of their physical health in relation to their attendance to this program. Working with peers, learning to master the skill of sewing, breaking bread and lots of laughing were some of the lived experiences of members of this program. When participants were asked how and if there life had changes from membership, members said:

> *Well, since I've been coming here at this centre the women's centre my life has changed so far because I don't worry like before, I don't* ***think*** *like before, because the centre help you to stop thinking and stop worrying yourself, beating yourself up, the centre stop you from doing that, because you have people that you do with everyday if you are coming in and from the look on your face they know that something is wrong and they will come and ask you – what's wrong with you – if you explain to them, they talk to you in a way that you yourself you forget the things you were thinking of and start to laugh and crack jokes, because you come they crack jokes they laugh and make you feel at home so that is why – that this centre is they running this centre for us to be able to come and feel at home – yup.*

Participants highlighted the support and confidentially of the staff members, the skills and educational aspects of the sewing, cooking, English language and conversation classes, and other services that were offered at the centre. The fact that the sewing training program operated free of charge was seen at a definite strength. Members said many of them were surprised that a program existed and taught you to sew, provided some food and lots of support free of charge.

One participant explained that the staff members were very supportive and how you could talk to them in confidence. They felt that the program and the centre staff were very

accommodating. People described how they received help completing forms, such as requests for information from Employment and Income Assistance, resumes and other documents. The centre staff members would advocate for members and attend court with them, help to intervene in family disputes or listen to family problems and help explain options. Bottom line was that the participants explained how the centre's staff members were very kind and made them feel at home.

Sewing Skills Mastery

All 12 participants had learnt how to hand sew from their mothers, other relatives and/or in school programs when they were children. The Learn-to-Sew program at the women's centre provided free training on learning to sew clothing without the use of patterns. Member who were interested in learning to sew, received an introduction to a sewing machine, practice time sewing straight lines on pieces of bond paper, then they would complete a small sewing project – a pin cushion. Members would then practice measuring items and take each other body measurements. They would learn how to transfer their measurements to the fabric using a tape measure making needed chalk markings. Seam allowance was added. Using the markings clothing pieces were cut out of the fabric. This level one, two and three training program included creating your own designs for women's or children clothing articles. Members would scan fabric books or fashion photos for some basic styles of clothing – then make changes to the design. The sewing instructor would work one-on-one with students as they learnt the process for design, measure, and transference of measurements on the fabric, cutting fabric, preparing fabric pieces to be sewn and the final sewing of the pattern pieces. During the advance level of the sewing training, people learnt about zippers, darts and other alterations. Members were given the support and

instruction to work to a skills mastery level. Previous graduates from this sewing program did go on to sewing related paid employment, sewing custom clothing for bridal parties.

The three main reasons members had for joining and attending this sewing circle program provide useful information for creating a space for women to break from isolated conditions. This program provided a place to learn a skill that will save money giving you more independence with budgeting. Through sewing skills mastery, graduates of the sewing program have started their own home based businesses. Valcour and Ladge (2008) spoke about the "protean career". This is a career path that shaped with your values and circumstances, with decisions in and out of your control. This career path does not always identify you – you identify it. Program participants explained that they purchased sewing machines so they could do more sewing at home for themselves and family members.

Perceived Self-Efficacy

Through the study we had hoped to understand if participants perceived self-efficacy had increased through their involvement in the sewing circle program. After the data collection process, it became clear that it would be difficult to determine what the exact aspects of this programming make specific areas of efficacy increase. I will use the following criteria to draw descriptions from participant's stories to discuss the increase of perceived self efficacy:

- self-sufficiency
- skill mastery
- economic empowerment
- career, training or entrepreneurial plans
- expanded social and resource networks are discussed

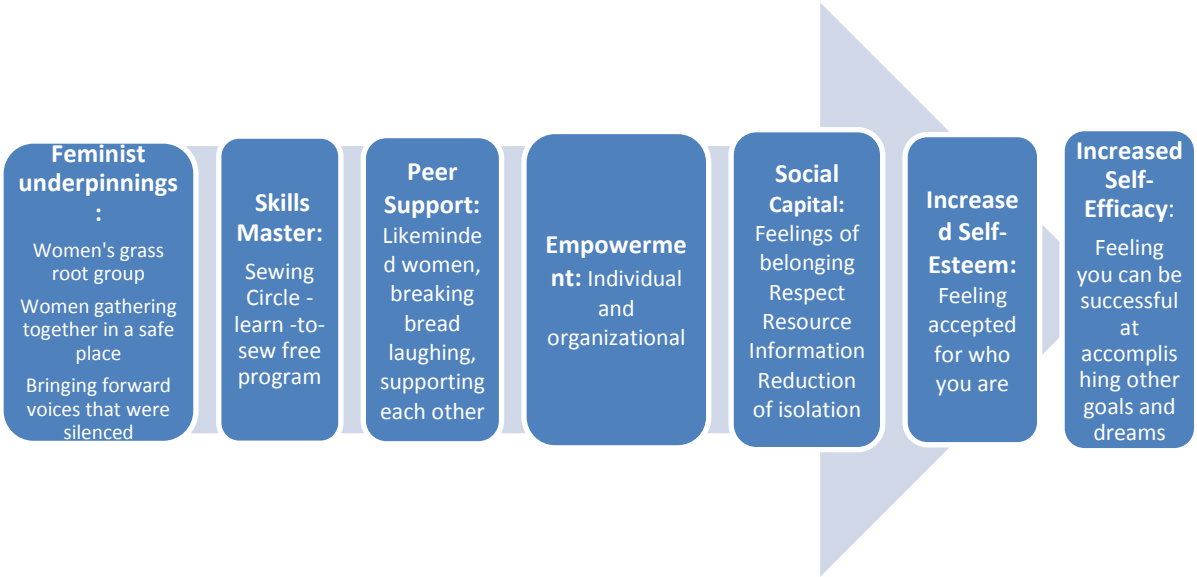
As will positive physiological transformations with feeling that are shared of:

- increased optimism
- self-worth

- increased self-confidence and
- belonging

Gaining skills to a mastery level in sewing was sought by members to increase independence, providing the ability to design, sew and repair/alter clothing for themselves and their families. As mentioned early, one woman stated that mastering the skill of sewing was "providing her with old age security", a skill she knew she would use to save money, and could also adapt as a skill to make money when required. Mastery experiences are only one element of what influences someone's perceived self-efficacy beliefs, according to Albert Bandura (1977, 1989, 1992, 1995 & 1997). Other influencing factors include positive feedback on your skills or ability from others, vicarious experiences with the task through "peer support or peer modeling" and your personal mental and emotional understanding and acknowledgment of your own good effort and overall abilities to do the task (Bandura, 1995). The study's theoretical framework below, supported the thought that increased self-efficacy would result from skills mastery, peer support, empowerment, increased social capital and self-esteem.

Theoretical Framework



The women described their experience being members of the sewing circle and how their lives have been affected by their involvement with the centre. Through their stories I was able to interpret the impact the sewing circle had to the participants' self-esteem and perceived self-efficacy. They spoke about peer support and the value of gathering with like-minded people. They discussed their reasons and goals being members. In chapter six, there are additional stories that describe the participants' goals and dreams. These stories will provide other examples of increased perceived self-efficacy experienced by participants.

Summary

The themes that emerged from the study helped to reinforce the value of this women's centre's sewing circle program as a place for women to gain a sense of belonging that helped to increase overall feelings of well-being. The theoretical framework above was realized. The data collected helped to explain that participants experienced increased self-efficacy.

In chapter six, the final chapter, I will provide a conclusion to the results of research with details on the gifts and the dreams of sewing circle members. I will provide some recommendations and implications of this project for the WCPWRC, other service providing organizations and for social work practice and policy. Suggestions for future research will be discussed. The validity and reliability of this study will be explained. A personal reflection of this study will follow the conclusion to this project.

Chapter Six

Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion

Introduction

In this final chapter, I will describe how I have come to understand the influence the sewing circle program has had on the lived experiences of the participants. This study has shown how participation in this sewing circle benefits newcomer women who are its members economically and socially, variables critical to integration. The study also has revealed how skill building programs, a safe and welcoming environment, access to resources and a network of peers will influence increased levels of perceived self-efficacy.

I will revisit the three main research questions to summarize the findings and review the problems and relevance of this study. The information the participants shared that describes their gifts and their dreams will be discussed. Recommendations with implications for the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre (WCPWRC), settlement service providing organizations, social work practice and government policy will be provided. This chapter will conclude with a personal reflection on the reasons why I pursued this research study.

Research Questions:

At the beginning of the research I set out to address these critical issues:

- the lack of documented stories that describe newcomer women's experiences,
- the abundance of skills, abilities and gifts these women hold, and to
- the need to identify these hidden or untapped skills and assist them to put them to productive use

I hoped that the results from this study might shed some light on these issues and help to contribute to the body of knowledge related to newcomer women's experiences in Canada. The

study objective was for the voices of the participants to be heard. To unearth answers to the above issues, I focused on the following research questions:

1) How does skills mastery, peer support and the activities at the women's centre actually impact upon the sewing circle members' lived experiences.

2) What are the gifts (formal and non-formal skills, talents, abilities education and knowledge) of members?

3) What are the goals and dreams (personal and career aspirations) of the sewing circle members?

It became evident that membership in the sewing circle program had been of benefit from the stories shared by the participants. This women's program has provided a place for women to go to on a daily basis and be with like-minded women for companionship and peer support. Membership in the sewing circle provided a place of belonging and a social network where members feel like a part of something.

Membership provided the opportunity for people to master the skill of sewing, increase confidence in their sewing ability and save money doing clothing alterations themselves instead of using tailors. Attending the sewing circle has helped some participants deal with day to day stresses and worries about past and current experiences with trauma and loss. Members would concentrate on the tasks at hand, kibitz with others, prepare and share meals and discuss issues that were on their minds with people who were empathetic and caring to their issues. In the sewing circle, women found support and a sense of family and belonging by taking on the roles of mothers, grandmothers, sisters and daughters. The participants' gifts and dreams that were identified during the interview process will be discussed in the following sections.

Sewing Circle Members Gifts (skills, abilities, interests)

Members were asked questions about education, training, careers and about interests and hobbies. The women discussed their past and present college, university and on the job training experiences. Skills and work experience came from various disciplines and included teaching skills, health care provision, esthetician and hair styling, embroidery and loom weaving, sales and customer service skills, entrepreneurship, cooking and baking, singing and dancing. Others' gifts were the abilities to communicate in a multitude of languages, farming and gardening, love of family and community and faith and spirituality (Bezt and Fitgerald, 1987).

Skills Pre-Arrival:

Here is a list that describes some of the skills and training participants possessed on arrival in Canada. This list was developed from the information that emerged from the interviews with participants. Participants arrived with many skills. They were not asked this question directly, unfortunately but rather, the following skills pre-migration came into light from this study's questions. Participants' skills include:

- University and college degrees in:
    - Marketing
    - Nursing
    - Nutritional Science
- Entrepreneurship skills as business owners and managers of:
    - Restaurant Owners
    - Clothing Design and Production Business
    - Importing – Exporting Business
    - Medical Office Owner
- Training and experience as:
    - Cooks
    - Customer Service
    - Retail Sales
    - Merchandising and Marketing
    - Business Planning

    - Clerical
    - Telemarketer
    - Hotel Clerk
    - Air Traffic Clerk
    - Kindergarten Teacher
    - Music and dance
    - Fitness
    - Tailors
    - Aesthetician: applying hennas, body waxing, hairstyling, braiding
    - Farmers
    - Market gardeners
    - Shoe makers/cobblers
    - Hand skills that include: sewing, embroidery, knitting, crochet, basket weaving, loom weaving
- Health care positions were:
    - Nurse
    - Nursing assistant
    - Community health care provided – leprosy education
    - Family planner
    - Dietary aid
    - Plastering technician
    - Health care aid
    - Crises counsellor
    - Child care worker
- Languages spoken by participants on arrival to Canada included:
    - English
    - French
    - Arabic
    - Nuba Moro,
    - Dinka
    - Creole
    - Mandi
    - Liberian-Pigeon
    - Somali, Swahili
    - Mandingo
    - Gbandi
    - Yoruba
    - Napoli
- Spirituality and sense of community included:
    - Caring for people; taking the time to talk with Elders
    - Love of family
    - Interest in community and all people

Taking stock of the gifts and skills participants possessed on arrival to Canada was interesting reminder of the value of a thorough assessment process (Betz & Fitgerald, 1987). If career counsellors are working with newcomers, the discussion on past areas of skills, education, abilities and interests would impact future employment or training. During this process it would be important to discuss relevant labour market trends/sectors and potential career trajectories. Under-employment and unemployment are factors for many of the members of the sewing circle at the WCPRWC. Valtonen (2008) suggests that, "a sign that integration is being attained would be evidence of newer citizens also being entrusted with valued roles in the society (p. 47)". Members were often job searching. Some members attended the sewing program on a casual basis as they worked part-time or attend training programs, such as English Language studies at the University of Winnipeg (one block away), or shift work during part of the day. Other women came for full days from Monday through Friday.

Discussing skills and abilities would also prove useful to help generate business start-up ideas for participants and for the women's resource centre. In the skill list above there would be many trajectories for paid employment and an extensive list of possibilities for entrepreneurship for these participants. Also, many of the current members at the women's centre have entrepreneurial experience. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter when we discuss recommendations for the WCPWRC utilizing the un-tapped skills and gifts of their members.

Dreams

The dreams of participants were of interest to me as well. Through my work as an employment facilitator, I had found that a starting place to understand someone's true career aspirations was to ask them to describe their "dream job" scenario. People did not need to be

practical; they would dream first and then the planning could start. This may result in a long term career path that includes academic upgrading, skills building through volunteer work or part-time employment, plus saving money to continue studies. When participants were asked; "What are some of the goals and dreams you have for yourself?" Most of their answers focused on career and training plans. In reviewing the experiences of recently-migrated refugees and immigrants to the United States in regard to their transition to careers and employment, Yakushko, Backhaus, Watson, Ngaruiya & Gonzalez (2008) used the framework of "social cognitive career theory" or SCCT developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994). The writers postulate that:

> SCCT highlights the role of a person's abilities, past performances, self-efficacy, and outcome expectancies in the development of his or her interests, educational and vocational choices, and educational and vocational persistence. Specifically, the theory highlights the importance of a person's self-efficacy, or judgments about their personal abilities in the development of their interest and subsequent educational and career goals. (p. 366).

It was apparent that the interventions at the women's centre, the peer support and advocacy from the staff and board members, helped to set in motion goals for future careers and training. As mentioned in chapter five, to understand increased levels of perceived self-efficacy, the following criteria were considered:

- expanded social and resource networks = increased social capital
- self-sufficiency
- skill mastery
- economic empowerment
- career, training or entrepreneurial plans

As will positive physiological transformations with feeling that are shared of:

- increased optimism
- new feelings of self-worth
- increased self-confidence and
- belonging

Many of the above aspects were apparent in the stories shared by participants. Their stories described how money was being reserved to be spent on other needed items, in place of on tailors to hem and mend their clothing. Some members were using their sewing skills to create articles of clothing for themselves and family members and others to start home businesses. Some participants were discovering new options for training or careers. Members discussed feelings of self-worth as they felt like a part of something and a strong sense of belonging. Burke, Bird, Clark, Rakowski, Guerra, Barker & Pasick (2009) discuss how self-efficacy would increase as one's social capital increases through building a support network and increasing access to resources and to information. Programs that help to build strong social networks are key factors in building and sustaining higher levels of perceived self-efficacy Burke et al explained. Here are some stories that describe training and career plans and some of the dreams and goals for the future participants shared. The dreams members shared led to the information exchange portion of the interview where various community resources were discussed. I enjoyed this part of the interview and took the time to listen intensively as participants discussed their future plans.

One member was looking into attending the University of Manitoba's Inner City Bachelor of Social Work program. We discussed the program together. In the pamphlet distributed by the University of Manitoba about the Inner City Social Work program, the program is described as "an off-campus program leads to a Bachelor of Social Work degree" (Inner City Social Work Program pamphlet, 2014). The application process and selection criteria are outlined. This program was designed to fill a gap for people who would not necessarily pursue university, with a low income, with no other family members having attended university, sole parenting and who are newer to Canada. Participants are selected based on their need (of

academic supports, small classrooms and peers) and readiness (volunteer experience, ready to attend a full-time college level program). Participants should have an inner-city or similar experience ((Inner City Social Work Program pamphlet, 2014). The program is designed to provide academic supports to students, but students must be ready to commit to this full-time program and demonstrate during the interview process that the field of social work is for them.

Another participant would like to become a language interpreter. She explained that when she first arrived in Canada, her children were taking into care by social services. She needed an interpreter to understand her rights. The Social Worker at the WCPWRC became her interpreter and advocated for her with family services and with the courts system. She has continued to increase her English Language skills and also speaks Sierra Leonean, Pigeon, Liberian, Mandingo and Swahili. She finds that she is gifted at picking up new languages. This woman's main goal is to get her children back from care. Then, she would like to translate languages to help others understand their rights.

Another study participant has decided to start a home based daycare centre. She had two pre-school aged children of her own and decided that it was inconvenient and costly to put her children in a child care facility when she worked shifts as a Health Care Assistant.

Many of the participants gained self-confidence in their sewing and clothing design abilities through this training and purchased domestic sewing machines. Presently, most members do the household mending and alterations, plus custom design and sew clothing for themselves and family members. A few members said they dream of starting a clothing design business. One member has her own home business. She imports traditional African dresses and garments and alternating them for her clients.

The diagram below (Fig. 9) describes some of the dreams and goals participants' shared.

Figure 7 - The Dreams of Sewing Circle Members

Members received information about community resources and referrals to outside agencies. Information and referrals were provided on issues that included housing, counselling, addictions, financial assistance, health care, childcare, English language skills training, career counselling, education and training opportunities, food bank, legal supports, resource information, resume writing, banking, personal identification and starting a business. One participant though, was clear to state the following about the women's centre:

> *All the women there are very, very strong. They are encouraging to new immigrants. Being around them gave me the encouragement to do more and more things.*

Working with newcomers when creating career and training plans, Yakushko, Backhaus, Watson, Ngaruiya & Gonzalez (2008) emphasize that "immigrants and refugees can be especially disappointed with occupation limitations set on them by xenophobic restrictions, such as the availability of only domestic services or dead-end jobs" (p. 396)

The next section of this study will discuss the implications from the findings and recommendations for the Women's centre.

Implications and Recommendations

Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre

Feedback on programs and services will be provided to the WCPWRC staff and board members. Resources, services and supports that were of value to participants will be discussed. I will describe the strengths and unique features of this drop-in sewing circle program which have benefitted its members. The range of specific skills and interests of past and present sewing circle members will be provided as well. This information may assist with the development of additional interventions; staffing for future programs; proposals for programs and services; and the start-up of a social enterprise at the centre.

Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre and organizations serving new Canadians:

The following section will describe some of the implications of the research findings. Recommendations for the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre, other organizations that provide programs and services for newcomer women, government and policy makers and for social work practice will be discussed.

Structured Intake Procedure

At the WCPWRC, new members are asked to complete a registration form that asks for contact information and information about countries of origin. This is kept on file at the centre. Through informal methods, as staff get to know the new member, they discover the member's current activities in Winnipeg and what types of activities they were doing before they migrated to Canada. As information unfolds, staff members provide information and referrals to community resources. I will suggest that preparing a more formal intake method to gather information on the new members' skills, abilities, interests, reasons for joining the center may prove to be of benefit to the new member and to the WCPWRC. Relevant community resource information could be provided more efficiently. Basic information about the new member could be added to a "skills bank" at the centre.

Skills Bank Development

The findings from this study identified untapped and underutilized skills, attributes and gifts of the 12 participants. Developing a "skills bank" at this centre may prove to be a useful project. The Spence Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation in Winnipeg has operated a skills bank service for several years and helps its members find odd jobs in the community, matching job requests with the skills members have. This organization also provides a tool lending services for members (Spence Neighbourhood, n.d.). A "skills bank" would provide a process for engaging in conversations with members about their past training, employment, abilities, interests and future career goals. The Spence Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation explains how community residents volunteer to share information about their skills, such as computer skills, gardening and carpentry. The data for a skills bank could be gathered through and interview process or through self-reporting. Interested members could use check lists or enter information

directly into a data base (that would be designed) on-site. Members update their skills profiles on a regular basis. The WCPWRC could start building a skill bank. The development of an in-house skills/asset identification process would be beneficial for members, as resumes could be prepared and a context for conversation around community resources, employment, and training and / or entrepreneurship trajectories could be discussed. This process could be of value for the resource centre as the identification of member's strengths, gifts, skills and interests could be utilized in the development and the provision of programs and services to the local community, by members hired to share their skills. With the details of people's skills on file, opportunities for members to provide workshop instruction on topics they have mastered could be arranged. With funding in place, honorariums or salaries could be provided to workshop facilitators. New facilitators could be provided with additional leadership and group facilitation skills to help build their capacity and confidence to step into these new roles as instructors and coaches. Dedicated staff and/or volunteers are required to manage a Skills Bank program.

A skills bank process would help to determine the potential for the current sewing circle members to share their gifts in the development and management of a profit generating social enterprise at the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre.

Social Enterprise / Entrepreneurial Training

The data showed that members have various entrepreneurial skills and collective years of relevant business experience. Ten of the twelve members had operated businesses. Below in Fig.

09 is an illustration of the types of businesses women operated pre-arrival to Canada.

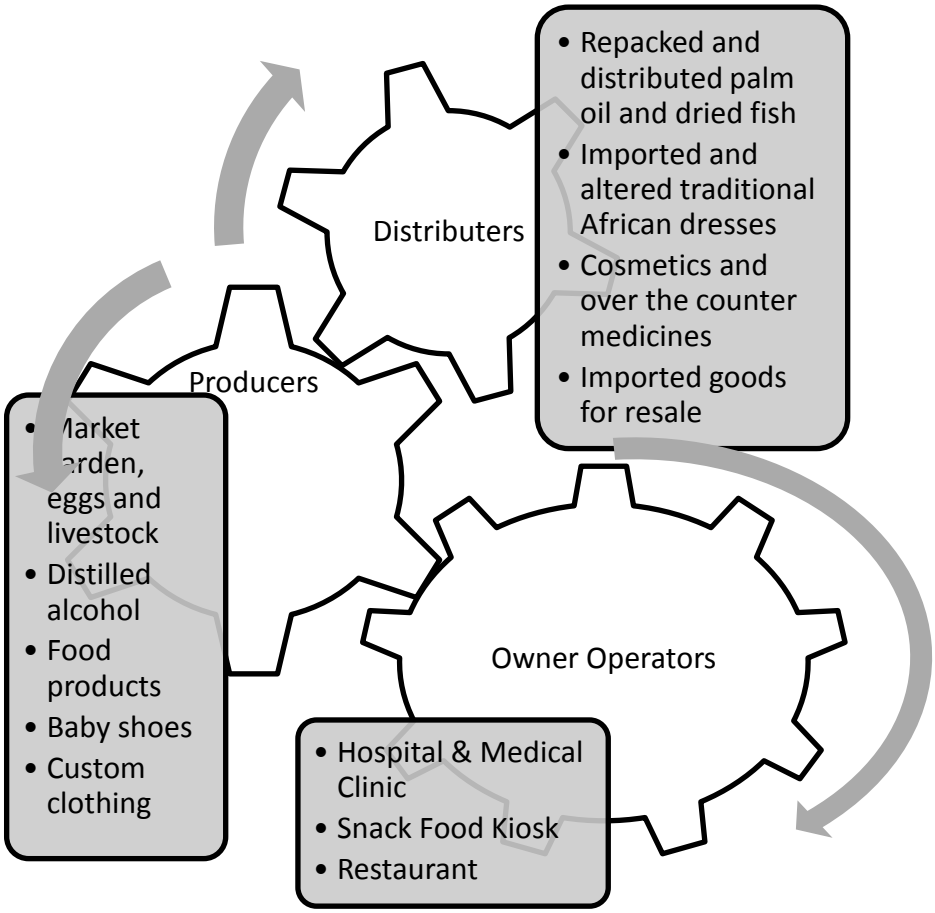


Figure 8 - Participant's Businesses

Businesses ranged from school yard kiosks selling candy and treats to tailor shops employing staff members. Entrepreneurial experiences included travelling to other countries to select and purchase items wholesale that would be in demand in their homelands, re-packaging and retailing the goods; producing items such as clothing, food products; and the administration and the training and hiring of staff members. Most of the participants describe how they were "pushed" into business start-ups as a way to supplement their income and support their families or due to displacement during refuge. Quarter, Mook & Armstrong (2009) suggest that businesses created to function as a social enterprises are often not self-supporting. These enterprises may require business plans that include in-kind volunteer support from members,

government, private funders for sustainability. Quarter & al. (2009) explain that many social enterprises in Canada are "focused on training participants to enter the paid workforce, others represent relative permanent employment for groups at risk" (p. 113). With this in mind, government support would be needed for start up and the development phases of a social enterprise project that builds entrepreneurial, business and specific skills for women. The existing wealth of entrepreneurial experience could help to build a social enterprise at this centre. Based on these study results, today's members of the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre could be polled and their collective business skills and experience could be document, with any gaps of key business skills noted.

Working with the current members, the potential for the management of a profit generating social enterprise at the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre could be explored and potentially pursued. This social enterprise project could serve the purpose of providing training and employment for women unemployed and/or under-employed, but utilizing the business skills and expertise of the existing members to develop the business for the women's centre. Community economic development staff members would likely be required to successfully coordinate this in-house member driven social enterprise initiative. A social enterprise in the Central Park community will to help sustain the women's centre, and provide additional training and skill mastery for members and the local community. This new business could be created in collaboration with the women users of the centre with the goals to:

1. Utilize the skill, abilities and talents of women members.
2. Design a for-profit business, social enterprise, workers co-op for the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre.
3. Provide jobs and rewarding work and pay at a "living wage" to women.
4. Fill a void in the Central Park community need for goods and employment.

5. Compete for government contracts, creating local partnerships to buy local products and services.
6. Increase career and entrepreneurship self-efficacy for women.
7. Serve as a step by step model to develop a social enterprise for other women's groups.

The to-be created business model could focus on government and corporate partnerships with women's sewing circles for the production and purchasing of the goods produced by paid centre members. Profits generated from such an enterprise could eventually provide the organization with added autonomy to develop other programs and services. This may mean the incorporation of a spin-off profit generating side for the not-for profit organization. The Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNET, n.d.) explained that "social enterprises generate income but also achieve social, cultural or environmental aims" (CCEDNET, n.d.). With this in-mind the project (product or service) could be selected to positively address the needs of the local residents. This type of training proposal could be developed as pre-training for newcomers who would then move into paid employment in related fields of work. The Manitoba Provincial Employment and Income Assistance (E&IA) program could be approached to support participants in employment pre-training programs of such nature.

Career Assessment

Collecting basic information for a skills bank can be the start of a career assessment with someone. It takes time to complete a thorough career assessment as the person who is career planning will need to self-reflect and take stock of their abilities and interests. The person will need make informed decisions about the types of supports they require to be successful in their career planning process. Will they require high school upgrading, college pre-requisites, apprenticeship or post-secondary training, work experience, funding, more career information,

employer information, childcare, transportation, tutoring, job finding supports and job retention skills? A Women's Training Community (ACTEW) produced a report for the Canadian Women's Foundation in 2007 that provided an environmental scan of training programs for women in Canada. The writers explain:

> women-specific training programs in particular, tend to view employment services on a continuum that describes an assessment process to determine what point on the continuum the women would be placed to receive supports and resources from pre-employment to employment retention (ACTEW, 2007, p. 19-20).

A thorough career assessment process helps to access current skills, abilities, experience, interest and values and will help to inform the decisions on the next steps required to reach career and training goals and find and maintain employment. The assessment process should be completed with a person who is aware of local and national labour market trends, un-employment issues, academic and training programs, labour market sectors, trades and apprenticeship programs and a solid knowledge of local employers. This could be an experienced Employment Facilitator, Academic Advisor, School Guidance Counselor, Employment Counselors and other people with this expertise. Taking stock of one's personal baggage is essential to working authentically in a counseling or supportive situation with vulnerable people. This is crucial, especially in a position of knowing or "gatekeeper" when providing programs and services to newcomers. Jackson & Esses (2000) conducted two studies to understand what approaches to helping immigrants were utilized. They looked at three models of helping "empowerment, direct assistance and group change" as per the Realistic Group Conflict Theory (p. 420). The authors explained the general public's belief that, "Empowering immigrants ensures equal opportunity for success, making immigrants more competitive" (p. 422). The

authors stated that "zero-sum beliefs" could affect the host population in their attitudinal view of the empowerment framework when working with Immigrants. They also found that,

> the pattern of results indicates that people high in social dominance orientation were less likely to endorse empowerment than those low in social dominance orientation because the former endorsed zero-sum beliefs – that gains for immigrants imply losses for host populations (p. 430).

It is essential to be aware of the power structures that exist when working with people in a helping role.

One participant believed that if she had completed a more thorough career assessment process on arrival to Canada, she would not likely be working a night shift as an Independent Living Attendant now. She believes she would be a Social Worker already. This participant works nights so she can attend university social work courses during the day. Her background experience and training was as a crises counselor in a refugee camp. When she came to Canada she was not aware of the Inner City Social Work program that is offered by the University of Manitoba. She would likely have qualified to attend this program if she had the relevant information. Instead, with the recommendations from someone, she entered a dental assistant program at a private college in Winnipeg. She completed the dental assistant training and only found part-time jobs in the industry. With a student loan to pay, she took a short training program and works night shifts as an Independent Living Attendant, supporting people with physical and mental challenges live independently in their private homes.

Yakushko, Backhaus, Watson, Ngaruiya & Gonzalez (2008) suggest that Career Counselors need to conduct a personal and career assessment with newcomers to be effective in a career planning role. These writers also stressed the need for counselors to develop competencies in working with immigrants and refugees. Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994), discuss the value of a well done personal and career assessment as a means to competently

identify a newcomer's strengths, skills and abilities, values, interests and goals. In my role as an employment facilitator working with individuals and groups, a career assessment and planning process would often include:

- Self-awareness exercises
  - Identify hard and soft skills
  - Identify personal and work values
  - Identify interests & personally traits
  - Strengths and weaknesses
  - Personal budget – to find out what salary level is desired
- Resume preparation
  - Work and education history
  - Skills, responsibilities and accomplishments
- Career exploration exercises
  - Review the labour market sectors
  - Acknowledge that you may not know what choices you have for employment and training selection
  - Refer to the Federal Governments National Occupational Classification (NOC) code list with over 30,000 different jobs titles to gain a concise understanding of the career choices you have. (http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/English/NOC/2011/AboutNOC.aspx)
- Career research activities
  - Informational interviews with employers
  - Detailed career research to understand job descriptions, skills and education required and other information for each career of interest
  - Where is training offered; what is the cost and length of training
- Labour market information
  - What are the high demand jobs and high demand skills
  - Who is hiring
  - Wages/ salaries
- Skill development and training plan
- Job shadowing and volunteer work experiences
- Employment opportunities
- Interview preparation
- Job retention

A career facilitator, job coach or employment counselor could assist people with the types of activities above. The career planner should be encouraged to identify 1) activities that they like to do and ones that they do not want to do anymore, 2) the details of their paid and

unpaid work experience, education and training, obtained to date, 3) all the skills they have obtained and the ones they would like to gain, 4) what they value in a career and in their personal home life and 5) career and training options is of interest them. The process of being self-aware, taking stock and looking inward at what is important to you will help develop a realistic career path that should motivate you.

Next, I will discuss program design elements that could be considered for the development of future programs for newcomer populations. Based on the findings from this study, five key elements of the sewing circles program's design became apparent.

Key Elements for Designing Integration programs

There were five key elements that this skill building program provided to members which seemed to add to the success of the sewing circle program for newcomers. These elements were of value as they addressed economic and social barriers, variables to successful integration. The five suggested elements for program design are outlined in figure 10 below.

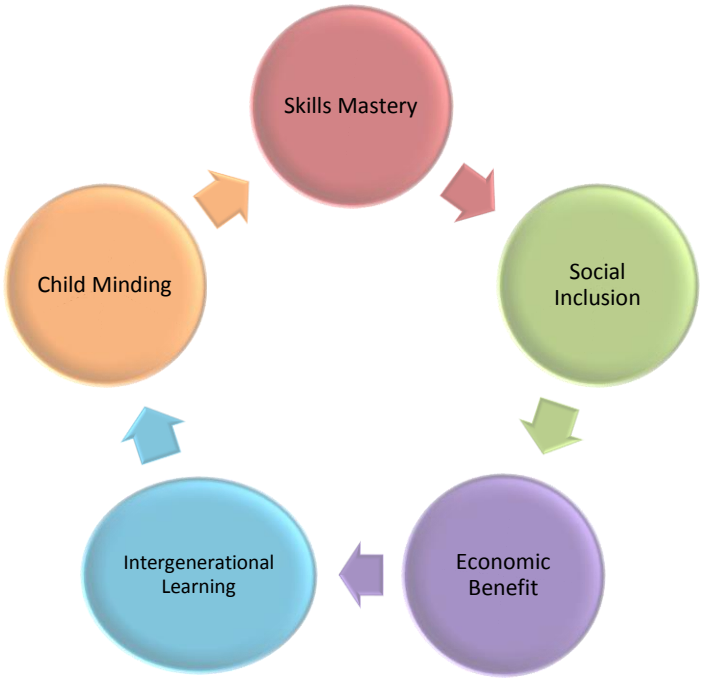


Figure 9 - Five Key Program Elements

The **Five Key Program Elements** are:

i. **Skills mastery:** The program offers a capacity building skill that is honed to a mastery level (Bandura 1995).

ii. **Social Inclusion:** The program is designed to be inclusive. Members expand their social networks as they connect with others with commonalities of experiences (Halpern, 2005). Extra activities/outings take group members off-site into the public sphere.

iii. **Economic benefit:** This training program is offered at no charge and the skill building training provides a method for members to start saving money as they learn a new skill and to also have the option to start making money as the skills were mastered. A free hot meal was provided daily.

iv. **Intergenerational Learning:** Project recruits intergenerational participants. Women from various age groups are recruited and accepted into the sewing circle, so they work together, sharing life lessons and information from their age cohorts. Eg. Participants in this sewing circle had little family members in Winnipeg and finding grandmother and daughter figures in this program were highly valued. The group members saw the benefit from learning across generations.

v. **Child minding:** The provision of child care is essential when planning program especially an inclusive program for women**.** The child minding program at WCPWRC was utilized by four of the women in this study.

The above features were part of this sewing circle program. As well, the drop-in format of this entry style program was definitely an asset which added to the sewing circle's uniqueness. The continuous in-take, one-on-one instruction with senior students mentor others gave staff the support needed to be flexible accepting new members. Members could attend part-time, full time or drop in once a week just to mingle and eat with others. All the staff members were newer Canadian which helped to provide the welcoming atmosphere and feelings of home to members who were immigrants and refugees. In the 2011 publication of Manitoba Women's Health Strategy, the government supports the continued "development of programs and places that reduce isolation especially for new immigrant women, older women, women with disabilities ..." (p. 8). This program currently provides this safe place for newcomer women and older women. This women's centre in the heart of the inner city focused on the integration of community women and newcomer women. The drop-in format and no-cost programming helped to achieve this end result.

Policy Recommendations

Throughout this study, evidence emerged to suggest that new policies are needed to increase access to employment opportunities, education and training and make self-employment real options for newcomers. As a result of this study's findings, here are a few policy recommendations.

1. **Skilled Employment Counselors be available at places where local residents/newcomers frequent or live, to provide personal career assessments, career exploration, career and training planning, work experience placements and job finding activities. This could be an outreach service.**

- In Winnipeg, Community Resource Centres, such as the Blake Garden Family Resource Centre and the Elwick Village and Resource Centre have a Career Counselor from the local Centre for Aboriginal Human Resources Develop Canada (CAHRDC) come on-site once a week to provide one-on-one career assessment/counseling support to local residents. This is a drop-in service and fills a gap, as these organizations wanted to provide this service to their local residents. A person with experience /training as a Job Coach, Career Counselor or and Employment Facilitator could fill this gap in services at the WCPWRC and other organizations whose members could benefit from this service. A person could be hired to come on-site once a week for one-on-one appointments, groups or drop-in. Someone in this role could also assist women to secure job shadowing or work experience placements with organizations and businesses, in areas related to their training. This person could also assist as a liaison regarding job searching and engage in work negotiations with potential employers. Job shadowing usually consists of spending a half day or a full day or more shadowing someone in a job of interest to you. The person would be followed around as they carried out their daily job functions. Work experience placements are longer in length. They are usually planned out with the employer and participant with an agreed upon time frame, set hours per day or week and set work functions or goals that will be reached by the end of the placement period. There are commitments that the work placement employer, Career Counselor and participant make to this arrangement / contract, so the placement experience is positive for all involved. Job shadowing and work placements provide an excellent opportunity for the participant to test

out different work environments before or after completing a skills specific training program and also for the employer to test out a potential new employee. The opportunity to spend even a few hours during a job shadowing placement with an employee in a career area of interest can be life changing. An organization does not need to employ a full-time Career Counselor. They could partner with a local organization that has this skilled staff complement so that this human resource function is available locally. This could be an efficient and effective way to assist a participant with their training and employment goals. The career counselor could also refer members to training initiatives offered at not for profit organizations that build skills for work in the community, such as counseling skills and maternity supports.

2. **Computer Skills Instructors be made available at places where local residents/newcomers frequent, to provide on-site computer skills workshops to members. A Travelling Computer Training Classroom could be developed.**
    - Provide computer skills instructors for resource centre's members. Build the capacity of members to a 21st century computer technology standard. On-site computer instruction for older adults for connecting with family is needed. Focus of training could start with applications like Facebook, Skype, e-mail, photography, scanning and printing. Four participants in this study had no experience using a computer and said they would love to learn as they wanted to connect with family members overseas. They said that though there were computers at the centre to use and staff willing to teach them – they thought they may break something. The computers on-site for members were old ones that had

been donated and were not new enough to load the Skype software. Age and Opportunity Centers in Winnipeg provide computer training for older adults. I referred two participants to the free classes.

3. **Free computers and/or computer upgrades for public access to resource centres, cultural centres and community centres**.
    - City libraries provide free computer access for residents. Resource centres often purchase their own computers for this purpose as well, though they get out-dated quickly as new software programs are created. It would be important to provide a new computer and technical resources to community clubs and resource centers for residents to access. Accessing computers will provide local residents with a 21st century method for connecting with family, job search, applying for employment, gathering community resource information, and for computer skills training.
4. **Additional English Language Training for Specific Purposes programs to align with high demand trades, technical and health care jobs in Manitoba.**
    - English language limitations impeded some participants from attaining their career goals. Red River College (RRC) has offered English language training for specific purposes (ESP) for years. Currently they offer ESP for Apprenticeship and Trades, Health Care Aids, Business, Nursing, Professional and Technical purposes (RRC, Language Training Centre, n.d.). There could be a benefit in development additional English Language training for specific high demand jobs where the vocabulary needed in the specific job, work sector or workplace is provided as well as the skills training. Finding effective ways to link the

employment needs of newcomers with the staffing needs of employers and sectors of the labour market would be good for all Manitobans. Career specific English language training programs could help fast track people into short term skills and English language training and then directly to employment.

5. **Introduction to the Trades programming for women.**
    - Accessible training programs for selected high labour demand trades occupations for participants with lower English Language benchmark levels. For this study, I had asked participants if they had experience using hand or power tools. Of the twelve participants, four said they were confident using hand tools and felt they could repair almost anything. They described fixing toasters, sewing machines and their toilets. Reintroduce the Introductions to the Trades training program specifically for women (this program ran in 1980s at Red River College). Provide women mentors to market this program in communities and through the school system. Recreate the trades women's speaker's bureau that Manitoba Women in Trades and Technology coordinated, providing female trade people to present information about jobs in the trades and technology sectors to job searching groups and schools. With the shortage of skills trade people, newcomer women should be marketed directly for these positions.
6. **Develop strategies that support food security initiatives at settlement serving organizations and community resource centres.**
    - The provision of food items for nutritious meals and snacks to participants for community programming is important. Partnerships with food banks or local grocery stores and perhaps securing a food budget from funders is often essential

for a program that is focused on women and families who are low wage earners or live in poverty. At the WCPWRC, when funding for an Ethic Cooking program that provided a daily lunch meal expired, members took turns bringing in food in to share. The staff noticed that some participants stayed away when it was their presumed turn to bring food in. Study participants explained that having free food available was "very, very important!" One participant said that providing meals at the centre, "helps to give hope that at least when they come to the centre they have something to eat and they don't have to worry about that part of their day". In a recent study called "Exploring Food and Healthy Eating: A Study of Newcomers in Winnipeg's North End", completed by Amy Goulet for Food Matters Manitoba (2015), she describes the challenges many newcomers have with issues of food "insecurity". Goulet explains how "newcomers on arrival "are typically healthier than the average Canadian – this is referred to as the 'Healthy Immigrant Effect'", she explains (p. 3). Health issues often occur with changes in food consumption as Western food "high in fat, sugar and salt" becomes a part of their diet (Goulet, 2015). Working with newcomer populations, programs that target food security issues, such as discussions on nutrition, new foods, label reading, Canadian grocery shopping experience, gardening and hand on cooking experiences are valued.

7. **Support programs that promote an awareness of issues for those who have experienced trauma and loss, such as trauma awareness programs in the workplace.**
    - Organizations and employers would benefit from added awareness of issues around trauma and loss and its effect of a person, family and ethic community.

The topic of trauma and loss came through in this study. White (2009) noted that mental health issues, such as depression for newcomers, have a direct relationship to the level of societal involvement a person has and vice – versa. White mentioned a study she conducted that looked at ways to provide better mental health care services and supports to newcomers in Saskatchewan. Recommendations included "for mental health service providers to go to the sites frequented by immigrant and refugee women… places were newcomers have formed new 'family' relationships" (p. 101). A study completed by Sahu & Rath in 2003 also resulted in evidence to show involvement through peer support and social networks had a reverse relationship to depression. Participant told their stories of seeking refuge, losing homes and family members and also careers and incomes as they transitioned to their current lives in Canada. The study by the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence entitled *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Lived Experience of Immigrant, Refugee and Visible Minority Women*, completed in 2001, made a policy recommendation:

> That those agencies and organizations serving the needs of immigrant and refugee women continue to develop and explore development workshops and educational programs that would build and enhance knowledge and awareness of the issue of post-traumatic stress disorder as it affects immigrant and refugee women. (p. iv)

These writers explain that when counseling is provided for newcomers, the use of interpreters is essential, so people can express their grief in the preferred language.

8. **Support community organizations in the implementation of programming that models the six program elements recommended by this study's results (fig. 11) when addressing newcomer women's economic and social needs.**

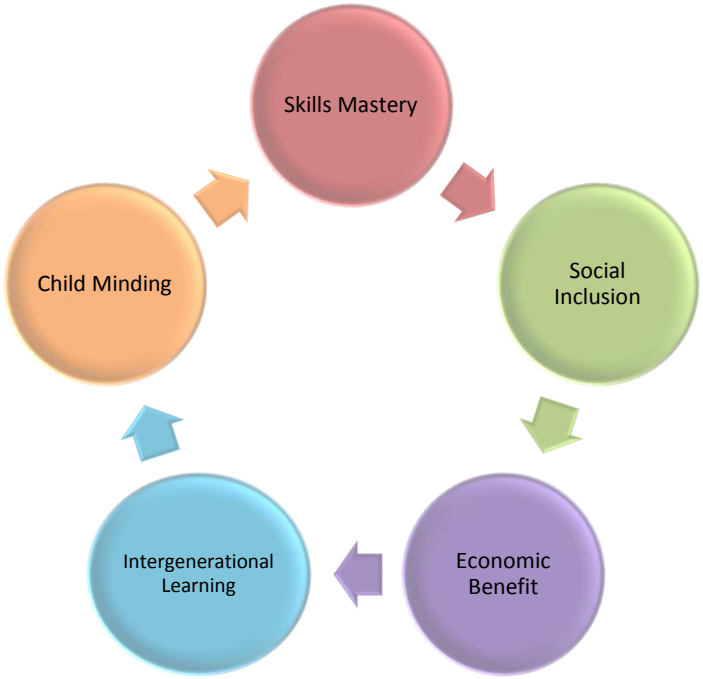


Figure 10 - Five Key Elements for Program Design

- The study revealed the positive impact of an intergenerational classroom. The inclusion of women of all ages had re-created a familiar environment in this host society. Learning practical hands-on skills to a mastery level was an appreciated asset. An accessible program that has childcare supports was key.
- The talents of community residents could be utilized to facilitate workshops to share many old world hand skills before they become lost to newer generations. Skills such as crochet, knitting, quilting, hat making and culturally based traditional arts and construction methods, to rekindle these skills areas. Community member's skills and gifts could be collected through the use of a

skills bank process, discussed earlier in this chapter. Wages and honorariums should be provided to the facilitators.

Figure 11 - Embroiders sheets: Photo J.W. (2013)

There would be benefit to offer more basic life skills training for adults in areas such as: sewing (mending, hemming and sewing), basic home renovations (painting, plumbing and carpentry) and food security (gardening, harvesting, cooking, preserving and freezing) locally. Many people have not had the opportunity to learn these practical skills growing up in their households or in school. Acquiring new hard skills could provide the economic option to save money making repairs or producing items themselves or to earn money as they gain skills mastery and provide products or services for others.

Further recommendations for Social Work Practice and Government Policy Makers

Social work practice is focused on the principle of "self-determination" (Freedberg, 1989). Working with this directive, information is provided so clients make their own informed decisions on what they believe is best for them at the time. Social work practice is committed to breaking down societal, economic and political barriers and addressing discrimination in its various forms (CASW Code of Ethic 2005). Through the personal interviews, barriers to integration were highlighted that were caused by matters such as, the lack of English language skills acquisition and/or literacy issues, limited Canadian work experience, credentials that were not recognized, need for Canadian standard education, lack of family support, involvement with Child and Family Services and many issues related to living in poverty. The Canadian Women's Economic Council in a discussion paper released in 2011 entitled "*Moving Forward: Advancing the Economic Security of Immigrant Women in Canada*" listed barriers to newcomer women's successful economic inclusion. These barriers include "precarious employment and/or low income, lack of affordable and accessible childcare, lack of affordable and adequate housing, language skills, lack of credential recognition and lack of community supports" (p. 3). Here are some recommendations of ways to support the integration of new Canadians by addressing employment and training barriers.

Access to English Language Skills programs

With a recent change of funding from the Federal Government to the Provinces for settlement services, a decision was made by many organizations to provide free English Language (EAL) classes only to people with permanent residents' classification (Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre (WELARC), n.d.). There are fewer free

English Language programs geared to Canadian Citizens who still require English language skills. One participant said she that does not qualify for any additional language classes, though her English Language Benchmarks levels are all around 3s for English Language comprehension, reading, writing and verbal communication. This participant is unemployed at present, and believes that she will need to increase her English language skills before she finds work, such as working in health care or with a program helping women. Possible recommendations to address the need for more inclusive programming for people with lower English Language skills abilities, such as programs where English for specific purposes have been discussed above.

English Language barriers stood in the way for educated, skilled and experienced newcomers to find rewarding work in Canada. The following new jobs could be created to help recognize the skills of newcomers and fill the need for employees in high demand job areas. The following recommendations address issues with systems and include suggestions for new positions of employment.

Community Liaisons/Worker:

Community Support Liaisons/ Worker positions could be established to assist Social Workers, E&IA coordinators and neighbourhood settlement workers. This new position would not have the same requirements of English Language level proficiencies. They would look for people who have settled into the community and could provide information and support with connections to social networks for people who have recently migrated. These positions would take away some of the current functions of the above listed professionals. Community Support Liaisons would provide outreach and home visits to people new to Canada and also provide information and support to people who have fewer settlement/ integration issues, but could

remain socially excluded due to reasons such as: unemployment, physical and mental health, disability issues, poverty and other issues. For this research study, I interviewed four participants in their homes. The need for outreach workers was underscored during the home visits. During three of the home interviews/ meetings, family members and/or friends were present. I was asked to look at resumes, talk about training opportunities, English Language class options and available child care spaces. I provide information and referrals to community organizations and offered to send additional information. I feel that there may be gaps in what and how community resource information is being shared with the public. Valtonen explains "Information and insight into a new community and society are powerful tools for enabling individuals to develop short and long-term life strategies with competence" (p. 15). Also, not everyone uses or has home access to computers for on-line resource information. Providing an outreach community information service and referral through home visits or through a mobile community resource unit may help remedy this information gap.

For example, one of the participants has lived in Winnipeg for seven years, at the time of the study, and speaks several languages. She wants to be a community worker or a health care aide, but she does not have the English language skills or the Manitoba Grade 10 level of education required for most home care worker positions. She would be a strong candidate for this community worker role, assisting families settling into Winnipeg to navigate the systems.

WRHA Home Care Partners:

A new position could be created at Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) for their (WRHA) Home Care program. This new position could be called something like a "Home Care Partners". This person would not require the English Language Benchmarks or the Manitoba equivalent Grade 10 that are currently required to apply for Home Care Assistant

positions with WRHA in Manitoba. This position would be of interest to people who have some personal care giving experience or training from their home countries. The main function would be to have an interest in caring for other people and to assist the main homecare worker, for example, operating a hoist, wheel chairs, and the other equipment used in home care situation. Often two home care attendants are sent to a home to use lifting systems and prepare clients to use the commode. They may help clients dress and undress in the morning or at night, help with light clean-up, laundry and meal prep or serving. I would propose that the new positions "Home Care Partner" would only attend as a 2nd person when two aids are required to attend a client's home. All of the written reports could be completed by the Home Care or Health Care Aid position at the site. This 2nd position would not be required to necessarily prepare written reports as they would not be required to have a specific level of English language skills or a minimum Manitoba School Grade level. It would be based on someone's ability to do the specific job functions for this new position. Many of the participants in this study had experience providing care for a family member. This new position would provide an option for employment and a starting place for newcomers interested in health care while they build additional skills, including English Language skills, to pursue other areas of training and employment or re-establish health care credentials.

Those were some new positions that came to light from talks with participants. The value of this sewing circle program at WCPWRC has been mentioned throughout this report. From the interviews, the participants' comments helped to affirm increased perceived efficacy that were due to the influence of the peer support, skills mastering, feelings of belonging and increased wellbeing members experiences at this women's centre. The next section will acknowledge the services and supports that were of value to increasing self-efficacy for participants.

Services and supports of value at the WCPWRC:

The women shared the importance of the sewing circle program and the WCPWRC. This centre provided a safe place where women gathered for a variety of reasons. It had the right environment that included peers of all ages, food and friendly staff members with whom they could relate. The women appreciated that the program had skill building activities where one could learn ways to save and earn money. The English Language classes that had been offered on-site at one time were missed. The child minding, cooking classes and plentiful information about community resources and advocacy supports were appreciated. Here is a recap of what the participants experienced that lead to their feelings of a sense of family, expanded social network, raised self-esteem, feelings of empowerment and increased self-efficacy. Their experiences included:

- Feeling accepted and included
- Feeling equal with staff members and board members
- Feeling respected for what they bring to the centre
- Feeling cared for and missed when they are not there
- Feeling listened to and trusted
- Feeling included
- Finding a place to go to not be alone all the time.
- Enjoying joking around with members
- Enjoying sharing stories and food
- Being able to take down masks and be authentic
- Receiving support and information
- Saving and earning money
- Using the money that use save for family priorities
- Witnessing how language is not a barrier to learning to sew and being a part of this program
- Participating in a program that was free and learning skills to a mastery level
- Learning new techniques and being creative
- Having access to sewing machines, fabric and notions, free of charge
- Learning to busy one’s mind and concentrate – forgetting about worries and stress for a while

This was a place where people could come for free and learn from each other and exchange ideas and grow. This research study has helped me to understand the participants lived experiences as members of this sewing circle. Next, I will provide some related areas to consider for future research.

Future Research

Based on the findings unearthed from this study, the following are areas for future research.

Explore settlement services programs:

Research the settlement/integration services currently provided to newcomers across Canada. Discover how newer Canadians describe the programs and services that have been of particular benefit to their integration into their new community and Canadian society.

Women's Social Enterprises:

Explore the various structures in place that promote or support social enterprise businesses at women's organizations in Canada and in other countries. Prepare a resource book with the results for organizations to use. Focus would be to identify if these centres are providing services or products their local community requires. I would like to understand if the business is creating local jobs for women and providing rewarding work and living wages. I would want to identify other preferred practices developed through the creation of these businesses at women's organizations.

A day in the life of a woman: Photo-Interviewing:

I am interested in conducting a visual research project that includes photography. Women take photographs to help tell stories about their day to day life. The process called "Photo Novella" or "Photo-Voice" would provide digital stories. Burke & Evans (2011) explain that, "Photo novella is presented as an effective and creative data collection method that has the

ability to engage participants in the process of critical thinking and reflection" (p. 164). Information could be collected from around the world to help to inform research on the study of "*One day in the life of a woman*". Women would be provided with cameras to take photographs throughout their day of normal activities. The pictures would be reviewed with the individual woman during an interview process to help the researcher understand what the priorities in their lives are, what is preoccupying their time, what relaxing, work or fun look like. Other questions could be asked about the way their lives have unfolded, any lessons or advice that they would like to pass on to other people around the world.

Conclusion

Women, who come to Canada with refugee status or as immigrants choosing to migrate, may have many skills and abilities that could be underutilized in this country. It would be of benefit to take the opportunity to explore these gifts they bring to Canada when the skills are still fresh (Valtonen, 2008). Study participants described how their involvement with this sewing circle program had affected their lives, including providing a sense of family, feelings of belonging, skills to be more self-sufficient and opportunities to save money as well as a break from isolation, worry and stress. Through the skill building program, the safe and welcoming environment with access to resources and a network of peers it was determined that membership with this program influenced increased levels of perceived self-efficacy. Members found a community of likeminded women and adopted roles of mothers, grandmothers, friends and daughters. They appreciated the fact that the program was provided to all women for free and how they shared food and laughter together. Participants said they felt like a part of something, a network, with access to information about community resources, advocacy with the support provided by staff members at the women's centre. It is hoped that the findings from this study

will provide valuable information for developing additional programs, services and supports to women who are newcomers to Winnipeg and Canada. This study proves the theories that skills mastery is empowering and learning by doing can lead the way to other successes by motivating individuals and increasing feelings of perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995). Feelings of inclusion, peer support with access to resource information also provided the platform for members to move forward. Participation in this sewing circle was of benefit to members economically and socially, variables critical to integration.

Through this research study, the voices of the 12 women participants were heard. The information they shared about their life experiences, concerns and opinions will go forward to develop programs, services and policy recommendations that could effect change, making the quality of life better for women who have come to Canada with this in mind.

On a Personal Note

When I prepared do to this research I stated the reasons I believed women were members of this sewing circle program (Fig. 1). The reasons I noted were all correct, but for one, which was “Time away from family and other demands”. None of the participants identified this as a reason for membership. Most participants longed for family and went to the centre to fill the void of not having family close to them. This had been one of my reasons for volunteering through the years, but it did not hold true for the participants.

I selected this study topic for a few reasons. The first reason was my desire to add to what I saw as the lack of documented stories that describe women’s day to day life experiences. The second reason was related to the work I do as an employment facilitator. I would find myself enthralled with the abundance of skills, abilities and gifts that women, newcomers to Canada, bring to the table, gifts which would often remain hidden and under-utilized due to labour market

issues, English language issues, lack of childcare, credentials not being accepted, to name a few of the reasons. The third reason was that I know that sewing skills and other skills that women predominately utilize are often undervalued in comparison to skills that men display. Many of the jobs that women do are undervalued and are not reflected in the economy. Providing care for children and family members, managing households and various volunteer commitments, often go unrecognized. In a publication edited by Genevieve Vaughan (2007) called *Women and the Gift Economy*, Maria Mies (1998) is quoted calling this imbalance, "the Iceberg Economy. The part that the world sees and the economists study is above the water. The remaining 90 percent of the economy, contributed largely by women and subsistence communities, is invisible" (p. 273). I wanted to take the opportunity to work with women who had immigrated to Canada, to understand their lived experiences and identify and list their skills. Reflecting, discussing, sharing and documenting your strengths, abilities, skills and experiences are powerful processes that help to reinforce your accomplishments and legitimize your skills, abilities and capabilities. I believe that it is important to engage in everyday conversations where you can exchange information about your gifts and your dreams with others. This can be life changing.

REFERENCES

A Women's Training Community (ACTEW) (2007). Environmental Scan of Employment and Training Services for Women in Canada report submitted to the Canadian Women's Foundation.

Agier, M. (2008) On the Margins of the World: The Refugee Experience Today. Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control. New York: W.H. Freeman and Company.

Bandura, A. (1989). Human Agency in Social Cognitive Theory. American Psychologist, 44, 1175-1184.

Bandura, A. (1992). Exercise of Personal Agency Through the Self-Efficacy Mechanism. In R. Schwartzer (Ed.), Self-Efficacy: Thought Control of Action (p. 3-38). Washington, D.C.: Hemisphere

Bandura, A. (1995). Sefl-Efficacy in changing societies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Bandura, A. (1997). Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control. New York: W.H. Freeman and Company.

Belenky, M., Clinchy, B, Goldberger, N. & Tarule, J. (1997). Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind. New Yortk, NY.: Basic Books.

Bezt, N. (2000). Self-Efficacy Theory as a basis for Career Assessment, Journal of Career Assessment, Volume 8, Issue 3, page 205-222.

Bezt, N. & Fitgerald, L. (1987). The Career Psychology of Women. Orlando, Florida: Academic Press Inc.

Brown, J. & Marshall, M. (2006). The Three Faces of Self-Esteem in Self-Esteem Issues and Answers: A Sourcebook of Current Perspectives. Edited by Michael H. Kernis Psychology Press: New York

Burke, D. & Evan, J. (2011). Embracing the Creative: The Role of Photo Novella in Qualitative Nursing Research. Retrieved from: https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/IJQM/article/view/10537/8318

Burke, N., Bird, J., Clark, M., Rakowski, W., Guerra, C., Barker, J., & Pasick, R. (Oct. 2009). Social and Cultural Meanings of Self-Efficacy. Health Education & Behavior, Vol. 36 (Suppl. 1): 111S-128S

Canadian Association of Social Workers (2005). Guideline for Ethical Practices. Retrieved from: http://caswacts.ca/sites/default/files/attachements/CASW_Guidelines%20for%20Ethica%20Practie.pdf

Canadian Association of Social Workers. Code of Ethics. Retrieved from: http://caswacts.ca/sites/default/files/attachements/CASW_Code%20of%20Ethics.pdf

Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (2003) Fact Sheet No. 5, retrieved from: http://www.criawicref.ca/sites/criaw/files/Immigrant%20%26%20Refugee%20Women%20Factsheet.pdf

Canadian Women's Community Economic Development Council (2005). Developing the Policy Framework for Economic and Social Inclusion: Women-Centred CED in the 21st Century. From: (http://site.ebrary.com.proxy2.lib.umanitoba.ca/lib/umanitoba/detail.action?docID=1041529)

CCEDNET. Creating Opportunities – Optimizing Possibilities. PowerPoint Presentation. Retrieved from:http://ccednetrcdec.ca/sites/ccednetrcdec.ca/files/creatingopportunities optimizing_possibilities.pdf

Champagne, L. (2005). Inner-City Co-ops, crafted by Women. Northern Star Workers Coop. Retrieved from: http://communityrenewal.ca/sites/all/files/resource/MW160357.pdf

Christiansen-Ruffman, L. (2007) Women's Community Gifting- A feminist key to an Alternative Paradigm, *Women and the Gift Economy- a radically different worldview is possible.* Vaughan, G. (ed). Inanna Publications and Education Inc.: Toronto, Canada

Chui, Y., Ortiz, L. & Wolfe, R. (2009). Beyond Settlement: Strengthening Immigrant Families, Communities and Canadian Society through Cultural Brokering. In Carter, T., Derwing, T., Ogilvie, L., & Wotherspoon, T. (Eds.), Our Diverse Cities, Prairie Region 6 (4), Ottawa: Metropolis

Chung, I. (2013). Practice with Asian immigrant families and intergenerational issues. In Congress, E. & Gonzalez, M. (2013) (Eds) Multicultural Perspectives in social work practice with families (3rd edition). Springer Publishing Company: New York

Congress E.P. & Kung W.W. (2013). Using the Culturagram to Assess and Empower Culturally Diverse Families. In Congress, E. P. & Gonzalez, M.J. (2013) (Eds) Multicultural Perspectives in social work practice with families (3rd edition). Springer Publishing Company: New York

Creswell, J. W. (2007). Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approached (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication

Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (2012) Critical Race Theory: An Introduction. New York: New York University Press

Denzel, N. L. & Lincoln Y.S. (2005). The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research. Sage Publications: London, United Kingdom

DeVault, M. & Gross, G. (2007) Feminist Interviewing. In Hagy Hesse-Biber, S. (Ed) Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis. Thousand Oaks: Sage

Farmer, H.S. (1997). Women's Motivation related to master, career salience, and career aspirations: A multivariate Model focusing on the effects of sex role socialization. Journal of Career Assessment, Volume 5, Number 2, Sprint 1997. (p. 355-381).

Food Matters Manitoba (2015) Goulet, A. (Ed). Exploring Food and Healthy Eating: A Study of Newcomers in Winnipeg's North End. Food Matters. Winnipeg: Manitoba

The General Child and Family Services Authority. Promoting Preventive Services for New Canadians. Retrieved from: http://www.generalauthority.ca/promoting_preventive_services.php

George, M. (2012). Migration Traumatic Experiences and Refugee Distress: Implications for Social Work Practice. Clinical Social Work Journal (2012) Vol 40. Pg 429 – 437

GlenMaye, L. (1999). Empowerment of Women, In L. M. Gutiérrez, R. J. Parsons & E. O. Cox (1999) Empowerment in Social Work Practice – a sourcebook. Brooks/Cole Publishing Company. Pacific Grove, CA

Government of Canada – Immigration and Citizenship website. Determine your eligibility from Inside of Canada. Retrieved from: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/inside/apply_who.asp

Halpern, D (2005). Social capital. Cambridge, UK: Malden, MA: Polity

Hamill, C. & Sinclair, H. (2010). Bracketing--practical considerations in Husserlian phenomenological research. Nurse Researcher, January 2010, Vol.17 (2), p.16(9)

Harris, L. J (2009) Motherhood, Race, and Gender: The Rhetoric of Women's Antislavery Activism in the "Liberty Bell" Giftbooks. Peer Review. Women's Studies in Communication; Fall2009, Vol. 32 Issue 3, p293-319, 27p

Hill Collins, P. (1990) Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment. Boston: Unwin Hyman. pp. 221-238. Retrieved from: http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/252.html

Hill Collins, P. (2000). Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment. New York: Routledge.

hooks, b. (1990). Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Between the Lines Press.

hooks, b. (2000a). Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center. Cambridge, M.A.: South End Press.

hooks, b. (2000b). Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics. Cambridge, M.A.: South End Press.

hooks, b. (2001). Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center. Cambridge, M.A.: South End Press.

Houston, M. & Davis, O.I. (Eds) (2002) Centering ourselves: African American Feminist and Womanist Studies of Discourse. Cresskill NJ: Hampton Press Inc.

Hynie, M. Crooks, V. A., & Barragan, J. (2011). Immigrant and Refugee Social Networks: Determinants and Consequences of Social Support among Women Newcomers to Canada. CJNR (Canadian Journal of Nursing Research), 43, 4, 26-46(21) [Peer Reviewed Journal] 2011

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada Website (2011): Government of Canada: Retrieved from: http://www.irb.gc.ca/eng/brdcom/publications/oveape/pages/index.aspx

Independent Living Resource Centre in Winnipeg. Personnel Attendant Community Education program. Retrieved from http://ilrc.mb.ca/programs/pace/index.htm

Jackson L. M. & Esses, V. M. (2000). *Effects of Perceived Economic Competition on People's Willingness to Help Empower Immigrants.* Group Processes & Intergroup Relations. 3(419) DOI: 10.1177. Retrieved from: http://gpi.sagepub.com/cgi/content/astract/3/4/419**.**

Lemire, B. (Ed.) (2010). The force of fashion on politics and society: global perspectives from Early Modern to Contemporary times. Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd

Lent, R. W., Brown, S.D. & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unified social cognitive theory of career/academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* [Monograph], *45*, 79-122.

Lesser, J.G., O'Neill, M.R., Burke, K.W., Scanlon, P., Hollis, K, & Miller, R. (2004). Women supporting women: a mutual aid group fosters new connections among women in midlife. *Social Work with Groups* 2004; 27(1): 75-88.

Manitoba Department of Family Services (2013). Manitoba Standards Manual for Women's Resource Centres (2013) Developed by the Family Violence Prevention Program and Manitoba's Women's Resource Centres. Retrieved from: Womens_resource_centre_standards_manual.pdf

Mennonite Heritage Portrait - Sewing Circles. Retrieved from: http://www.mennoniteheritageportrait.ca/Report.php?ListType=Documents&ID=1719

Mollica, MD. R.F. (2006). Healing Invisible Wounds: Paths to Hope and Recovery in a Violent World. Toronto, Ontario: Harcourt

Moustakas, C. (1994). Phenomenological Research Methods. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage

NorWest Coop Community Health Centre Website: Immigrant Women's Counselling program. From: http://www.norwestcoop.ca/mind-spirit/immigrant-womens-counselling-services/

Osborne, M., Sankey, K. & Wilson, B. (2007) Social Capital, lifelong learning and the management of place: an international perspective. London. New York: Routledge

Patton, M. (2002). Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Perkins, D. D. & Zimmerman, M.A. (1995). Empowerment Theory, Research, and Application. American Journal of Community Psychology, 23(5)

Prairie Women's Centre of Excellence (2001). Post Traumatic Stress disorder: The lived experience of Immigrant, Refugee and Visible Minority Women. Project #24. A report conducted under the auspices of Immigrant, Refugee and Visible Women in Saskatchewan. Prairie Women's Centre of Excellence. Saskatchewan

Province of Manitoba – Department of Entrepreneurship. Starting a business in Manitoba. Retrieved from: http://www.gov.mb.ca/jec/emb/smbus/pdfs/st_a_bus_in_MB.pdf

Putnam, R. D. Leonardi R., & Nanetti, R. Y (1993). Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Quarter, J., Armstrong, A. & Mook, L.(2009). Understanding the Social Economy: A Canadian Perspective. University of Toronto Press.

Red River College (n.d.). Language Training Centre. English Language for Specific Purposes (ESP). Retrieved from: http://blogs.rrc.ca/ltc/programs/permanent-residents/

Sahu, F.M. & Rath, S. (2003). Self-efficacy and Wellbeing in Working and Non-working Women: The Moderating Role of Involvement. Psychology Developing Societies, 15 (187-200). Retrieved from: http://pds.sagepub.com/content /15/2/187

Salzman, P. C. (2002). On Reflexivity. American Anthropologist 104 (3): 805-813.

Skill Bank Program. Spence Neighbourhoood Association. Retrieved from: http://www.spenceneighbourhood.org/#!ced/c1i2v.

Shakir, U. (2005). Dangers of a new dogma: Social Inclusion or Else…! In T. Richmond & A. Saloojee (Eds.), Social Inclusion: Canadian Perspectives (pp. 203-214). Halifax, NS, Canada: Fernwood

Smitherman, G. (1977) Talkin and testifyin : the language of Black America. Boston: Houghton Mifflin

Social Work Faculty (2014). Inner City Social Work program brochure. University of Manitoba: Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Sohng, S. S. L. (1998). Research as an empowerment strategy. In L. M. Gutierrez, R. J. Parsons, & E. O. Cox (Eds.), *Empowerment in social work practice: A sourcebook*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Spicer, N. (2008). Places of Exclusion and Inclusion: Asylum-Seeker and Refugee Experiences of Neighbourhoods in the UK, Journal of Ethics and Migration Studies. 34:3, p. 491-51

Taylor, A. (2010) *Fashion has extended her Influence to the Cause of Humanity:* The Transatlantic Female Economy of the Boston Antislavery Bazaar in the Levine, B. (Ed.).*The Force of Fashion in Politics and Society*. Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing.

UNHCR. Refugee definition: Retrieved from:

http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c125.html)

Valcour, M. & Ladge, J. (2008). Family and career path characteristics as predictors of women's objective and subjective career success: Integrating traditional and protean career explanations. Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 73(3008), .300-309.

Valtonen, K. (2008). Social work and migration: Immigrant and refugee settlement and integration. Burlington, VT. USA: Ashgate Publishing Company

Vaughan G., (Ed) 2007. Women and the Gift Economy: A radically different worldview is possible. Toronto, Ont: Innana Publications and Eduction.

Volunteer Manitoba - Contact Resource Guide. Retrieved from: http://www.contactmb.org/

Vonk R (2006) Improving Self-Esteem in Self-Esteem Issues and Answers: A Sourcebook of Current Perspectives. Edited by Michael H. Kernis. Psychology Press: New York

White, J. (2004). Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Lived Experience of Immigrant, Refugee and Visible Minority Women. Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence: Winnipeg, MB

White, J. (2009). Exploring Ways of Addressing Immigrant and Refugee Women's Mental Health and Well-Being in Saskatchewan. In Our Diverse Cities, Prairies Region. (Eds) Carter T., Derwing, T, Ogilvie, L. & Wotherspoon, T. Metropolis. No. 6. (p. 170-175). Retrieved from: http://canada.metropolis.net/pdfs/ODC_vol6_spring09_e.pdf

White, J., Tutt, S., Rude, D., Mutwiri, B. (2002). Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Lived Experience of Immigrant, Refugee and Visible Minority Women: A Report Conducted Under The Auspices of Immigrant, Refugee and Visible Minority Women of Saskatchewan. Project #24 of the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence. Retrieved from: http://www.pwhce.ca/pdf/postTraumaticStress.pdf

Wilson, F., Kickul, J. Marlino, D. (2007). Gender, Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy and Entrepreneurial Career Intentions: Implications for Entrepreneurship Education. Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice, 31(3), 387-406.

Wilson, F., Kickul, J., Marlino D., Barbosa, S. & Griffiths, M. (2009). An Analysis of the Role of Gender and Self-Efficacy in Developing Female Entrepreneurial Interest and Behaviour. Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship, 14(2), 105-119

Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre, Mission and Vision. Retrieved May 2012 from: http://www.wcpwrc.org/shared-vision-and-values.html

Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre's (2012) Annual Report Documents. WCPWRC: Winnipeg

Winnipeg Child and Family Services. The New Canadian Awareness and Education Initiative: A Workshop about Engagement and Collaboration, presented at the Strangers in New Homelands Conference, October 21, 2013 in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre (WELARC). English Language Assessments or Free English classes for Canadian Citizens. Retrieved from: http://www.welarc.net/new-information-for-citizens.html

Women's Economic Council (2011). Moving Forward: Advancing the Economic Security of Immigrant Women in Canada, Women's Economic Council: Thorold, Ontario

Yakushko, O., Backhaus, A., Watson,M., Ngaruiya, K. & Gonzalez, J. (2008). Career Development Concerns of Recent Immigrants and Refugees. Journal of Career Development, 34 (4), 362-396. Sage Publishing

Zimmerman, M. (2000): Empowerment Theory: Psychological, Organization, and Community Levels of Analysis. In Handbook of Community Psychology. Rappaport, J. Seidman, E. (Eds). Kluwer. New York: Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Appendix A: Script of telephone conversation

Hello_____(Participant's name).

Thank you for phoning. This is Judy Williams. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba. I am conducting a research study for my Master's thesis.

Can I answer any questions or clarify the information from the Letter of Invitation you received?

Through this research study we are hoping to identify the many used and unused skills, abilities, interests, gifts and dreams that sewing program members have. We also want to understand all of the strengths that have come from learning to sew together and sharing your talents and support with each other at the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre.

Would you like to participate in this study? Great, thank you.

I would like to take a moment to review the research study criteria with you:

Are you currently a member of the sewing program at the Women's Centre? _____
Or were you a member of this sewing program? _____
Did you migrate to Canada? _____
Have you lived in Canada for two years or more? _____
Are you over 19 years of age? _____

Thank you. Would you be available to meet with me for a one to two hour interview? ____

Would the following date and time be alright?
Interview Date: _____
Time: _____
Can we meet at _____ (location)

Just so you know, I would like to digitally record the interview to be sure I have the information clearly and in your own words.

Is there any other information I can provide at this time?

Thank you for taking the interest and time to participate in this study.

I look forward to meeting with you on_____. Good bye.

Appendix B: Letter of Invitation

(Printed on Faculty of Social Work Letterhead)

Dear Multi-Cultural Sewing Program Members,

I am Judy Williams, a graduate student in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba. I am preparing to conduct a research study for my Master's thesis. I would like to meet with women who have migrated to Canada and are members of the sewing program at this centre. This research study is called: **Exploring the Gifts and Dreams of Sewing Circle Members:** Skills Mastery and Peer Support as vehicles for increasing Self-Efficacy among Women who are Newcomers to Canada.

As many of you know, I have been involved with the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre for three years, as a board member. I have taken a leave of absence from the board while I am conducting this research study.

The primary purpose of this research is to understand how mastering sewing skills, peer support, interventions and other activities at the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre impact upon a sewing circle member's life. The research is also aimed at exploring the gifts (strengths, formal and non-formal skills and abilities) and dreams (aspirations and future plans) of Newcomer Women who are members of this sewing circle program.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. ***I am looking for women who have moved to Canada and are interested in speaking with me about their lives and their experience as members of this sewing program. I would meet with each person separately to conduct a one to two hour interview.***

The information I gather from anyone who decides to participate will be kept confidential. Though, you may be identified by other participants through the information you share during the interview.

The research process should not cause any potential harm beyond what one might experience in normal conduct of one's everyday life. The benefits include the experience of participating in this study and the results of this study that could help to identify and document your interests, skills and abilities, in regard to navigating or setting new personal, educational and/or career goals. Participants in this project will also be offered relevant resource information.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You can choose to withdraw from the study at any time. If you decide to participate you will be given a consent form with additional information about this research project. You will have the opportunity to review this consent form, ask additional questions about this project and your role as a participant. Declining this invitation to participate in this research study will not affect your membership at the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre now or in the future.

Feedback and the findings from this study will be provided to each participant on request. This information will be published in my thesis and will be made available to the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre to assist with future programs and/or used to develop a community business at the center that will look at ways to use the interests, skills, abilities and gifts of the sewing circle members.

The only requirements are that you are over 19 years of age, have migrated to Canada, and have lived in Canada for a minimum of two years.

For more information on this research study or to be a participant in this study, please contact Judy Williams at my phone number XXX-XXXX or the e-mail address below.

You may also contact the research supervisor, Kim Clare, at the Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba for additional information on this project. Kim Clare can be reached 474-XXXX or e-mail address: xxxxxxxxx

Thank you,

Judy Williams, BSW
Researcher
Phone: XXX-XXXX
E-mail: xxxxxxxxx

Appendix C: Consent Form

(Printed on Faculty of Social Work Letterhead)

Research Project Title: Exploring the Gifts and Dreams of Sewing Circle Members: Skills Mastery and Peer Support as vehicles for increasing Self-Efficacy among Women who are Newcomers (Immigrants and Refugees) to Canada.

Principle Researcher: Judy Williams, BSW, University of Manitoba
Phone: XXX-XXXX E-mail: xxxxxxxxxx

Research Supervisor: Dr. Michael Baffoe, University of Manitoba
Phone: XXX-XXXX E-mail: xxxxxxxxxx

Research Supervisor: Kim Clare, Director of the Inner City Social Work Program, University of Manitoba
Phone: XXX-XXXX E-mail: xxxxxxxxxx

This consent form, a copy that will be left with you for your records and reference is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Judy Williams (the researcher in this study) has explained to me that she is conducting a study called "**Exploring the Gifts and Dreams of Sewing Circle Members:** Skills Mastery and Peer Support as vehicles for increasing Self-Efficacy among women who are Newcomers to Canada". The primary purpose of this research is to understand how mastering sewing skills, peer support and interventions and activities at the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre impact upon the sewing circle member's lives. The research is also aiming to explore the gifts (strengths, formal and non-formal skills and abilities) and dreams (aspirations and future plans) of Newcomer Women who are members of this sewing circle program.

I fit the research criteria:

Woman	Yes	No	Over 19 years of age	Yes	No
Migrated to Canada	Yes	No	Current/past member of Sewing Program	Yes	No

This interview will be approximately two hours in length. The information obtained through this interview will be used to further the research explained above. The interview is designed to be a conversation with the researcher, though questions will be asked to focus the interview. The questions that will be asked are personal in nature and may require me to recall memories and events that are stress inducing. I will be asked to share my experience as a woman who has come to live in Canada and is or have been a member of the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre's sewing program. I will be asked basic questions about myself, including

country of origin, immigration status, language skills, education, income source, training and employment. If I am not comfortable with any of the questions I will decline answering them. Declining to participate in this research study will not affect your membership at the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre now or in the future.

If I would like, I can show an article I have sewn to the researcher. The researcher will ask to take a photograph of the article only. This picture may be published in the final thesis or thesis presentation. I can decline from bringing an article or agreeing to have a photo taking of the article I have sewn.

My participation in this interview is voluntary and I have the right to leave the interview at anytime. The researcher does not expect there to be any potential harm beyond what one might experience in normal conduct of one's everyday life. The benefits include the experience of participating and the results of this study will identify the strengths, gifts and dreams of women who are newcomers to Canada.

Confidentiality:
The researcher has also explained that she is audio recording the interview with a digital recorder. The researcher will also take notes throughout the interview. Confidentiality will be maintained. The transcripts from these audio tapes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher's home. A code number or name will be used on the audio tape and transcript. The key identifying information will be kept in separate cabinet from the interview responses. The name of each participant, the information collected and all details from the interview will be kept confidential. Data in digital format will be encrypted and password protected.

All the information collected will be stored at the researcher's residence at 4210 Waverley Street in two locked cabinets:

Locked cabinet # 1	Locked cabinet #2 – no identifying information
Key coding information Participants signed consent forms	Coded audio tapes Coded transcriptions of interviews Coded notes

Feedback and the findings from this study will be provided to each participant on request. This information will be published in Judy Williams' thesis and will be made available to the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre to assist with future programs and/or used to develop a community business at the center that will look at ways to use the interests, skills, abilities and gifts of the sewing circle members. I have been advised that there is a chance I may be identified by other women centre members through my comments that are released in the findings of this study. The researcher has assured me that all identifying information about me will be removed from the final research report or publications. All identifying information will be destroyed one year following the completion of this study and thesis, approximately November, 2013.

Once the interviews have been transcribed the participants will be given an opportunity to review the interview transcripts for accuracy.
_____Yes, please send me a copy of the transcript for revision of accuracy
_____Yes, please send me a summary of the final report. Mail to:

Name: _____ Address: _____

Email Address: _____
(Please include your e-mail address if you would prefer to have the summary e-mailed to you)

The summary of the final report will be mailed to participants by November 2012.

_____ No, I would not like a summary of the final report

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in this research study and you agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal right nor release the researcher or involved institution from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time, and / or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board(s) and a representative(s) of the University of Manitoba Research Quality Management/ Assurance office may also require access to your research records for safety and quality assurance purpose.

The researcher will invite me to attend a presentation on the research findings on the completion of this study.

Contact information:

Principal Researcher	Judy Williams, University of Manitoba	XXX-XXXX	xxxxxxxxxx
Research Supervisor	Kim Clare, University of Manitoba	XXX-XXXX	xxxxxxxxxx

This research has been approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba. If you have concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principle Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Interview Guide

(Printed on Faculty of Social Work Letterhead)

Script for the beginning of interviews

Hello _____. Thank you so much for coming to meet with me today. As I mentioned, this interview may last from 1 – 2 hours. Will you need to leave before _____? Here is a copy of the consent form. Please take your time to read this form. I can answer any questions you have. After you have read the form, please sign the form and we can start the interview. I will give you a copy of this consent form for your records.

(Signed consent form is handed to researcher)

Thank you.

Do you have any other questions before we start this interview?

I will not use your name on the interview digital recording or in the notes I am taking. I will be using a code with today's date and interview time.

(Start the digital recorder)

Today is _____(time and date). The research study is called "Exploring the Gifts and Dreams of Sewing Circle Members."

There are two parts to this interview. The first section, Part A, is a collection of some facts and demographic information. The second section, Part B, is some interview questions, I will use as a guideline for this interview.

Part A: Demographic Information

(The researcher will ask for the following information and complete the form below. Participants will be reminded that they are free to decline any questions or terminate the interview at any time without explanation).

Coded name: _____

Criteria	Responses
Age	
What is your country of origin, or what country do you consider home?	
How long have you lived in Canada?	
How long have you lived in Winnipeg?	
What was your migration status on arrival in Canada? (Immigrant, Refugee, other?)	
What is your marital status?	
What education and training did you have before coming to Canada?	
What education or training have you had since your arrival to Canada?	
What different jobs did you do before coming to Canada?	
What is your Canadian employment history and current employment status?	
What is your source of income?	
What languages can you speak, read, understand and write?	
Family: Who are your household members? How many children and adults?	
What other family supports to you have in Canada?	
Community resources: What other supports or resources to you have in Winnipeg? (church, ethic community, personal supports, friends)	
What community in Winnipeg do you live in?	
Do you rent or own your home?	
When did you first start to come to the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre?	
How did you hear about this women's centre and the sewing program?	
How often do (did) you typically attend this program? What times?	
What types of daily activities would you do today, if you were living in your home country? *Much of the work that women do day to day is unpaid and often undervalued. Asking people to reflect on activities they may be doing on a regular basis in their home country will provide the participants with the opportunity to share activities that may include paid and unpaid work and give the participants the opportunity to explain any chores, tasks and roles that consumed much their time and energy. Activities such as, working or studying in their particular field, preparing daily meals, caring for family or friends, volunteer roles in their communities and the like. Understanding the day to day activities will help to outline skills, abilities, interests, strengths, and other qualities and gifts that the participants have.*	

Part B: In-depth Interview questions

(***The following questions will be used to guide the individual interview process.*** *Participants will be reminded that they are free to decline any questions or terminate the interview at any time. Patton (2002) explains that for a phenomenological study it is important to understand how the participants relate to the phenomenon on the following levels: How they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it and talk about it with others (p. 104).)*

Interview Questions	Probing questions
Please describe this sewing circle program at the Winnipeg Central Park Women's Resource Centre?	What do you tell others about it?
What are your reasons or goals for being in this program?	What are some practical reasons for coming to this program? What were your reasons or goals for coming to this program?
Please describe your personal experience with this sewing program?	Please describe the different sewing projects you have completed? What type of training or skills have you developed from your involvement at this centre? Please describe what you have learnt from this sewing program?
How important are meals and food to this program?	
Please help me to understand how your life has changed since you started coming to this women's center?	What does being a member of this sewing circle mean to you? How important is this sewing circle program in your day to day life and that of your families? What place does this sewing program have in your life?
What are some of the strengths of this sewing program?	What are some of the things you love about this program?
What are some of the weaknesses of this sewing program?	What changes might help improve the program? What suggestions or new ideas you have for this sewing program?
Please describe your relationship with other women who come to this program? (peer support)	Have you made some friends? Do you see any of the women outside of this centre's programs/services?

	Please describe your feelings when you work with a group of women on a project at this center (cooking or sewing) What do you need to feel comfortable in a group?
Please describe the things you do here to support or assist other women?	Please describe your role as a member of this sewing program?
Please describe your experience and interest in sewing?	When did you learn to sew? Who taught you? What can you sew? With or without patterns?
Please describe something you have sewn that you are proud of?	What sewing techniques and skills have you mastered?
What are other strengths, interests or hobbies you do well and enjoy doing here, at home or other places?	Please share some other skills and talents to that you have?
Please describe your experience using hand or power tools, computers, equipment or machinery?	
Please describe any experience you have running a business?	
Please describe your dream job/career (if money, training and time were not factors)?	What career interests have you had through the years?
What are some of the goals and dreams you have for yourself?	
Do you have final questions for me?	Was there any resource information I could share with you?

Appendix E: PLEDGE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

(Printed on Faculty of Social Work Letterhead)

Research Team Members

This form is intended to further ensure confidentiality of data obtained while performing my duties as a member of Judy Williams' research team. All students (undergraduate & graduate), research team members, and transcribers involved in Judy Williams' research program will be asked to read the following statement and sign their names indicating they agree to honor this pledge of confidentiality.

I hereby promise to keep confidential any information that I may become privy to while performing my duties as a research assistant, and/or transcriber. I agree to discuss material directly related to this study only with other members of the research team. I agree to remove obvious identifiers of participants from all data that I collect and from any papers that I write about the data.

_____	_____	_____
Research team member (Printed name)	Research Team Member Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Witness (Printed name)	Witness Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Principal Investigator (printed name)	Principal Investigator Signature	Date

As you know, confidentiality deals with the strategies we use to ensure that both the information provided to researchers by research participants and participants' identities remain protected. As the person interviewing, doing data collection and recruitment, and/or transcribing the tapes, could you please acknowledge that you are aware of the importance of research participants' privacy, and that you will take appropriate measures to ensure the confidentiality of the contents of the audio-tapes and transcripts while they are in your possession (e.g., store tapes and transcripts in a secure place and return them to me once the transcription is complete, delete any duplicate electronic or paper copies of the transcripts once they have been returned to me). It is also important that you do not talk about the contents of the audio-tapes outside of your interactions with members of the research team. In addition, it is important that any other information related to Judy Williams' research (e.g., research proposals/protocols, research team meeting discussions, future research studies and so on) not be discussed outside of your interactions with members of the research team. By signing this form, the above mentioned persons agree that the data is not to be used for any other purposes than that which is directed by Judy Williams including using it towards other research collaborations, publications, or discussions.

Please refer to the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical conduct for Research Involving human (Canada's research ethics guidelines).

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | OFFICE OF RESEARCH SERVICES
Office of the Vice-President (Research)

CTC Building
208 - 194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Fax (204) 269-7173
www.umanitoba.ca/research

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

December 5, 2011

TO: **Judy Williams** (Advisor K. Clare)
Principal Investigator

FROM: **Bruce Tefft, Chair**
Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board (PSREB)

Re: **Protocol #P2011:080**
"Exploring the Gifts and Dreams of Sewing Circle Members: Skills Mastery and Peer Support as Vehicles for increasing Self-efficacy among Women who are Newcomers (Immigrants and Refugees) to Canada"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol, as revised, has received human ethics approval by the **Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2). This approval has been issued based on your agreement with the change(s) to your original protocol required by the PSREB. It is the researcher's responsibility to comply with any copyright requirements. This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

Please note:

- **If you have funds pending human ethics approval, the auditor requires that you submit a copy of this Approval Certificate to the Office of Research Services, fax 261-0325 - please include the name of the funding agency and your UM Project number. This must be faxed before your account can be accessed.**

- **If you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.**

The Research Quality Management Office may request to review research documentation from this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Manitoba Ethics of Research Involving Humans.

The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study (available at: http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors_ethics_human_REB_forms_guidelines.html) **in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.**

Bringing Research to Life