

Review of Supportive Counseling Theories With Newcomers in the Field of Social Work

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Social Work (MSW)

The Faculty of Graduate Studies
Laurentian University
Sudbury, Ontario, Canada

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Laurentian University/Université Laurentienne

School of Graduate Studies/École des études supérieures

Title of Thesis/Advanced Practicum Project Report

Review of Supportive Counseling Theories with Newcomers in the Field of Social Work

Titre de la thèse / stage spécialisé

Name of Candidate

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Nom du candidat

Degree

Master of Social Work

Diplôme

Department/Program

Social Work

Date of Approval

March 18th, 2021

Département/Programme

Date de la soutenance

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Abstract

This report explores the experiences of my Master of Social Work advanced practicum, which took place in non-profit settlement agency, Peel Multicultural Council. This project stemmed from my desire to further my social work skills in regard to community outreach when working with newcomers during such a pressing time for Canadian immigration. With newcomers arriving everyday into the country, and generations of immigrants now representing many members of the Canadian population. The advanced practicum focused on implementing theoretical concepts and frameworks into practice, through supportive counseling and advocacy work. The initial theories and frameworks which were chosen included critical race theory, ecological systems theory, strengths-based theory, cultural competency frameworks, and anti-oppressive practice frameworks. This outline evolved within a few days to include solution focused therapy, and task centered practice as they were found to be beneficial when working with this population.

Throughout this practicum I was able to develop both my professional and theoretical skills required to assess clients' needs and connect them to the appropriate resources and pathways to assist with their settlement difficulties. This helped me to develop my professional skills as a social worker at both the community and individual level. Overall, this final report aims to work as a tool to reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of using the aforementioned theories, and the effectiveness of these theories in this specific advanced practicum context, whilst searching for other theories which may be better suited in the field of social work.

Abstrait

Ce rapport explore les expériences de mon stage avancé de maîtrise en travail social, qui a eu lieu dans un organisme d'établissement à but non lucratif, Peel Multicultural Council. Ce projet découlait de mon désir de développer mes compétences en travail social en ce qui a trait à la sensibilisation communautaire lorsque je travaillais avec les nouveaux arrivants pendant une période aussi pressante pour l'immigration canadienne. Avec l'arrivée quotidienne des nouveaux arrivants au pays, et des générations d'immigrants représentent maintenant de nombreux membres de la population canadienne. Le stage avancé s'est concentré sur la mise en pratique de concepts et de cadres théoriques, par le biais de conseils de soutien et de travail de plaidoyer. Les théories et les cadres initiaux qui ont été choisis comprenaient la théorie critique de la race, la théorie des systèmes écologiques, la théorie fondée sur les forces, les cadres de compétences culturelles et les cadres de pratique anti-oppressive. Ce plan a évolué en quelques jours pour inclure la thérapie axée sur la solution, et la pratique axée sur les tâches, car ils se sont révélés bénéfiques lorsqu'on travaille avec cette population.

Tout au long de ce stage, j'ai pu développer mes compétences professionnelles et théoriques requises pour évaluer les besoins des clients et les mettre en contact avec les ressources et les voies appropriées pour les aider à faire face à leurs difficultés d'établissement. Cela m'a aidé à développer mes compétences professionnelles en tant que travailleuse sociale tant au niveau communautaire qu'individuel. Dans l'ensemble, ce rapport final vise à travailler comme un outil pour réfléchir sur les avantages et les inconvénients de l'utilisation des théories susmentionnées, et l'efficacité de ces théories dans ce contexte spécifique de stage avancé, tout en recherchant d'autres théories qui peuvent être mieux adaptés dans le domaine du travail social.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, all praise to the Almighty for my countless blessings which has made this experience possible.

I am eternally grateful to my Mama and Papa who made the decision to immigrate and bring me to Canada, as a part of their lifelong commitment to support my academic journey. It is your unconditional love, support, and sacrifices that have made me who I am.

A big shout out to my siblings/BFFS, Mashail, Manal, and Mohammad, your support and love is indescribable. You three are my greatest blessings from above.

Samer, thank you for giving me my sunshine on a cloudy day, aka Lyla.

To my soulmate, and love of my life, Saeed, I am so incredibly lucky to have your presence, encouragement and affection in my life. I could write a million papers on my love for you.

A tremendous thank you to my first reader, Dr. Sandra Hoy, and my second reader, Dr. Elizabeth Carlson, for their patience, guidance, and encouragement. Without your effort, positive energy, and help throughout this entire process I would truly be lost. Thank you for always helping me find my way back to this project with your kind and gentle motivation. Your commitment and pursuit of social justice is both admirable and inspiring.

A sincere thank you, to my wonderful supervisor, Faisal, for his support throughout this venture.

Thank you to all those who worked with me every step of the way, filling my days with laughter, happiness and ease.

It's been a long, but amazingly fulfilling journey.

Dedication

To all immigrants, from lands close and far, who grace this country with their strength, wisdom,
and traditions.

Table of contents

Abstract	3
French Abstract	4
Acknowledgements	5
Dedication	6
Table of Contents	7
Chapter 1 – Introduction	8 - 11
Chapter 2 - Literature Review	12 - 48
Chapter 3 - Practicum Process	49 - 84
References	85 - 91

Chapter 1 – Introduction

For this advanced practicum I had the privilege to work with Peel Multicultural Council, a settlement-based agency in the Region of Peel. The placement focused on numerous areas and initiatives regarding the agency's settlement procedures. I was under the supervision of Faisal Cheema, a settlement worker who has a Master of Social Work degree. Peel Multicultural Council is a settlement services agency established in 1977 targeted towards assisting newcomers with reaching their goals in regard to their settlement in Canada. Their vision is centered on promoting a harmonious multicultural society in which new citizens can prosper, grow, and reach their goals. It is a community led organization, focused on providing the necessary tools to assist newcomers with integrating into society. These tools and resources include settlement services in relation to health, employment, education, transportation, housing, financial assistance, translation services, as well as language programs, employment programs, youth programs, and senior programs. Alongside these many resources, Peel Multicultural Council focuses on building strong community connections which creates additional resources to be available for clients throughout the referral process.

Peel Multicultural Council was selected as the organization with which to complete this advanced practicum due to the diversity of and immense immigration to the Region of Peel. The region of Peel has the highest amount of foreign-born population out of all the municipalities in Canada (Peel Newcomer Strategy Group, 2019). As of 2016, 51.5 % of the population was foreign born, making Peel an immigrant-majority region in the Greater Toronto Area (Peel Newcomer Strategy Group, 2019). The region of Peel also constitutes the highest percentage of visible minorities in the Greater Toronto Area, with 62.3 percent of the population being a visible minority (Peel Newcomer Strategy Group, 2019). The top countries for immigration to

Peel include India and Pakistan (Peel Newcomer Strategy Group, 2019), which reflects most of the clients I served throughout the advanced practicum process due to my identification as a South Asian multilingual social worker.

Goals of the Advanced Practicum

As someone with no previous practice experience working with newcomers in Canada and assisting them with their transition period, -apart from my personal immigration experiences- this agency provided the appropriate introduction as a new social worker in the field, while giving me the freedom to expand my knowledge and achieve my learning goals at the masters level. This was done through all the resources Peel Multicultural Council has to offer, and the knowledge the agency has gathered through numerous years of providing services to immigrants and refugees. These resources include the agency's access and expertise in community family services, legal services, health services, and settlement resources.

This advanced practicum was a method of increasing my community outreach skills, in order to evolve my practice skills, and to see what practice theories work well in this particular field. The placement helped to enhance my ability to work with newcomers in a professional context, while adhering to the core values laid out by the Canadian Association of Social Workers. The practicum allowed me to participate in many community outreach events, information sessions, and to provide one on one delivery of services to clients.

The main goal of this practicum was to focus on the use of critical race theory, strengths-based theory, and ecological systems theory, while using a cultural competency framework and anti-oppressive practice model, when working with newcomers. It was my goal to assess the effectiveness of these theories in this specific advanced practicum context, whilst searching for

other theories which may be better suited in this field of work. Eventually, the incorporation of other theories included solution focused therapy and a task centered therapy approach.

Chapters Outline

Chapter one is focused on an introduction which dissects the different phases and areas of this advanced practicum. Chapter two contains an in-depth literature review. The literature review focuses on the theories and concepts which were used throughout this advanced practicum, and how they intersect with working with newcomers. This review consists of a detailed overview of critical race theory, strengths-based theory, ecological systems theory, solution focused theory, task centered practice, cultural competency frameworks, and anti-oppressive theory. The review also focuses on literature surrounding the transition of immigrants from one country to another and the challenges this population may face. Finally, it also speaks to literature conducted on the roles of settlement workers in this field, and what roles they play in client's lives.

The third chapter of this report describes the advanced practicum process in detail. This includes an analysis of the beginning to the end of the required 450-hour practicum period, and the transitions in between. This chapter focuses on the learning goals upon which this advanced practicum was centered, and whether and how these goals were achieved. The challenges and barriers associated with using the desired theoretical frameworks are explored. In addition to focusing on the challenges associated with the aforementioned theoretical frameworks, the third chapter will focus on how theories were used and added throughout the practicum process.

The fourth, and final chapter, focuses on the critical reflection and analysis of the practicum experience. This chapter indicates my personal thoughts, feelings, and perceptions as a student in the field as well as an analysis of the overall learning outcomes and procedures

associated with my time at Peel Multicultural Council. This chapter also includes a conclusion which wraps up my experiences, learning process, and final comments. Overall, this report is meant to be an informative tool to uncover the processes and learnings associated with my advanced practicum, and is meant to be used as a tool to further practice knowledge and understandings of research when taking a look at how literature is applied in the field of social work by Master of Social Work Students when working with newcomers.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review will be focused on five main areas which constitute the basis and need of the nature of this advanced practicum. These include Canadian immigration trends, immigrant population strengths, a structural overview, a social work perspective, reoccurring themes which arise when working with this population, and a deep look at the theories implemented throughout this practicum.

Multidisciplinary databases were the foundation of gathering this research. These include the social work and social service work databases available through the Laurentian University library, and other online library platforms. The key words in the searches included, Canadian immigration, immigrant, newcomers, resiliency, strengths-based theory, anti-oppressive practice, cultural competency models, and social work.

Canadian Immigration

It is important to note that prior to the arrival of the European settlers, Canada was and truly remains to be Indigenous Land. The displacement of Indigenous Peoples resulted in the large shift in the demographics of Canada over the years, as a direct result of the genocide and planned eradication of the Indigenous population. This essentially created the platform for immigration. Even though immigrants face complex barriers, they are essentially from somewhere else, hence ultimately making them settlers on Indigenous Land (Chatterjee, 2019). The 2016 Canadian census found that roughly 4.9 percent of the Canadian population was composed of the Indigenous People of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016). This is a direct result of the genocide and cultural genocide, which was implemented through the displacement and murder of Indigenous children and families (Guematcha, 2019).

As a result of these tragic events, Canada has essentially become a land of immigrants; a land that is full of complicated and unique policies which are based on a multitude of factors which creates our ever-changing immigration systems. For the purpose of this report, the term immigrant will be defined as a person who changes their place of residence from one country to another, with the intent of residing there permanently (Keenleyside, 1948). The history of immigration in Canada has been historically based on multiple harmful events. These events over the years have been a direct result of colonization and eradication of Indigenous People. Due to the history of early European settlers in Canada, a large majority of the Canadian population is composed of the descendants of European settlers, who came to this country (Statistics Canada, 2016). Driving factors for immigration throughout history have consisted of famine, war, poverty, religious freedoms, and job opportunities (Dwyer, 2020). Due to the complexity of these factors, immigration is a continuous process that occurs in Canada.

In the modern era, there are numerous reasons for a rise in immigration. One large factor is the harsh economic and political conditions in certain areas of the world (Dwyer, 2020). This has created diverse communities with numerous cultures, languages, and traditions in Canadian society (Peel Census, 2016). People from all parts of the world find themselves relocating to different regions, including Canada, due to politically driven forces that have pushed individuals out of countries (Dwyer, 2020). This is due to a combination of factors including economic, social, political, and environmental factors (Dwyer, 2020). Factors such as climate change are playing a direct role in the rise of immigration, and will continue to result in an increase of immigrants. This is due to the rising sea levels, natural disasters, and destruction of agricultural land (Dwyer, 2020). No matter the reason, people who find themselves in foreign lands can be faced with complex issues associated with migration. These issues can include job insecurity,

poverty, acculturation stress, isolation, mental health issues, and physical health issues (Pumariega & Rother, 2010).

Canada's immigration system is based on economic contribution, humanitarian need, and the reunification of families (Government of Canada, 2020). Screening processes and tools are used to take a deeper look at the health, safety, and security of potential newcomers (Government of Canada, 2020). Many immigrants are evaluated based on their skills and abilities to take part in Canadian society and create a contribution to the growing economy (Government of Canada, 2020). It is important to note that this 'knowledge based' and 'talent focused' system is oppressive and discriminatory in nature (Danso, 2009). It is centered on luring highly qualified immigrants to maintain an advantage in the global economy (Danso, 2009). The points system used to take a look at these qualifications focuses on language skills, education, work experience, job offers, and a nomination from a province or territory (Government of Canada, 2020). Based on these scores, newcomers are invited to immigrate to Canada (Government of Canada, 2020). It is then that these highly qualified new comers are aided through settlement service organizations, which are focused on providing newcomers with the additional resources needed to be successful in their new environment (Government of Canada, 2020).

Immigration experiences are vast and unique, thus unique approaches to assist families with their transitions are required. Current research shows immigration experiences are dependent on factors such as age, race, sex, education and wealth (Rezazadeh & Hoover, 2018). Each of these variables impacts families, men, women, and children, differently. Many immigrant adults often arrive in Canada and are faced with three central components, which include finding a better life, living the immigrant dream, and starting from the bottom once again

(Hilario et al., 2018). Immigrant men are often faced with the pressure of being the provider for their family, which creates tremendous stress when adjusting to a new country and navigating income opportunities (Hilario et al., 2018). These narratives influence the marginalization of immigrants, leaving them vulnerable to mental health implications that limit their advancement within society alongside other glass ceiling related factors (Hilario, Oliffe, Wong, Browne, & Johnson 2018). For many immigrants, their experiences are often shaped by their status, ethnicity, visible minority status, and religious backgrounds (Rezazadeh. & Hoover, 2018).

Immigrant women possess unique strengths and resilience which can often be derived from their religious beliefs, courage, endurance, goal setting, and external support systems such as families and community ties (Lemus & Johansson, 2020). These strengths are used to overcome difficulties that these women may face. It is important to note that foreign-born women in Canada have higher rates of depression and face tremendous stress when faced with linguistic difficulties (Rezazadeh & Hoover, 2018). Additionally, immigrant children also show tremendous resilience when faced with many stressors in relation to acculturation, isolation and adjusting into a new society. When faced with other immigration stressors such as linguistic barriers and financial stressors, this can cause mental health concerns (Hilario et al., 2018). Because the lives of immigrants are so diverse and full of different experiences, the above-mentioned concerns are just a few of what they may experience, and what was widely seen throughout the advanced practicum at Peel Multicultural council.

Immigrant Versus Refugee Populations

As previously mentioned, newcomer populations are diverse (Rezazadeh & Hoover, 2018), however, it is important to understand the difference between different types of newcomers. Newcomers include immigrants and refugee populations. For the sake of this paper

an immigrant will be defined as a someone who chooses to settle permanently in another country, whereas, a refugee is defined as a person who is forced to flee their country due to fear of persecution (CCR, 2010). As previously mentioned, immigrants are often driven to move to a new country due to economic, social, political, and environmental factors (Dwyer, 2020). Similarly, these factors can be driving factors for refugees to seek safety in a new country. Refugees flee their homeland because of natural disasters such as earthquakes or floods, war, and the fear of being persecuted due to their religious or political beliefs (Garebian, 2019). Refugees differ from immigrants because they do not wish to leave their homeland, but are rather forced into doing so (Garebian, 2019). In 2019, 341,180 permanent resident immigrants were welcomed into Canada, and 30,087 refugees settled into Canada (Government of Canada, 2020). The work at Peel Multicultural Council was specifically done with immigrant populations, although the organization does serve refugees as well in partnership with other community-based agencies.

It is critical for social workers to understand the differences in barriers faced by different newcomer populations. In doing so, we are able to understand and work in a system which affects all newcomers in different ways. Refugee populations are often at an economic disadvantage in comparison to immigrants; this can be seen in what is referred to as the “refugee gap” (Connor, 2010). This gap is a direct reflection of refugee experiences which may create less educational opportunities, a greater impact on mental and physical health, and systematic disparities which create lower occupational earnings in comparison to non-refugee immigrants (Connor, 2010). Moreover, refugee populations are at many times disproportionately served through crisis counseling available at settlement agencies, such as Peel Multicultural Council. Although I personally did not work directly with refugees throughout my placement at Peel Multicultural Council, I was able to work with crisis counselling services to coordinate services

that may be beneficial to them through community outreach. This is due to the tremendous physical or mental trauma faced by these clients (Connor, 2010), which can create crisis situations which may require the assistance of professionals.

Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)

One of the major governing legislative pieces that guides Canadian immigration and embodies the experiences of newcomers is the Canadian Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act. For that reason, it is critical for social workers to be familiar with this piece of legislation as it heavily impacts the lives of numerous newcomers and Canadians. However, at face value, the act can be seen as a means of protection for both newcomers and Canadians. In order to understand Canada's history of immigration and policies it is important to acknowledge two important principles (Aazadeh, 2009). Firstly, immigration in Canada has always focused on controlling the entry of certain populations and excluding others from entry (Aazadeh, 2009). Secondly, Canada's history is directly linked to racism, hence Canadian policies are directly reflective of that racism (Aazadeh, 2009). When taking a closer look at Canadian Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), it is clear that it has, and can, perpetuate racism against newcomer groups (Jantzi, 2015). The language used throughout it insinuates immigrants and refugees as being national security threats to Canadians (Jantzi, 2015). Because of this act's emphasis on security enforcement, and recognizing threats to national security based on the entry of newcomers into Canada, it fosters the sentiments that newcomer's are a danger to Canadian society (Aazadeh, 2009). IRPA views migration as a threat, and stresses on the importance of integrating immigrants into Canadian society (Aazadeh, 2009).

In the mid-late 90s the primary source of immigrants and refugees Canada was the global south. However, despite the transition from traditional white, European immigrants to those from the global south, Canadian laws have created a fear and distrust of immigrants that do not adhere to this white, European identity (Jantzi, 2015). A direct example of this can be seen in the protection act. Section 55 (1) of IRPA provides:

An officer may issue a warrant for the arrest and detention of a permanent resident or a foreign national who the officer has reasonable grounds to believe is inadmissible and is a danger to the public or is unlikely to appear for examination, for an admissibility hearing, for removal from Canada. (Government of Canada, 2019, p. 55)

This is solely one example of a focus on the detention of foreign nationals in the IRPA. This can be concerning when taking a look at the history of Canada's racist and oppressive immigration experiences, and when taking into consideration the harmful effects of racial profiling (Jantzi, 2015). The IRPA also increases the ability for officers to practice detention based on discriminatory practices by broadening the categories of people who are not admissible into Canada (Amery, 2013).

Moreover, further injustices are also seen in the excessive demands placed on newcomers to meet the inadequacies in the Canadian labor market. This can be seen as a means of controlling the “other”. An example of these excessive demands in IRPA, include the provisions on health and how this may impact newcomers with disabilities. Section 38 (1) (c) provides: “A foreign national is inadmissible on health grounds if their health condition (c) might reasonably be expected to cause excessive demand on health or social services” (Government of Canada, 2019, p. 55). This result is that people with disabilities are excluded and viewed as having a

negative impact on Canadian society (Jantzi, 2015). These examples are ongoing throughout this major piece of legislation, thus rendering it necessary for social workers to be familiar with it, in order to work towards minimizing social injustices and creating pathways for newcomers to thrive in Canadian society. Recognizing openly oppressive practices and governing legislation allows social workers to understand that there are many inward and hidden injustices faced by this population as a direct result of years of systemic oppression and control created by governing systems. These aforementioned elements of the act are visibly discriminatory in nature. It is arguable that the act promotes domestic and international interests by focusing on an economic strategy that fills labor gaps, rather than practicing equity and transparency within Canadian immigration (Amery, 2013).

Canadian Immigration Historical Events

It is also important to note that historically, the governing legislation and policies have perpetuated racially motivated events that have labelled newcomers as *the other* and have created harmful and unfair circumstances for newcomer populations. I note the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 and the Continuous Passage Act of 1908, which were implemented to limit Asian immigration. Due to the injustices present in these acts, many hardships were created for immigrants from Asian countries (Jantzi, 2015). A widely known example is the Komagatu Maru, a ship with 376 Indian passengers, which was declined entry into Canada in 1914 (Jantzi, 2015). Being familiar with how previous Canadian immigration acts have negatively impacted immigrants is critical in taking action to limit how future and current acts may negatively impact them.

Structural Overview

Settlement counsellors who work within settlement agencies are responsible for assisting newcomers throughout their adjustment to their new country of residence. They use many theories, frameworks, and concepts to assist with their work (Hendricks & Congress, 2009). These theories can include the theories used throughout this advanced practicum, which included critical race theory, strengths-based theory, ecological systems theory, solution focused therapy, and task centered practice. However, they are not limited to these approaches. Practice theories vary from client to client and are often reflective of the client's strengths. In many ways, the work reflects an eclectic social work approach which draws on many theories, depending on what the client's specific needs are at the time (Coady & Lehmann, 2007). This provides a worker with the flexibility to use and combine theories to develop a suitable action plan for clients (Coady & Lehmann, 2007). This process is reflective of unique client situations (Coady & Lehmann, 2007). Due to the complexity and uniqueness of each immigration story and needs of the client, this framework works exceptionally well in allowing workers to navigate their actions plans accordingly with the help of the client (Hendricks & Congress, 2009).

Furthermore, when analyzing the use of numerous theories and their relevance and value to each client case, using a structural approach is necessary in order to maximize the potential benefits of working with the client (Yohani, Poirier, & Brar, 2013). By using a structuralist approach one can recognize the opportunities and barriers present at a structural level that may be limiting the advancement of the client (Yohani et al., 2013). This is essential when working with newcomers as these structures shape their interactions and progression within society. The newcomer population requires intervention at not only an individual level, but at the larger structural level (Carrillo & O'Grady, 2018). By understanding and focusing on these social

systems, social workers can understand social systems that are designed to limit the progression of certain populations such as immigrants and refugees (Carrillo & O'Grady, 2018). Using a structural social work perspective is necessary when advocating for client needs on a systematic level (Carrillo & O'Grady, 2018).

Some of these structures include immigration legislation systems, legal systems, labour regulations, and health systems (Carrillo & O'Grady, 2018). Structural social work perspectives aim to break down society's structural causes of social problems in order to pinpoint in what ways these may be harming clients and creating oppressive barriers for members of society (Carrillo & O'Grady, 2018). Therefore, settlement workers must adhere to understanding these disparities within the systems with which our societies function, in order to aid those affected by the injustices deeply rooted in day to day structures.

Additionally, because structures like the capitalist workforce, education, and legal practices are so deeply engrained within our society, it can be difficult at times to examine how these perpetuate oppression amongst newcomers (Mostoway, 2020). However, examining these systems from a social work perspective breaks down numerous practices that are degrading to the overall well-being of Canada's newcomers. Due to the circumstances surrounding relocation from one country to another, many immigrants are determined to find a job as soon as they arrive in Canada in order to provide for their families (Wang & Sangalang, 2005). Sometimes, these work environments can create harsh, and unfair work conditions that immigrants can be subject to. This can stem from language barriers which then allow employers to create fearful and abusive environments for newcomers who may not be familiar with their rights and entitlements (Mostoway, 2020). Additionally, many systems can take advantage of the gratitude expressed by

newcomers towards those who employ them, which can create exploitative environments for this population (Mostoway, 2020).

When looking at the work adjustment and job satisfaction amongst immigrant employees, Wang and Sangalang (2005) found that foreign born employees receive less support from management in comparison to Canadian born workers. Poor job satisfaction amongst immigrant employees is a common, long standing issue observed by social workers who work with newcomers (Wang & Sangalang, 2005). Foreign born workers often get their support through other immigrant co-workers, or self- efficacy (Wang & Sangalang, 2005). Wang and Sangalang (2005) described dynamics that are true to the experiences of clients shared at Peel Multicultural Council. These workplace conditions show the need for organizations to promote both the interactions between immigrant employees and Canadian born employees, while providing support from upper management in order to create additional support and fill gaps that are present in the workplace (Wang & Sangalang, 2005).

In the realm of education, social exclusion may occur through culturally normative dynamics which do not always cater to the diversity at hand (Saleem et al. 2016) These include Anglo-conformity -which is the idea that newcomers should learn and speak English-, westernized concepts of adolescence, financial security, and other areas of privilege that may not be widely seen in immigrant populations (Saleem et al. 2016). Xenophobic behaviors can result in structural violence in the educational sector (Saleem et al., 2016). Structural violence is faced by many marginalized populations, as they do not always have access to the same privileges as others which puts them at risk of inequalities within the health, economical, and political systems, (Saleem et al., 2016). Structural violence can be defined as injustices that are heavily

rooted in social and institutional structures in society that may result in the harm to an individual's wellbeing (Saleem et al., 2016).

Additionally, systems that are supposed to be based on equality and fairness such as the legal system, are still subject to harmful predisposed racist ideologies, which put immigrant populations at risk of prejudice (Saleem et al., 2016). These racist ideologies include a predisposition of beliefs that frame people of color as criminals through historically racist values, and underlying racism in communities (Pinard, 2020). Race is found to heavily influence convictions (Pinard, 2020). For example, Black men are more likely to be imprisoned for the same crime as White men (Pinard, 2020). Additionally, those of color are also more likely to serve more time for the same sentence as a White person (Pinard, 2020). This alarming data is proof of the inherent racism and bias present at both a conscious and unconscious levels within the legal system, that results in unfair and oppressive outcomes (Pinard, 2020). Moreover, the legal system creates a fear regarding the status of newcomers in Canada (Saleem et al., 2016). This creates gendered risks when seeking assistance and legal services (Dwyer, 2020). Newcomers, may be hesitant to seek legal support due to fears of persecution and losing their resident status (Dwyer, 2020). For newcomer women, this poses a threat that further deters them from seeking assistance when faced with forms of violence (Dwyer, 2020). Consequently, studies have shown that newcomer populations face higher rates of poverty, limited access to health care, employment related harassment and sexual violence (Saleem et al., 2020). This is directly related to the failures of the systems that are meant to serve individuals, however, are unable to stop perpetuating bias. Therefore the systems in place also fail to inform newcomers of available supports, ultimately failing them. All of these factors stemming from structural violence can have a tremendous impact on one's physical and mental health (Saleem et al., 2020).

Moreover, by understanding and recognizing the opportunities and barriers present for this population, at the structural level, social workers can attempt to advocate to create social change, while using theories to assist clients at the micro level (Yohani et al., 2013). These forms of advocacy all are directly focused on dismantling the systems that give unequal aid to its citizens (Chan, 2018). It can stem from urging government policies that are targeted on providing newcomers with access to dental care, to advocating for better health care resources in areas situated with a high number of immigrants (Chan, 2018). Therefore, settlement work may be looked at as an intersectional field that requires the use of a multitude of theories, frameworks, and practice skills in order to aid with the unique circumstances of each newcomer and their personal strengths and aspirations (Yohani et al., 2013). In order to assist clients on an individual level, the outward systems that impact them daily must be taken into consideration. This will maximize the level of intervention and understanding between the worker and client (Motoway, 2020).

Settlement Workers

After the arrival of immigrants and refugees into their new country, they are often assisted by settlement workers. Settlement workers assist newcomers with their transitions into the new systems they have entered into. This includes, but is not limited to, housing, jobs, legal assistance, health care navigation, and immigration assistance (Tedesco, 2013). The roles of settlement workers are vast, due to the vast and unique needs of newcomers. Settlement workers provide assistance with language programs, documentation completion, overcoming cultural barriers, and one on one counseling (Tedesco, 2013).

Although settlement workers roles are so diverse and complex, there is a central theme present amongst many settlement workers that is centered on the concept of “hope”. Although

this idea of hope varies from person to person, there is research to suggest both newcomers, and settlement workers, share ideas and concepts of hope, which is central to their working relationship (Tedesco, 2013). “Hope”, for the purpose of this paper, can be defined as a projection that is centered on a means of an ongoing persistent desire of reaching and attaining a goal through oneself, or through a higher power (Capps, 1995). Throughout the advanced practicum experience, I was able to experience the same belief and central values instilled with this idea of hope, amongst my colleagues and other settlement workers. The undeniable belief of hope was present alongside all workers as they worked with clients to reach their goals. (Tedesco, 2013). The mission of many settlement agencies is reliant on hope, and the faith that people can reach their goals as newcomers in a foreign land. But this idea of hope assumes that the systems in place can be adequately changed to support the client’s needs.

However, because the idea of hope varies for each person, it is difficult to quantify and define (Tedesco, 2013). Factors such as religion, change in attitudes, culture, personal perceptions, and feelings of hopelessness are all reflective of how an individual feels hope (Tedesco, 2013). Additionally, in the worker-client relationship, feelings and attitudes surrounding this idea of hope and the transitioning in the journey can be projected onto the client from the worker. Therefore, this idea of hope is central to understand and reflect upon with each client, as it is an integral part of settlement work.

There were many gaps in connecting existing social work theories to practice with newcomer populations. These gaps were most often seen when assessing how settlement workers and social workers have previously used these theories with immigrants in a Canadian immigration setting. The limited amount of available data for how critical race theory, ecological systems theory, strengths-based theory, solution focused theory, task centered practice, is used

by social workers assisting newcomers sheds light on the importance of assessing the effectiveness of theories in the field with different populations. This paper itself aims to depict how these theories were used and the benefits and limitations of each in the field as a settlement worker. This is due to the fact that in recent years many social work practitioners, scholars, and educators, have become increasingly cognizant of the importance of expanding our knowledge base of working with diverse populations, and challenging what we know in order to increase our knowledge (Sakamoto et al., 2018).

Population strengths

When taking a look at the diverse characteristics of the region of Peel's unique immigrant population, it is clear that there is much strength that can be derived from working with and conducting research with this group. The role of hope in research and practice with immigrant populations is a prominent theme that contributes to the success of many immigrants (Maiter & Stalker, 2011). This optimistic state of mind works as an invisible force in driving immigrants to continuously get back up and face new challenges daily (Maiter & Stalker, 2011). Immigrant populations face unique challenges in relation to relocation; however, they tend to show high levels of resiliency (Maiter & Stalker, 2011). Resiliency works as a major strength accompanied with the personal agency that is often held by immigrant families. Resiliency is the ability to prosper, grow, and increase personal competence when involved in adverse circumstances (Maiter & Stalker, 2011).

Furthermore, the hope for a better future is often a strength used to consistently overcome the barriers and challenges that come along with migrating from one region of the world to another. This strength is often shown collectively throughout family units. Minority cultures in

Canada can encompass different worldviews that emphasize a greater sense of family strength and resiliency as a unit (Proskaeur, 2000). Resilience is seen as the “positive adaptation in the context of significant risk or adversity” (Masten & Powell, 2003). The strength of the family unit is a huge contributing factor in the successful adaptation to new schools, work, and community cultures (Proskaeur, 2000). Strong family connections are often associated with the belief that dedication, time, and hard work will ultimately result in improved circumstances for families (Raffaelli & Wiley, 2013). For many immigrants, these connections and transnational community support provides assistance for hardships the families may face (Raffaelli & Wiley, 2013).

This level of resiliency is seen in numerous ways within the family structure. Immigrant youth are vulnerable to both low socioeconomic status and discrimination, which are two factors which can have a tremendous effect on one’s psychological health (Güngör & Perdu, 2017). However, we see many times that these minorities show similar levels of well-being as their peers, while they may be subject to certain risk factors that their peers are not (Güngör & Perdu, 2017). In terms of educational outcomes, second generation newcomers have greater participation rates in higher professional education (Orupabo, Drange, & Abrahamsen, 2019). This is important to note considering the lower economic status that many minority youth are subject to (Orupabo, Drange, & Abrahamsen, 2019). Education is seen a critical component of immigrant families, therefore high expectations are often placed on the children of immigrants (Orupabo, Drange, & Abrahamsen, 2019). Although these children don’t always have access to additional supports and programming, they often overcome these challenges and pursue higher education (Orupabo, Drange, & Abrahamsen, 2019). This form of resilience can be rooted in the multiple cultural dimensions of youth. In numerous western cultures independence is promoted.

Whereas, in many non-western cultures, there is an emphasis on connections and the interdependence on communities and strong ties (Güngör & Perdu, 2017). These attitudes can encourage resourcefulness, and result in connections and attitudes towards creating a greater and more fulfilling life (Güngör & Perdu, 2017).

However, it is important to note that these experiences vary based on different factors. Research has shown us that some white educators assume intellectual superiority to black students (Kelly & Varghese, 2018). As a result of this, black students face restriction and discrimination in their education as opposed to white students (Kelly & Varghese, 2018). This not only has an impact on their educational journey, but also when they are outside of school joining the work force (Kelly & Varghese, 2018). These impacts include racial discrimination which results in an employee being treated unfavorably due to their race (Snyder & Schwartz, 2019). This form of discrimination results in racial microaggressions which can create hostile environments for people of color in the work force (Snyder & Schwartz, 2019). These microaggressions include verbal and non-verbal insults and offences which create a hostile environment (Snyder & Schwartz, 2019). It is important to understand that although immigrant youth show high levels of resiliency, there are factors that work as barriers as a result of institutionalized oppression (Kelly & Varghese, 2018).

Moreover, in terms of adult education, settlement service agencies such as Peel Multicultural Council provide language services to adult immigrants. There are also opportunities for adult learners to further their education and participate in community adult learning programs. There is a great resilience amongst immigrant adults in these programs when they fully partake within these services and learn the English Language, despite other challenges they face (Samuels, 2015). These include psychological challenges, economic burdens, social

commitments, and linguistic differences (Samuels, 2015). It is the resilience of this population that allows for settlement workers to aid them in navigating through programs and opportunities, when many factors put them at a disadvantage. These factors will be further explored in chapter 3 and 4 of this paper, where the advanced practicum process is discussed, as many of the disadvantages faced by this population were uncovered through working directly with them.

Social work dimensions

The term “integration” refers to what those who control the structural systems that enable progression within society, have deemed as the desirable outcome of those who immigrate into Canadian society (Li, 2003). The central goal of these desirable outcomes is based on newcomers adopting the full economic, social, cultural, and political norms of their new host country as a means of assimilation (Li, 2003). For that reason, it is critical for social workers to work outside the dominant paradigms, and focus on creating systems that can provide equitable opportunities for newcomers. These systems are based on the white constructed dominant paradigm that continues to enforce white power and privilege. In recognizing this system, social workers can strive towards rejecting conformity models that reject diversity, while looking for an inclusive approach (Li, 2003). It is imperative that social workers take transformative action to represent the needs of a growing population in Canada. This form of practice directly relies on a commitment to reflective and reflexive practice in order to understand how we, as social workers, use our values and experiences to practice in a context that enables us to provide effective tools for community advancement amongst immigrants (Pease et al., 2020).

From the late 1800s to early 1900s, the large influx of immigrants from Europe resulted in the idea and notion that is referred to as the “immigrant problem”. The idea of the immigrant

problem created a pathway for open racism and outward oppression towards those labelled undesirables by society (Park & Kemp, 2006). This was a method which aimed to blame society's problems on newcomers (Park & Kemp, 2006). This was a central issue for the social work profession which launched charity organizations, neighborhood activism, public advocacy, settlement houses, and a progressive era for a majority of white European racialized immigrants (Park & Kemp, 2006). It is important to note this was a major beginning for the social work profession and was one the main incidences that brought into effect the structuralist social work perspective (Park & Kemp, 2006). The reason this is important to note is because it highlights the formation of the social work profession as a way to address social injustices and serve the community (Park & Kemp, 2006). However, many immigrants of color were subject to discrimination and excluded from these settlement houses (Lee & Ferrer, 2014). Therefore, this form of welfare was exclusionary and inherently racist, and failed to serve those in need (Lee & Ferrer, 2014).

That brings up the main points of article *Are Social Workers Prepared to Work With Newcomers* by Yan (2011). Yan (2011) explores the readiness and capacity of Canadian social workers in British Columbia to work with newcomers. At the BSW level, and MSW level, the research study found that a majority of participants found it helpful to take a course on working with this population in order to create better preparedness at the intervention level, and to be equipped to work with the unique challenges faced by this population (Yan, 2011). The study explored the findings of self-selected members of the British Columbia Association of Social Workers and explored their perceptions on how prepared they are to serve the newcomer population. Additionally, the study found that 22 % of respondents never heard of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, while 52% had heard of this act, but were completely

unaware of what it entails. This is problematic because the Act is one of the major governing legislative pieces in Canadian immigration (Yan, 2011). The findings of this study indicated that the Canadian social work profession has work to be done to better prepare professionals to aid immigrants in their transitions (Yan, 2011).

Social workers are made available to support newcomer children, youth, and families throughout their transition period, and to aid with their overall well-being in all aspects. In order to effectively work with this population, social workers must have the background knowledge and experience that can be beneficial to assisting clients' with their needs. In terms of community practice, specifically with the newcomer population, it is critical that social workers are aware of the social, political, and economic factors that shape immigrants' experiences in Canadian society (Todd & Drolet, 2020). This means learning from both the literature and the lived experienced of immigrants and newcomers to understand how their experiences are influenced by these systems. Reflecting on advancements in research studies, relevant news, and personal experiences of immigrants can all aid in forming this awareness.

In terms of hearing newcomer voices, there is a lot social workers can do in the field. Highlighting the voices and journeys of immigrants can help convey their challenges, struggles, and triumphs (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). This is done through listening and assisting newcomers with establishing a place to share their stories. This can be done on a one to one basis or in a group setting (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). By working with newcomers and involving them in community-based research and in policy making, social workers can serve the population while listening to their needs and perspectives (National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018).

Reoccurring themes

It is important to note that there are certain disproportions prevalent when taking a look at foreign born versus Canadian born individuals. These consist of different social issues that affect each population differently such as poverty, health, and economic stress (Rezazadeh & Hoover, 2018). Many of these social issues are recurring themes which reinforce the need for settlement agencies to work alongside the immigrant population to tackle the barriers that come along with these social issues. This is required in order to focus on connecting clients to resources to overcome and manage issues such as family stress, health vulnerabilities, economic stress, social stress and experiences of racism (Rezazadeh, & Hoover, 2018). All of these social issues are dependent on factors such as age, race, sex, education and wealth (Rezazadeh, & Hoover, 2018). It is apparent that immigrant families are at a higher risk of being subjected to these components (Rezazadeh, & Hoover, 2018), therefore requiring additional intervention from agencies such as settlement services. The following section of this chapter will discuss the theories settlement agencies and social workers use to combat these social issues. These theories were incorporated within the advanced practicum setting and were evaluated for effectiveness in the field as discussed in the following section of this paper.

Theories in practice

Critical Race Theory

The development of critical race theory stemmed from frustration regarding the prevalence of racism within western societies (Gillborn, 2006). Critical race theory acknowledges that racism is ingrained within society on a structural level: legally, culturally, and psychologically (Gillborn, 2006). Racism is not solely defined as hate acts committed by

individuals, but also as subtle oppressions that cause disadvantages for minority groups (Gillborn, 2006). By recognizing institutionalized racism as social workers, we can use critical race theory to emphasize the need to address these disparities, while attempting to understand the viewpoints of racially marginalized groups through an analysis of systemic racism and the use of storytelling (Gillborn, 2006). Additionally, the framework provided by this theory allows for social workers to create strategies for action and to eliminate racial inequalities within society, while also addressing these disparities in their own agencies with colleagues and supervisors (Kolivoski, Karen, Weaver, Addie, & Constance-Huggins, 2014). The tools incorporated within this framework include storytelling, critical white studies, and interest convergence, while acknowledging and recognizing the experiential knowledge that people of color hold (Gillborn, 2006).

Moreover, critical race theory has been applied to immigrants when looking at the sociological migration process and what it entails for these groups (Garcia, 2017). History has shown that certain ethnic groups have been viewed as less desirable throughout the immigration process; primarily people of colour (Garcia, 2017). As has been noted, these beliefs have caused exclusionary conditions that may prohibit the immigration of certain individuals (Garcia, 2017). Although many white ethnic immigrants were once discriminated against, they now have become more accepted with other white groups (Garcia, 2017). Critical race theory identifies how other racial groups' experiences may differ throughout the immigration process, and what factors may play a role in preventing them from successfully integrating into society (Garcia, 2017). The benefits of using this theory with immigrant populations stem from its strengths associated with analyzing racism in large systems and the use of storytelling of lived experiences. For settlement workers, deconstructing and determining what disadvantages are

present for clients is critical in aiding them with their journey and advancement within the society they have moved into. Thus, critical race theory is an important component of community based and individual counseling with newcomer populations.

Critique of Critical Race Theory

Although critical race theory influences the use of certain skills that are beneficial for clients, there are certain weaknesses that must be taken into consideration when using this theory in the field. It is argued that critical race theory is predominantly a tool for analyzing systematic racism, thus rendering it useless on a worker to client basis (Closson, 2010). However, when applying critical race theory as a form of analysis, discussions can arise that break down some of the issues clients are facing in regards to their racial backgrounds (Closson, 2010). This can aid in therapeutic intervention as clients are able to share their narratives which may add value to the therapeutic process (Closson, 2010). Additionally, some critics have called for the exclusion of white scholars in critical race theorizing due to the importance of experiential knowledge of racism (Closson, 2010). Because critical race theory has splintered into so many subgroups it is important to have an overview of how one plans to use this theory in their practice in the larger sense in order to establish a discourse (Closson, 2010). In terms of this advanced practicum project, critical race theory was used to analyze structural difficulties clients faced, and to create plans through an advocacy role to address these concerns. This will be further discussed in depth in chapter three of this paper.

Ecological Systems Theory

Critical ecological systems theory provides social workers with a framework that works towards comprehending human activity within the social structures where it is formed. These environmental structures and interactions can shape the events in an individual's life (Piel,

Geiger, Julien□Chinn, & Lietz, 2017). The systems within the ecological environment consist of the microsystem, macrosystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and chronosystem (Piel, Geiger, Julien□Chinn, & Lietz, 2017). These systems play a direct role in the influences within one's life and their experiences. The microsystem is composed of the closest relationships that one has such as family and friends and those connected through organizations such as school, work, or places of worship (Piel, Geiger, Julien□Chinn, & Lietz, 2017). The macrosystem consists of one's beliefs and values that they have adopted such as political, economic, and community ties (Piel, Geiger, Julien□Chinn, & Lietz, 2017). The positioning one has in regard to rules, regulations, and the decisions they make are based off of the mesosystem, while the interactions and processes within other systems are controlled by the exosystem (Piel, Geiger, Julien□Chinn, & Lietz, 2017). Additionally, the chronosystem aligns experiences within a historical context in order to understand how norms are formed within the systems (Piel, Geiger, Julien□Chinn, & Lietz, 2017). This framework developed by Bronfenbrenner uses these complex systems to describe the underlying functions within one's personal system of many layers that they have developed within the areas of their life, that are both strengths filled and problematic (Bronfenbrenner, 1981). By identifying how each tier and system operates within an individual's life, social workers can work towards creating an action plan that can address these issues on both an individual basis, and a community basis, when working with larger populations that may be affected by the same systems.

Ecological systems theory has been applied to work with immigrant and newcomer individuals in order to assess how each social system impacts their life and their transitioning period (Paat, 2013). Also, this theory has been used as a tool to identify what areas of one's life are working for them versus against them (Paat, 2013). By identifying relationships,

environments, rules, and cultural factors in place, one can work towards assessing numerous dimensions of a client's social location that may be acting as a privilege or oppressive factor. Immigrants partake in unique life experiences within their systems that shape their social adjustment and their adaptations to new societies (Vimont, 2012). Using this theory in direct social work practice as a settlement worker was shown to be effective, and will be further discussed in chapter three of this paper.

Additionally, using Bronfenbrenner's ecological frameworks model to assess individuals and families, aids in identifying risks that an individual may face (Bronfenbrenner, 1981). For example, immigrant family experiences within each tier of this system can greatly vary (Vimont, 2012). At the micro system, immigrants have their families that face hardships just as non-foreign families do (Vimont, 2012). However, these families face different pressures due to social nonconformity and as well as the pressure to be successful and academically succeed as children (Vimont, 2012). These high aspirations held by many immigrant families can significantly shape the experiences of children and families in their transition into a new society.

Additionally, many immigrant's macrosystems are altered by their adjustment from their previous country to their new homes (Paat, 2013). This transition, and assimilation into a new society can create significant impacts for immigrants. This arises when being faced with the new norms and new culture of the new country they now reside in. This dramatic shift can be extremely overwhelming as families adjust to the new language and culture (Paat, 2013). In the mesosystem immigrants can be faced with the monitoring of previous cultural norms and activities (Paat, 2013). For example, parents may have difficulty interacting with others due to existing language or cultural barriers, whereas children may end up going against their parent's wishes with the attainment of new values (Paat, 2013). This is due to the fact that children take

part in systems that force assimilation such as the educational system, therefore it is often easier for them to adapt these new values and languages, whereas it can be harder for adults (Paat, 2013). The exosystem consists of one's neighborhood. This can shape immigrant experiences depending on socioeconomic status, and factors such as diversity of neighborhoods versus predominantly white neighborhoods (Paat, 2013). Immigrants who live in more diverse neighborhoods may find their ability to socialize and make connections in the community to be easier than those who live in predominantly white neighborhoods (Paat, 2013). This is based on numerous factors including cultural norms, language barriers, and ability to form relationships (Paat, 2013). All of these factors can play a role in the wellbeing and adjustment of newcomers who are transitioning (Paat, 2013).

Finally, the chronosystem examines the life transitions of immigrants while monitoring both physiological and emotional elements that affect their lifespan (Paat, 2013). These include major life transitions such as immigrant children's transition to adulthood and timing of migration, duration of time spent in new country, which all ultimately have an impact on newcomer's success (Paat, 2013). All of these systems are valuable in identifying family systems and creating planning strategies that may divert some of the issues faced by immigrant women, men, and children. These are all important factors to take into consideration when working within a settlement agency that helps transition newcomers into their new country and home.

Critique of Ecological Systems Theory

Many of the critiques of this theory stem from its detail orientated nature, as a result of focusing on each system in a person's life (Neal & Neal, 2013). Human lives are complex thus applying this theory into practice must be done strategically in order to ensure the development of these systems is strategically identified and addressed (Neal, & Neal, 2013). Additionally,

when using this theory, it is important to address which systems hold a larger weight on the issues one is facing, in order to work towards limiting those weaknesses based on hierarchical importance (Neal, & Neal, 2013). By applying reductionist principles to this theory, it creates an easier form of implementation, however, this can decline the value to client's treatment plans (Neal & Neal, 2013). Moreover, another major critique of ecological systems theory is based on the fact that it is so abstract and metaphorical that it cannot be effectively utilized in direct intervention with clients (Coady & Lehman, 2007). But rather because of the theories use of mapping and pinpointing it is a useful tool for the assessment process (Coady & Lehmann, 2007).

Strengths Based Theory

Strengths-based theory is a fundamental perspective for social work practice where social workers strive to promote client well-being through recognizing and utilizing the strengths the client already possesses for the purpose of combatting issues in their lives (Coady & Lehmann, 2016). Examining a client's intellectual capabilities, physical abilities, interpersonal skills, interests, motivations and environments can lead to identifying what their strengths are and using these strengths to accomplish their goals (Coady & Lehmann, 2016). Because there are a number of ways to define strength, this theory is great for working with an array of clients and taking a positive approach towards the helping process (Coady & Lehman, 2016).

This approach is interdisciplinary in nature and can be effectively used alongside other approaches such as critical race theory and ecological systems theory. Therefore, the use of this theory is easily integrated within a generalist eclectic approach that many social workers often use (Coady, & Lehmann, 2016). Some of the tenets of this theory include focusing on resilience, hope, empowerment, and self-determination (Coady & Lehmann, 2016). Strengths based

theory's framework is goal orientated, therefore clients are supported when setting goals throughout the process of intervention (Coady & Lehmann, 2016). This theory also assesses strengths and progress made by the client. Additionally, it aids in identifying strengths in one's environment as a positive attribute to reach one's goals (Coady & Lehmann, 2016). Furthermore, this framework is hope inducing, and provides clients the ability to choose their direction with their strengths, while assuming clients are served best when the social worker and client collaborate (Coady & Lehmann, 2016). Since hope is a prominent theme in newcomer stories (Tedesco, 2013) this theory can be extremely beneficial. Moreover, strengths-based theory views traumas and other hardships and struggles as harmful, but also as having the ability to create opportunity, while taking into account the worker isn't the navigator of the client's abilities (Coady & Lehmann, 2016).

Strengths based social work practice with immigrant populations can work to promote the resilience and strength held by clients, as they make a major move from their home country and work towards adjusting in a new country (Maiter & Stalker, 2011). By working with clients to identify their strengths, a social worker can assist clients with their journey of settling within their new country. This can range from identifying emotional strengths, to career orientated strengths, and qualification strengths that may help a client excel within their community (Maiter & Stalker, 2011). Additionally, using strengths based social work can help in working towards allowing newcomers to develop positive attitudes that can shift their self-perception and positioning while adjusting to their new environment (Maiter & Stalker, 2011). Working with clients to view themselves as resourceful and resilient can provide a sense of hope throughout the transition process. This can be valuable as many immigrants' struggle with isolation, economic

difficulties, and structural inequalities that may prevent them from recognizing their own strengths (Maiter & Stalker, 2011).

Critique of Strengths Based Theory

Although there seems to be many strengths of using this theory when engaging the personal resilience and strengths of immigrant clients, there are some limitations that must be taken into account in order to address the shortcomings this theory carries (Broski & Dunn, 2018). Strengths based perspectives stem from philosophical foundations and can dangerously fall into the realm of self-help and self-responsibility-based interventions (Broski & Dunn, 2018). This can be harmful for clients especially when working with immigrant and minority populations who are susceptible to social structural factors of poverty, discrimination, and unemployment (Broski & Dunn, 2018). This can be immensely problematic as it can disregard the structural inequalities that clients face, such as race and class, while focusing on their strengths (Zimmerman, 2013). When using this theory with clients it is important to engage client's strengths while recognizing any factors that may deter the use of those strengths (Zimmerman, 2013). By taking into consideration the social and historical oppressions faced by clients, it can work as a force of really valuing the strengths held by clients that have brought them as far as they've come.

Solution Focused Therapy

Solution focused therapy has been proven to be effective with immigrant populations in many circumstances (Cheung, 2013), therefore it was added to the approaches used during this practicum. Solution focused therapy is a strengths-based practice, which focuses on building solutions to client's problems in the fastest and most efficient way possible. This is done by identifying client strengths in order to create solutions that are attainable through the attributes

the client has (Purba & Abdullah, 2018). Solution focused therapy has become a widely used therapy approach which many practitioners may incorporate in their treatment of clients (Purba & Abdullah, 2018). For example, a study conducted amongst migrant workers in Malaysia used solution focused therapy with Indonesian women experiencing depression as a result of the difficulties associated with migration (Purba & Abdullah, 2018). The treatment plan encompassed intervention that helped these women realize their capabilities, while finding strategies to deal with their difficulties. The research study found that after the six 90-minute sessions, there was a positive shift in the levels of feelings of depression amongst these women (Purba & Abdullah, 2018).

Additionally, solution focused therapy can be seen as culturally appropriate when working with other cultures as minimal self-disclosure is included when using this theory (Chaudry & Li, 2011). The main concern when using this therapy is focusing on the issue presented and creating a pathway to dealing with that (Chaudry & Li, 2011). This can be beneficial when working with clients from other cultures as it can shift the focus from oversharing about themselves, and focus on a solution. This can be beneficial based on cultural norms and discomforts surrounding focusing and drawing attention to oneself (Chaudry & Li, 2011). Due to the short term nature of this therapy, it can be ideal for clients who may feel anxious about seeking continuous assistance through services, which can occur often in immigrant and newcomer populations (Chaudry & Li, 2011)

Critique of Solution Focused Therapy

Although the empirical evidence for solution focused therapy is strong, it is a shorter and less time-consuming approach which may make it beneficial for short term client and worker relationships, but may preclude building a strong therapeutic relationship with clients (Gingerich

& Peterson, 2013). Due to the fast, goal focused nature of this theory, it may limit the time spent between the client and practitioner, time that may be necessary in maximizing the client, practitioner relationship and building a strong foundation to a trusting relationship (Gingerich & Peterson, 2013). Solution focused therapy has proved to be more effective in cases that have implemented it with a consistent effort, whereas when it was not heavily implemented, it has been shown to be less effective regardless of its short-term nature (Gingerich & Peterson, 2013). Commitment to using solution focused therapy when working with clients has been shown as a clear component of success amongst treatment with clients throughout Gingerich and Peterson's (2013) systematic qualitative review of the outcome of 43 studies which used solution focused therapy as a form of treatment. Moreover, when using solution focused therapy, it is important to remain aware of clients' feelings and give them the attention they require, rather than dismissing those feelings to focus on their strengths and create a suitable solution. This can be problematic and counterproductive to the client's betterment (Gingerich & Peterson, 2013). Additionally, solution-focused therapy also poses an issue due to its inability to assist with chronic and complex issues that require longer periods of time to work through, due to its short-term nature (Gingerich & Peterson, 2013).

Task Centered Practice

Another short-term therapy approach used throughout this advanced practicum is task centered practice. Task centered practice was developed by William J Reid, in 1978, and since then has been widely used in the social work profession in many areas (Yu & Gusukuma, 2001). This is a problem-solving model which is constructed to determine a client's problem, and then identify the course of action required to create change and solve these problems (Reid, 1997). The use of this model varies depending on the client and field of social work; however, in the

basic model, treatment is based on spending time in sessions to plan and prepare, and figuring out how to overcome obstacles (Reid, 1997). The model is often applied through the use of short term interventions, in between the 6 to 12-week range (Reid, 1997). This model emphasizes targeting a problem and creating the necessary tasks to defeat the issue using the client's strengths (Yu & Gusukuma, 2001). This framework also allows for clients to become more involved in the planning and focus of their treatments, which has been shown to be a factor in therapeutic success (Kanter, 1983). For immigrant populations, task centered therapy may be beneficial in using their resiliency and strengths, in creating a plan to combat the problems they are facing.

Critique of Task Centered Practice

Although task centered therapy practices are well suited for a short intervention period, there are limitations that come into play when using this model. The limitations surrounding task centered practice focus on the short period of intervention and the willingness of a client to engage in the necessary tasks discussed during the sessions (Kallies, 2007). For clients who unwillingly participate, or are reluctant to engage in therapy, using a task centered practice approach may not work as well. This is due to the hesitation or unwillingness to perform the tasks set out by the social worker and client (Kallies, 2007). This is also because of the model's emphasis on a client using their own strengths to combat the problems they are facing (Kallies, 2007). Additionally, this approach is most suitable for clients who are readily able to identify problem areas and work to create the change they desire (Kallies, 2007).

Cultural Competency

When using the aforementioned theories and working with newcomer clients, I was obligated to explore a cultural model that addresses the uniqueness of working with clients from

other cultures, in order to effectively work with newcomers in the field. The cultural competency model, as it related to the practice of social work, takes on a broad meaning. Competency refers to attempting to understand the unique sociocultural experiences of groups of people while aiming to recognize intersectional factors such as sexual orientation, gender, social classes, religion, spiritual beliefs, age, and physical and mental ability (Small et al., 2017). Cultural competency has been described as an essential practice skill for all social workers, and has been labelled as very important within the world of settlement work with newcomers (Small et al., 2017). This is because you are working with clients from many different countries and cultures, therefore it is extremely difficult to become competent in every culture you interact with. However, recognizing and embracing the diversity of each culture and the uniqueness of each family within a culture is critical to be an agent of change within the social unit (Small, Nikolova, & Sharma, 2017). To increase one's knowledge of different cultures as you work with people, it is important to ask questions, while recognizing and respecting clients' core values and difference, in order to better assist clients throughout the adjustment process (Small, Nikolova, & Sharma, 2017). This framework of cultural competency goes beyond classroom learning in the sense that social work students are now responsible for furthering their knowledge of diversity on a client-to-client basis. Gathering these skills and knowledge enforces the deterrence of misconceptions, and works towards increasing self-awareness, and limiting personal biases that one may hold. This can all be accomplished alongside the use of reflexivity and anti-oppressive practice. Being reflexive within social work practice is a fundamental part of ensuring one is able to be culturally competent, in order to recognize that the clients are the knowledge holders whom social workers must learn from in order to broaden their cultural competency lens and scope (Small, Nikolova, & Sharma, 2017).

Critique of Cultural Competency Models

Many cultural competency critiques arise from the reluctance to accept the term “competency” as something that individuals are capable of when it comes to another culture other than their own. In terms of therapy, it is often viewed as a challenge for therapists to work with someone from a different cultural background and develop cultural competence when working with different cultures (Rober & Haene, 2014). Many scholars question one’s capability of being competent in other cultures, and consider this to be problematic (Rober & De Haene, 2014). Additionally, some researchers find this theory problematic due to the complex and unique characteristics of society’s evolving cultures (Edwards, 2016). The interpretation of this theory varies from scholar to scholar; thus the context must be outlined in order to justify the use of this theory in practice (Rober & De Haene, 2014). The use of culturally competent models in practice is not to create an expert practitioner in a foreign culture, but rather to educate oneself about different cultures while remaining open to different aspects of each client that varies within the same culture (Rober & De Haene, 2014). By working towards creating a competent practice working with individual cultures, workers can be more efficient in their practice (Rober & De Haene, 2014). Because no culture is universally the same, it is important to understand the weaknesses of using this theory, and adjusting it, in order to broaden one’s self awareness and understanding the uniqueness of each client in order to better serve their needs (Rober & De Haene, 2014). The strengths of this theory are based on continuously furthering your knowledge and understanding of different cultures by learning from clients.

Moreover, other theories such as the cultural intelligence model also follow a similar outline as cultural competency. However, culturally intelligence refers to the capability to function effectively in diverse cultural situations (Edwards, 2016). Culture intelligence

encompasses knowledge, reflective, mindfulness and behavior skills (Edwards, 2016), all of which are similar to the foundations that cultural competency models are built on. As a social worker, I preferred the use the term competency rather than intelligence. Competency encompasses the ability to do something efficiently, whereas intelligence implies a measurable sense (Edwards, 2016). This can have a negative connotation as intelligence has been used as an oppressive instrument in the past when comparing the abilities across different races (Edwards, 2016). For that reason, I prefer to use cultural competency models and language when working with immigrant populations. However, throughout the advanced practicum process I realized that this theory is extremely limiting as discussed in chapter three.

Additionally, another critique of using this model is found within the way cultural competency models ignore power relations and historical contexts that may impact clients differently (Carpenter-Song, Nordquest & Longhofer, 2007). It is important to remember that ideas of race, ethnicity, and culture are historically created concepts that heavily influence the systems in social life that cause discrimination on numerous levels (Carpenter-Song et al., 2007). The use of historical contexts when attempting to use a culturally competent framework is a key component that impacts each client differently and must be recognized in order to effectively engage with this framework.

After assessing other forms of cultural models, the cultural humility model is considered an alternative to cultural competence. Due to the above-mentioned limitations of the cultural competency model, cultural humility models challenge the failure of the models inability to take into account the complex power dynamics between the provider and client (Fisher-Borne et al., 2014). Cultural humility models take into account the way culture changes person to person, and challenges at an institutional level to address inequalities that are a result of not acknowledging

cultural differences (Fisher-Borne et al., 2014). Cultural humility seeks to develop self-awareness and acknowledge how cultural values and systemic institutions create inequalities for clients (Fisher-Borne et al., 2014). This model is based on the core elements of ongoing learning, self-reflection, power imbalances, and institutional and individual accountability (Fisher-Borne et al., 2014), ultimately making this model suitable for working with newcomers in the field of social work.

Anti-Oppressive Practice

Finally, the use of an anti-oppressive practice lens when working with marginalized populations is critical in order to deter practitioners from further oppressing clients facing oppressive situations and factors embedded within their social location (Flynn, 2017). The first step of using this lens is to acknowledge the power imbalance between a client and practitioner (Flynn, 2017). Flynn (2017) contends an anti-oppressive practice lens is crucial in attempting to break down systematic barriers that are present within a client's life. Reshaping and using this practice skill when working with immigrant clients is important in order to examine notions that view immigrants as skill deficient, which is a significant barrier to success within Canadian society (Chatterjee, 2015). Therefore, a practitioner's job in this case would be to utilize these concepts both within themselves, and larger systems (Chatterjee, 2015).

For example, by critiquing the demand Canadian society often places on professional immigrants, social workers challenge these notions that see immigrants as skill deficient. An example of this exists within the criteria of having Canadian work experience in order to work in certain fields. This can be viewed as oppressive and discriminatory as it deters many applicants from the ability to apply and attain such positions (Chatterjee, 2015). By challenging these notions and holding people accountable for the inconsistencies within systematic requirements,

one can attempt to bring social change to the injustices faced by this population (Chatterjee, 2015). Moreover, creating a dialogue with newcomer individuals that evolves your practice and allows you to learn from the client rather than positioning yourself as superior and more knowledgeable, works as a method of anti-oppressive practice (Chatterjee, 2015). Understanding capitalist, Eurocentric ideals placed within society and working towards eliminating them from your own personal practice as a social worker is a difficult and long journey, however it is a necessary part of anti-oppressive practice that is directly in relation with self-reflexivity and awareness. This theory is an integral part of working with diverse populations, and having the privilege of aiding them in their settlement journey.

Critique of Anti-Oppressive Practice Theory

An anti-oppressive approach has been critiqued for a lack of focus on addressing problems at both a macro and micro level (Sakamoto, 2005). This is due to the fact that practitioners often work with clients on a micro scale, however, fail to target the oppressive systems at a macro level (Sakamoto, 2005). This includes systematic inequalities deeply rooted in the policies that guide legal, health care, and educational systems (Sakamoto, 2005). Traditionally, social work with Canadian immigrants has focused on individual and family challenges as a result of migration and integration (Chatterjee, 2015). However, a large portion of anti-oppressive practice focuses on understanding the systematic inequalities faced by this population on a larger scale (Chatterjee, 2015). This creates a gap in using this framework when servicing individuals, as anti-oppressive practice can miss addressing the needs of the service users (Sakamoto, 2005). When working with clients on an individual basis using an anti-oppressive practice lens, one may uncover numerous systematic barriers that negatively impact the client's life. However, it is also very important for workers to gain critical consciousness of

their own power and position, and how this may inadvertently make the practice at the micro level, an oppressive experience (Sakamoto, 2005). Using this framework entails a greater form of addressing the needs of clients at an individual level and being more reflexive and self-aware of the practitioner and client power dynamics (Sakamoto, 2005).

Chapter 3: Practicum Process

This advanced practicum was focused on evolving social work practice skills when working with newcomers in a professional context. In order to effectively focus on the main goal of this practicum, a practicum schedule and process was formed. This was to assist with the overall goal of analyzing the use of practice theories in the field, while assessing which theories are suitable for working with newcomers in the field. As previously mentioned, these theories originally included critical race theory, strengths-based theory, ecological systems theory, cultural competency framework and the anti-oppressive practice model. These theories eventually evolved to including solution focused therapy and a task centered therapy approach. The next portion of this paper will discuss the practicum schedule and process which led to the analysis of these theories.

Additionally, a key focus of this advanced practicum was to examine the effectiveness of the chosen theories in the realm of settlement work. These theories were selected based on a literature analysis and practical experiences in the field. In this section of the paper I will explore my personal experiences using these theories in the advanced practicum setting. This analysis is based on my experiences with clients at Peel Multicultural Council and is intended to be an informative review of the efficacy of using them in the field. However, it is important to note experiences can vary depending on clients, organizations, service delivery, and personal experiences.

Practicum Schedule

The Master of Social Work advanced practicum began on September 5th 2018 and was completed on December 14th 2018. The advanced practicum was a full time, one semester practicum, which was completed within the settlement agency, Peel Multicultural Council. The advanced practicum process fulfilled a total of 450 hours, which were required for completion of the practicum. This was done through Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 5:00pm for 7.5 hours a day throughout the 12-week period.

The first week of the practicum entailed a training period which required shadowing my supervisor, Faisal Cheema, a registered social worker with a Master's of Social Work. Shadowing involved gaining an understanding of how the agency works and what the job responsibilities of a settlement worker are. Due to the short nature of this advanced practicum, the first week was extremely intensive in preparing me for the next three months and allowing me to learn the organization's functions and job description, in order to fulfill my learning goals and further my professional skills in the field of community social work. Through the use of a strict schedule, and time frame laid out by myself and my supervisor, I was able to successfully reach my goals and broaden my understanding of numerous concepts in the field of settlement work. This chapter will discuss the advanced practicum process, my learning goals, challenges and barriers I encountered, supervision methods, and the environmental factors present throughout the placement.

Practicum Environment

The advanced practicum process took place in Peel Multicultural Council's office space, which is located in the city of Mississauga, Ontario, and serves residences within the Region of

Peel. The region of Peel is comprised of the cities of Brampton, Mississauga, and Caledon (Peel Census, 2016). With a population of roughly 1.4 million citizens, Peel demographics are diverse, with over 50 percent of Peel residents being foreign born (Peel Census, 2016). Thirty five percent of Peel's recent immigrants are from India. The second largest immigrant group is from Pakistan, followed by the Philippines, China, Iraq, Jamaica, Egypt, United States, Syria, and United Arab Emirates (Peel Census, 2016). This environment was chosen to increase my experience of working with diverse communities, and help me reach my future career goals of working with immigrants and refugees in the field of settlement work. Moreover, with the increase of immigration to Canada, specifically within the Region of Peel, there is a demand for social workers and other social service professionals in the field of settlement work (Peel Census, 2016).

Peel Multicultural Council is a non-profit organization that was established in 1977 (Peel Multicultural Council, 2014). The council was formed as a response to concerns about immigrant needs within the Region of Peel. It was formed by a group of ethnic leaders who wished to create positive community relations (Peel Multicultural Council, 2014). The Peel Multicultural Council values the uniqueness of Peel's diversity and strives to create an inclusive environment centered on supporting marginalized community members (Peel Multicultural Council, 2014). The organization offers an array of resources for newcomers, which includes settlement support, language programs, connecting communities projects, employment services, youth programming, senior programming, oath commissioning services, and volunteer opportunities for both youth and adults (PMC, 2014). The organization also offers support for newcomers prior to their arrival and throughout their adjustment. Client case files are individualized and set to create plans that will assist individuals and families with their transition (Peel Multicultural

Council, 2014). The long-standing experience and commitment to serving newcomers in the Region of Peel made this agency an amazing introduction into social work with immigrant and newcomer populations.

Process of the advanced practicum

Since the advanced practicum was based in a settlement agency, I received a week of training on how to use the OCMS database, which was the data base responsible for documenting and tracking all interactions with clients in the organization. The week of training also focused on the organizational rules handbook, and the overall procedures and duties of a settlement worker, which I was responsible to fulfill. I was encouraged to speak to all my colleagues in the agency in order to get an idea of how the agency worked in each division to achieve their vision as a whole, and to explore my areas of interest and discover the ways in which I would like to achieve my learning goals. In addition, I was encouraged to familiarize myself with key areas and issues surrounding immigration which many of my clients faced, and the community resources and connections that were in place to offer clients assistance.

There were numerous available community resources through the agency, Peel Multicultural Council. These included services to assist with different issues, such as: addiction, mental health services, housing services, assault women's helpline, and community peer support for diverse families in Peel. Additionally, I was required to familiarize myself with legal services and health services such as community care, health centers, Peel Children's Aid Society, Alzheimer's Society of Peel, and the Mississauga Halton LHIN. Familiarizing myself with the social supports and community partners available in the Peel Region was critical to assisting clients with their needs beyond what the Peel Multicultural Council's capabilities are, due to the complex and unique needs of newcomers. Allowing myself to understand the services offered by

each of the available community supports and partners was extremely helpful as often referrals were made to these agencies.

Additionally, in the first week of initial meetings with clients I shadowed my supervisor in order to learn first-hand how settlement workers address the needs of clients in both first sessions, and in repeat sessions. In the first week, my supervisor scheduled an array of different clients with different needs ranging from settlement services, crisis support, language support, and family and youth support. The clients who accessed services were from all age groups, and encompassed many types of family units. From there, I was able to understand and develop an attention to the details and differences in each unique case. This was critical for the practicum as each client was placed in a different program based on criteria for accessing services. This included the newcomer settlement program (NSP), job search workshops, enhanced language training, English classes, community Connections, and oath services. Each of these programs were designated to assist clients with different needs. By determining the uniqueness of each case and client needs, clients could be directed to the appropriate programming. This was largely to do with the operations of the agency and how they allocated their funding and resources.

Due to the nature of settlement services, clients are often assigned to a settlement worker and paired up with those from a similar cultural and linguistic background in order to create a comfortable environment for clients and to address language barriers that may be present. Similarly, to my supervisor, we both are of South Asian descent and are multilingual, being fluent in the languages of English, Punjabi, Urdu, and Hindi, thus we were matched with a high percentage of the clients from South Asia. Approximately 70 percent of the clients I saw were from South Asia; however, we were not limited to seeing clients from only that region of the world. The referral process allowed for clients to be referred to us based on their needs. These

needs determined the services and programs the clients would be referred to, as well as the designated staff who would work with these clients in the various programs. As previously mentioned, these programs include newcomer settlement program (NSP), job search workshops, enhanced language training, English classes, community Connections, and oath services. Services are often offered by many settlement workers from diverse backgrounds and language capabilities in order to ensure service delivery to all newcomers.

Additionally, my training period was an ongoing process throughout the entire practicum due to the ever-changing needs of clients. Assessing newcomers' needs and creating settlement plans was the basis for the entire practicum, and I incorporated all the previously mentioned theories in order to create action plans to better serve clients. This was in large due to the fact the one of the major components of this advanced practicum project was to assess which theories would be helpful when working with newcomers. These theories were incorporated in all aspects of the practicum process from providing orientation sessions, to sharing housing information, helping clients fill out forms, familiarizing them with government programs, referring them to programs, advocating for their needs in the health care system or educational system, and advocating on behalf of clients within institutions, places of work, or amongst landlords. Also, the practicum process had a heavy focus on educating service seekers about their rights and responsibilities under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canada Human Rights Act, the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the Employment Standards Act. Finally, maintaining the appropriate client records and updating client files was an important component of this advanced practicum.

Upon completing my training, I was able to meet with clients one on one to create settlement plans that met their goals and addressed their needs. Additionally, I was able to assist

them with any questions they had throughout the transition process, and make the appropriate referrals required to meet the needs of each client. It was through one on one sessions I was able to interact with clients using the theories mentioned throughout the paper and assess the effectiveness of each theory in unique circumstances. Each initial session with clients ran on average for 30 minutes to an hour of working together to build a settlement plan. I would often see clients on an average of three times throughout the 12-week process. This resulted in me meeting many clients with diverse needs, for short term intervention focused on them reaching their goals. This also allowed me to meet my learning goals and interact with clients while creating meaningful relationships in a short period of time, due to the sensitivity of the relationship and disclosing of personal experiences. This will be further discussed throughout the chapter in the learning goals section and the challenges and barriers section.

Upon speaking to clients I was able to identify their need of certain resources and reach out to community members to organize a form of community outreach. Upon realizing that there were numerous families struggling to meet their needs financially, I engaged with colleagues at Peel Multicultural Council, to assess community-based resources that could aid our clients in any way. It became apparent with winter coming up, many families did not have the resources to equip themselves with the appropriate clothing for this transition, which for many was their first winter in Canada. I contacted numerous community agencies and came across Safety Net in Oakville, with the help of Peel Multicultural Council's crisis counselor. Safety Net is an organization that provides free items such as clothing, furniture, and accessories to financially disadvantaged families. This organization collaborated with us to provide families with access to new winter clothing which included pants, sweaters, and jackets. I was able to work with my colleagues to create a referral process for 48 clients and arrange a trip to Safety Net which

allowed clients to go visit and select their items. This small event created a community partnership between Safety Net and Peel Multicultural Council. As a settlement worker, it was clear that there is a continuous responsibility of advocating for client needs and making as many community connections as possible.

Finally, the practicum process included continuously reading social work literature and settlement work literature, in order to be up to date with advances in research and policies. I read various articles to continuously update my knowledge of practice theories, and the views of numerous researchers on the roles of social work with immigrants in western society. Many of these resources are included throughout this paper, due to the knowledge they provided throughout the advanced practicum process, which guided my practice.

Coady & Lehmann (2016) provided a great base for different theoretical frameworks used within the eclectic approach I took on. The knowledge of each practice theory from the text guided my practice knowledge and practice of client centered models (Coady & Lehmann, 2016). This text was extremely useful throughout the advanced practicum as it provided valuable information on several theories I used, including ecological systems theory, solution focused therapy, and task centered practice (Coady & Lehmann, 2016). This gave me a platform for my general knowledge which I was able to expand through practice and other journal articles. These journal articles included article *Are social workers ready to work with newcomers* by Yan (2011) which highlighted major gaps in Canadian social work education, to prepare social workers to work with newcomers. This guided my practice and attention to relevant literature to evolve my practice skills with immigrant populations. Similarly, a memorable piece of literature by Saleem et al (2016), examined the systemic violence immigrant populations are vulnerable to. This

allowed me to be informed in my practice and work with clients to address their systemic barriers on a client to client basis, as demonstrated in my learning goals.

Learning Goals

Prior to commencing my advanced practicum, I had devised learning goals that would help guide my learning experience. This section will highlight whether these goals were attained, and if so, how. Please note that the goals encompassing the practice theories I used throughout the practicum will be further discussed in the next section of this paper, where I evaluate the effectiveness of each theory. These goals influenced my entire advanced practicum process and molded my experience in the agency. The goals focused heavily on my professional development as a social worker with the newcomer population. I was extremely eager to develop both my theoretical and professional practice skills through the use of literature and practical delivery through sessions with clients. This was done while examining the effectiveness of the different theories which included critical race theory, strengths-based theory, ecological systems theory, solution focused therapy, task centered approach, cultural competency framework and the anti-oppressive practice model, and evaluating what positive and negative outcomes they have when working with newcomers.

Learning Goal 1: Maximizing My Understanding of Systemic Oppression

My first learning goal was focused on maximizing my understanding of systemic oppression present within Canadian society that may deter the success of immigrants. In order to effectively achieve this goal, I engaged with clients throughout the intake period to assess what barriers they were facing, but also continuously read relevant literature in order to familiarize myself with these challenges. A systematic review by Vang, Sigouin, Flenon, and Gagnon

(2016) informed me of the existing health care inequities faced by immigrant populations, that lead to a decrease in health and well-being throughout the settlement process, specifically in mental health amongst newcomer women. I saw this throughout my advanced practicum with numerous newcomer women, who were overwhelmed with their responsibilities and new life away from the support of their families who traditionally would provide them with the support and comfort they needed. Social exclusion faced by this group was a factor in a decrease in mental health and overall well-being. In order to address these issues when creating a settlement plan with clients, we looked for social support through a strengths-based perspective that could create a pathway for these women to diminish their sense of social exclusion. These strengths often included family support, faith-based support, and personal experience and resilience showed by clients to attain their goals through different pathways. For some clients, working with their families as a unit to assist one another to reach their goals was a viable strength they had. Whereas, other clients might seek connection to their faith based communities and places of worship for additional support and guidance in the settlement process. It was my job as a settlement worker to connect clients to different pathways that clients had to the ability to utilize, through the use of a client's personal strengths and resiliency. These pathways included numerous agency services such as English language training classes, group mentorship opportunities, volunteer opportunities, ESL classes, employment support, religious communities, and familiarizing clients with our crisis support team, in case it was required.

There is research evidence to suggest immigrants are typically physically healthier than the general population prior to arriving in Canada. However, their health deteriorates (Gee et al., 2005) due to numerous factors, which include a lack of access to services, a predisposition to certain health issues, inequalities in the healthcare system, and stressors faced with the

immigration process (Gee et al., 2005). All of these factors impact newcomer's health and can cause physical conditions to heighten and worsen due to lack of treatment (Gee et al., 2005).

During my work with clients it was clear that many clients do face these disadvantages and health care inequalities, and this can largely be due to a client being unfamiliar with the English language. This can create difficulties in not only accessing services, but also in the quality of the services received through health care providers. Therefore, it was important for me as a settlement worker to assist in connecting clients with health care services and inform them of how the Ontario Health Care system works. This underscores that settlement services are extremely important for newcomers to access. However, the annual Peel Newcomer Report of 2019 noted that the Regional Diversity Table of Peel determined that the majority of newcomers actually do not access formal settlement support throughout their transition (Peel Newcomer Strategy, 2019). Rather, newcomers often access informal support in the community (Peel Newcomer Strategy, 2019). However, a majority of clients who did access settlement services did state that they would recommend settlement services to other newcomers (Peel Newcomer Strategy, 2019)..

Aside from health disadvantages, newcomers are faced with an array of other barriers, which includes a performance disadvantage in schools amongst newcomer children. Because immigrant pupils are given little support to catch up when they're behind due to learning a new language and adjusting to a new educational system and a new home, school performance issues can develop on an individual basis depending on the child (Volante et al., 2017). In order to address this need, Peel Multicultural Council offered the after-school Youth services drop-in program to assist newcomer children with their learning and promote socialization with other children. This program offers a homework club, information workshops, and various group

activities, with an emphasis on social development. Additionally, many immigrant youths were in need of part-time employment, so they were offered an opportunity to be enrolled in the Community Connections Youth Program Job Search Workshop (JSW) program. These programs are designed for clients aged 15-19 to assist them with some of the disadvantages they face regarding their educational goals, income support, resume building, and interview skills. I would often encourage and refer clients to enroll in these programs as a method of increasing their community connections.

A significant issue many clients faced was the non-recognition of credentials, which limits the advancement of skilled immigrants, specifically people of color. This was due to the oppressively created standards that view foreign education as insufficient in Canadian society (Guo, 2009). This systematic oppression is present in nearly all regulatory bodies governing many professions which evaluate the acceptance of one's education and experience (Guo, 2009). Many immigrants who may have been licensed professionals in their home country face major accreditation issues which create a massive barrier in them attaining a job in their desired field (Danso, 2009). This often results in immigrants taking lower paying jobs in a different profession (Guo, 2009). Although Canada attracts highly educated, skilled based immigrants who hold such a rich knowledge base, they are often forced into mediocre careers which do not evolve their professional practice, in attempt to pay their bills (Danso, 2009). This can often cause clients to feel devalued. However, I have observed through my practicum and my personal experience that many older immigrants sacrifice their professional dreams in order to allow their children to achieve success. This problematic system creates a foundation for those who held higher positions in their homelands to be subject to doing odd jobs in Canada (Danso, 2009). The tremendous demand for "Canadian experience" is a problematic and discriminatory practice.

Thus, Canadian job experience is viewed as superior, while experiences from other countries are viewed as insufficient.

For many clients I spoke to, this was a great issue in their lives, and they had trouble accepting this situation throughout their transition. In terms of support, I was able to connect clients to the Enhanced Language Training (ELT) program for internationally trained professionals. This program is designed to assist with finding employment or shadowing opportunities in order to gain Canadian experience. This program also assists newcomers with resume and cover letter writing, job search strategies, interview skills, networking, learning about Canadian workplace culture, enhancing employability skills, and knowing their employee rights. It offers free access to computers, internet, printers, fax, and telephone, because the lack of these items is still a barrier to access for many newcomers.

Asides from healthcare inequalities, language barriers, acculturation stress, and employment difficulties, my goal of maximizing my understanding of systemic oppressions present within Canadian society that may deter the success of immigrants, also helped me recognize the situational factors each client faces in a system that inadequately addresses these problems. These included barriers to transportation, childcare, financial aid, and overall emotional supports to cope with these difficult barriers.

I worked with clients using social work theories and knowledge to create plans to address these barriers. However, it is evident that there is a tremendous need for advocacy work and support for newcomers to address these ongoing inequalities that deter their maximum capacity of success in Canadian society. This is based on the factual evidence that women of color, Indigenous Peoples, and non-European immigrants are subject to a greater difficulty finding

jobs, and when they do find jobs, they can be lower paying and insecure in comparison to whites and/or people born in Canadian (Danso, 2009).

Learning Goal 2: Evolving My Self - Reflexivity and Awareness

For my second goal, I focused on increasing self-reflexivity and awareness of personal biases and experiences as an immigrant when working with this population. This was done largely through the use of journaling and supervision. Journaling my experiences and thoughts allowed for me to create a way to process my feelings and separate them from my professional attitudes in order to provide clients with effective assistance in their journeys. I was able to journal my thoughts and ideas that resonated with me when encountering clients with similar situations to what my family and I faced as newcomers in Canada. This was important in order to maintain self-reflexivity, and checking my own personal biases as I often found myself becoming extremely overprotective of certain clients. When reflecting upon this I came to the realization this occurred most with clients I felt I shared similarities with, or when I remembered facing a similar situation when coming to Canada. This was largely to do with the desire to assist clients with certain avoidable hardships that my family and I faced with our transition to Canada, as we did not access any social supports throughout our transition process. This brought me towards research based on countertransference which will be further explored below.

A specific case where I found practicing self-reflexivity and awareness to be critical was when working with a female client who was in Canada without her husband. This client was feeling overwhelmed with the pressures of immigration and taking care of her children, while her husband was back home. I could strongly relate to this, as my father too worked back home for numerous years, leaving my mother alone with four children in Canada. I had to ensure I was not

projecting personal feelings when working with this client. It was helpful to speak about this during supervision with my supervisor. My supervisor, also immigrating to Canada, and being a social worker working in a settlement agency, was extremely helpful in creating an open discussion about my feelings and addressing them to allow me to have an outlet to explore my feelings when working with clients. I also learned to be aware of my personal assumptions when working with clients, because even though situations may have similarities, they are often very different at the root.

This led me to increase my knowledge of countertransference with clients and how this may impact the client – worker relationship. Countertransference can occur unintentionally in helping relationships (Breda & Feller, 2014). This can occur when a worker may project their personal issues onto a client (Breda & Feller, 2014). This can stem from a worker having personal unresolved issues, or an unconscious link that can occur during the helping relationship (Breda & Feller, 2014). A large part of dealing with this effectively and professionally is centered on limiting the projection of your personal issues on a client. In order to do this, reflection and awareness is necessary. This was a key component of my practicum, which I used to reflect on personal unresolved trauma, in order to minimize projection and forms of countertransference with clients that may have been harmful to the professional relationship.

Learning Goal 3: Furthering My Implementation of Cultural Competency Frameworks

My third goal was to further my knowledge of cultural competency frameworks and critiques, while implementing them into my practice within the organization. I managed to achieve this goal through once again educating myself through relevant literature and also engaging with coworkers in understanding how they implement this framework into their

practice. Although I did further my knowledge of culturally competent social work practice, I still believe this is a process that continues through each person's journey and professional development. As mentioned in the literature review, I was able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of this theory, while grasping the benefits of using this in practice. In a settlement agency working with many newcomers who came from similar backgrounds as myself, it was critical to continuously evolve my cultural sensitivity practices. This was done by constant self-reflection, which was critical in order to limit projection and assumptions of practices and beliefs onto clients (Breda & Feller, 2014). This was required when working with and learning from those from different cultures, but also when learning from those from the same culture as myself.

Everyone navigates throughout their culture differently, and therefore it is important to understand that there is a uniqueness each person operates from within their own culture. This is reflective of what values they hold dear. For example, when working with male clients who were coming from traditional South Asian or Middle Eastern backgrounds, it was important to understand cultural and religious preferences that influenced the way they interacted with me. These values may differ from how my brother or father interact with female professionals, even though we are from the same culture or religious background. Because culture is so diverse and unique for each person, it is important to take into account factors that may create a different cultural perception for each person (Little et al., 2017). These factors include geography, community, education, family patterns, and religious beliefs (Little et al., 2017). For example, clients from Eastern backgrounds who were born in the West may express their culture differently than those who come from a similar cultural background in their home country (Little et al., 2017). Values and beliefs can also differ person to person from the cultural norms (Little et al., 2017). Understanding and educating myself on cultural differences through open discussion

greatly broadened my understanding of numerous cultural traditions, which I believe furthers my ability to effectively work with diverse populations. However, I shifted my focus from the use of cultural competency frameworks. Within the first week of my 12-week advanced practicum it became clear to me the culturally competent practice was heavily flawed. Growing research has found alternative models such as the cultural humility model, as explored in chapter two of this paper. Cultural humility takes into account how culture changes from person to person and focuses on developing an awareness of that (Fisher-Borne et al., 2014). In settlement work we are reminded and taught to be culturally competent, however, it is extremely difficult to be culturally competent as cultures are so unique, vast, and complex. I had a difficult time being culturally competent with clients who identify with the same culture as me, due to the fact that everyone practices and engages in their culture differently. To each person their cultural teachings are unique and differ immensely, therefore, the cultural humility model would have been more effective in this practicum environment (Fisher-Borne et al., 2014). There are also numerous forms of cultures within one culture. The south Asian population I mainly served was filled with all different types of cultures and traditions. I quickly realized it is impossible to be competent in another culture, but it is possible to be mindful of cultural differences and continuously educate oneself through the use of communication and learning. Going forward in my professional career as a social worker, I will be able to utilize alternative forms of cultural frameworks, such as the cultural humility model.

I also had concerns using a cultural competency framework when working with immigrant youth whose old and new cultures intersected creating entirely new identities (Clarke & Wan, 2019). Upon further researching these issues it became clear to me that cultural competency frameworks can in fact be racist when workers are encouraged to label themselves

as culturally competent as a result of creating an absolute view of culture (Clarke & Wan, 2019). This is where anti-oppressive practice approaches counter this negative discourse and provide workers with a way to attend to client needs by being aware of their intersecting identities and multiple oppressions (Clarke & Wan, 2019). Using an anti-oppressive practice approach throughout my advanced practicum was critical in not only reaffirming differences, but also integrating them into the agency.

Learning Goal 4: Implementing Critical Race Theory Into practice

My fourth goal heavily relied on my knowledge of critical race theory and implementing it into practice in order to understand systemic inequalities that are directly rooted within society that may negatively impact clients transitions into their new home. Although this goal was difficult to implement in one-on-one client sessions, it was widely found to be effective when evaluating immigration acts that may impact clients. The reason this goal was difficult to implement one-on-one with clients was due to my personal limited ability and competency of critical race theory in a therapeutic setting. I struggled with using the theory with clients and approaching the tenets of the theory, as it often didn't seem to fit in the goals of the session. I attempted to familiarize myself with the tenants of this theory, which included interest convergence, ordinariness of racism, and narrative story telling (Trahan & Lemberger, 2014). Interest convergence focuses on the claim that all forms of racism advance the interests of White people (Trahan & Lemberger, 2014). Ordinariness of racism suggests that racism exists in all social structures, and narrative story telling is used for minorities to share their experiences with racism (Trahan & Lemberger, 2014). Storytelling was one of the tools I was able to incorporate in one-on-one client sessions, however, I found this theory came more into use when assessing the systematic factors that affect client's lives.

Furthermore, I learned about numerous microaggressions clients faced as newcomers in Canada. These microaggressions came to light through storytelling, where clients disclosed their personal stories and events that shaped their immigration experiences. These microaggressions are so common that they have become systematically acceptable and blindly reoccurring in our systems. For example, many people of color encounter cultural disrespect in the education system and workplace with the mispronunciation of their names (Kohli & Solorzano, 2012). This is extremely problematic as many times newcomers may not feel comfortable in correcting their teachers. This is deeply rooted in a schooling system that has historically created a cultural hierarchy amongst minority youth (Kohli & Solorzano, 2012). Evaluating the complexities of these aggressions, like the mispronunciation of names, is rooted in the oppression of the systems newcomers are subject to. Historically, a segregated schooling system was used as a racist tool to systematically oppress people of color, who were labelled as the other (Kohli & Solorzano, 2012). Something as simple as a name holds a lot of power. A name encompasses a sense of identity and a self-concept for many people. Children begin to understand who they are through their name which echoes through their parent's accents and pronunciation (Kohli & Solorzano, 2012). The pressure to fit in and adhere to a new society or culture is one that is focused on pleasing the dominant perspective.

Moreover, immigrant professionals are subject to microaggressions in regard to their accents and accomplishments. Many clients face backhanded compliments such as “you speak English so well” or “wow you are actually a fast learner”, which can be harmful to the overall confidence of newcomers as they transition into their new homes. A critical race perspective examines how deeply ingrained these discriminatory practices are in our societies and culture, that normalize these microaggressions. When working with clients to address these impacts of

microaggressions, I strived towards providing them with an environment to explore and examine how these statements made them feel. In doing so, I also acknowledged the unfairness of these assumptions and spoke to clients to see what impact this may have had on them. Research shows that the counselor-client relationship is a place that can be used for healing and sharing oppressions (Malott & Schaefle, 2015). This is done in order to provide clients with a safe place to share these experiences, and recognize and explore any traumas associated with them (Malott & Schaefle, 2015).

As explained in chapter two of this paper, critical race theory focuses on highlighting the racism that is ingrained within our society on a structural level, legally, culturally, and psychologically (Gillborn, 2006). Because racism is so deeply ingrained within society, it is often difficult to pinpoint and address; however, using this theory gives practitioners a lens to operate from that focuses on finding these inequalities in order to address them. Throughout my practicum I focused on familiarizing myself with the concepts of critical race theory and came quickly to realize that this theory is easier to use as an advocate on a macro level, but harder to use on a micro level in one-on-one client sessions. There are a few reasons for this. Firstly, clients who come for settlement services often do not focus on the systematic oppressions they are facing, but rather are seeking services to aid them in their hopeful transitions. Because of this discrepancy it can be difficult to create a dialogue to examine these issues. Secondly, critical race theory can be linked to almost all difficulties faced by immigrants as a result of historically racist systems, which have continued into the present-day and have perpetuated unfair circumstances amongst these clients. This creates a large focus for social workers to address, more so on a community and systematic level. Thirdly, critical race theory heavily relies on the use of storytelling, which all clients may not feel comfortable disclosing. Clients can face reluctance to

disclose their experiences to workers based on a variety of factors. In terms of settlement work, I observed through personal practice experience, that clients often do not approach settlement agencies for therapeutic intervention, but can find themselves being in a therapeutic relationship with workers through the client centered practice approaches. Furthermore, clients who face social anxiety, a reluctance to disclose their personal life can be a result of adjusting to a new environment, mental health issues, or stress (Bray, 2019). Newcomers in particular can be hesitant to share personal issues due to stigmas and personal cultural norms which influence how they interact with strangers and what they disclose (Martin, 2009). This can also be due to the lack of trust in the new systems these clients are in (Martin, 2009).

Critical race theory is an essential framework to use when analyzing the systems in place that affect client lives. It allowed me to gain control of my advocacy platform when advocating on behalf of clients. Furthermore, I was able to use a critical race perspective when analyzing acculturation difficulties and anti-immigrant sentiment that created a form of social exclusion for some of my clients. This was done through analyzing the legal and political systems in place that may exhibit racism towards clients. Placing race as a center for evaluating client issues can assist practitioners with making a conscious effort to understand the effects of racism in our everyday systems (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). These systems often included the health care system, education system, and legal system. Therefore, when working with clients I used the critical race theory framework as a tool for planning and advocating. By evaluating these problems, I was able to advocate on behalf of clients to inform clients of their options in addressing these issues, and assist them in navigating them using a strengths based perspective. This was more widely used with clients having difficulty adjusting to their new school environment (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015). Critical race theory demonstrates how racial and ethnic students and parents

can face oppression in the schooling system and subordination (Ledesma & Calderon, 2015).

This was present with clients of mine that felt very hesitant to speak up and express their concerns in the schooling system with their children's transfer to the English as second language program, they felt intimidated by educators with their concerns. I was able to provide them further information and direct them to the appropriate avenues to address their concerns and feel their voices being heard.

Learning Goal 5: Implementing Strengths-Based Theory into Practice

My fifth goal was to use a strengths-based perspective with clients in order to channel resources that they were already equipped with in order to assist with their transitions. This goal was achieved through direct communication and work with clients. The strengths-based perspective focuses greatly on harnessing client's strengths and using them to reach their goals (Hartwig, 2020). I was able to work with clients throughout the advanced practicum to pinpoint their personal underutilized skills that would aid them in achieving their goals. This perspective was used in numerous aspects of settlement work including learning English as a second language, working towards furthering their careers, and connecting them to specialized supports for themselves and their families. All of these aspects rely heavily on a client's strengths and abilities, which enabled them to participate and reach their goals in the programs offered by Peel Multicultural Council, and other community organizations. Therefore, it was critical to work with clients to create plans using their strengths on how they were going to follow through with their goal attainment. Examples of these strengths included self-determination, family togetherness, community support, problem solving skills, resilience, and experiential value in their field of education or work.

Additionally, a strengths-based perspective allowed me to not only advocate on behalf of my clients, but to empower clients to be their own advocates and take power and control of creating the change they would like to see. A strengths-based practice approach was extremely beneficial when working with the newcomer population, as they hold many strengths that allow them to navigate through the community and reach their goals created throughout the settlement planning period. Strength-based perspectives are extremely beneficial when assisting clients with their job search, highlighting their personal qualifications, enrolling in community programs, and filling out new documentation or paperwork, as all these factors can create a tremendous amount of anxiety for many immigrant clients. However, strengths-based theory was limiting as the entire theory is fundamentally based on an idea that clients have unchanneled strengths which are not being put into play when they are achieving their goals (Brubaker, 2019). This can be problematic as sometimes clients are using all their strengths and in fact require assistance from an outside form of intervention. Also, sometimes clients can be so emotionally drained from their personal immigration journey that the idea of focusing on their own strengths to overcome the barriers they face can be overwhelming. In these cases, it is important to reflect and see what alternative routes may be better suited for the client. Moreover, in order to effectively channel client strengths, I worked with clients to assess the systems in their lives for strengths and weaknesses in order to pinpoint what they would like to work on.

Learning Goal 6: Application of Ecological Systems Theory in Practice

My sixth goal was to further develop my skills of applying ecological systems theory through the use of discussion, mapping, and understanding a client's file in order to see what systems in their lives play both positive and negative roles. This goal was easily achieved due to the effectiveness and assistance of note taking and working with clients to create a settlement

plan. I was able to then create a map to assess the different systems in their life with them. In order to do so, I used the conceptual framework to map out the factors influencing a client's life. This model, which is provided by Bronfenbrenner, highlighted the different layers of social structures (Bronfenbrenner, 1981). These layers included the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1981). As discussed in earlier in this paper throughout the literature review, each system holds a unique portion of a person's life including their family, peers, neighborhood, culture, immigration, and transitions (Bronfenbrenner, 1981). It was clear that newcomers have complex systems with numerous layers that play many roles in their lives, making it helpful in certain circumstances to map out those systems, whether it was in my personal notes or verbally with the client. This allowed us to pinpoint and discuss both the strengths and barriers present in a client's life.

Moreover, ecological systems theory also allowed me to map out with clients the factors on all levels that affect their daily lives. We often focused on the meso and micro systems with clients in order to analyze how things like family, language, class, friends, community services, school, or legal services all can play a part and add to their strengths. By using this mapping process we not only identified strengths, but also found barriers that were limiting clients advancement. By identifying those barriers through the use of ecological systems theory, we were able to come up with alternative routes to dealing with these issues.

Learning Goal 7: Exploring the use of Anti-Oppressive Practice

Additionally, my seventh goal throughout my advanced practicum process was to further my knowledge of how the agency operates from an anti-oppressive practice lens, while furthering my own personal skills and insights on this method. In order to achieve this goal I had

to familiarize myself with agency policies that functioned from an inclusive anti-oppressive practice lens, and also communicate with my colleagues to learn how they personally operate in order to incorporate this in their day to day work. Using an anti-oppressive practice lens when working with immigrants means a service provider is striving to become a learner and ally in the process of immigration (Clarke & Wan, 2011), while acknowledging the power differentials between client's and service providers (Clarke & Wan, 2011). This lens also heavily relies on advocacy and promoting social change that focuses on the integration of immigrants in society (Clarke & Wan, 2011). However, throughout the advanced practicum process it was apparent that settlement workers may be required to do individual level advocacy, and yet they are not required by the agency to advocate for social change on a systemic level, as a part of their staff roles (Clarke & Wan, 2011). Providing direct services to newcomers does not always address the oppressive social systems that are affecting them, and in that area I found the anti-oppressive capacities of the agency to be limited. Immigrants are subject to so many gaps in service, fees, and long wait times which are not all addressed in agency services (Clarke & Wan, 2011). This is an area of settlement work that needs to be worked on and further explored agency wide.

Moreover, Clarke & Wan (2019) stated “settlement workers who come from cultural minority groups must think critically about the oppressions they share with newcomer youth, as this does not exempt them from oppressing newcomer youth”. This deeply resonated with me as a minority immigrant social worker working with newcomer populations. It was important for me to recognize the power imbalances present systematically between my clients and myself as service provider and service user. Anti-oppressive practice fundamentally caused me to engage in an ongoing reflection of the numerous power dynamics in clients' lives (Clarke & Wan, 2019). Settlement workers must actively engage in learning, reflecting on power, privilege, and

oppression, in order to develop the much-needed change at not only the agency level, but also the community level (Clarke & Wan, 2019). In terms of my advanced practicum at Peel Multicultural Council, this meant consistently engaging in active conversation with fellow settlement workers and spending time to reflect on how our positions automatically create a power imbalance with clients. Furthermore, I used this reflection time as a way to determine how this may impact them while receiving services, and how to minimize this as an agency. The practicum environment served as a great platform for reflection and supervision, as the agency team met often and encouraged reflection as a tool for improving service to clients.

Learning Goal 8: Furthering my Knowledge of Community Resources

My eighth goal throughout the advanced practicum was to broaden my understanding of how community resources are connected and affiliated with Peel Multicultural Council. This was a significant part of the advanced practicum, as settlement work is deeply rooted in community work, and community work often relies on using networks and operations that are able to aid in the success of the clients. Prior to beginning work with clients, I familiarized myself with possible referral agencies in order to maximize my knowledge of community support. I continuously addressed concerns by reaching out to colleagues to see if they knew of any other opportunities for additional support for clients. Some community partners I engaged with heavily included Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services, a community-based agency centered on providing supportive counseling to refugees and newcomers. I also referred clients for mobile dental clinic services, transport assistance services, mental health clinics, and Peel Legal assistance clinics. Due to the uniqueness of each client's situation it was important to continuously allocate resources that would serve Peel Multicultural Council's clients in other ways.

Learning Goal 9: Developing a Professional Caseload

Finally, my ninth and final goal was to create my own client caseload as a training settlement counselor, while working to create individualized action plans for each client. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to engage with clients and create my own caseload under the supervision of my practicum supervisor. Throughout the 12-week period I was able to serve 23 different clients continuously on my own caseload and assist them with their transitions throughout Canadian society. With these clients I was able to work to develop their settlement plans and assist them with the aid of the social work theories presented in this paper.

Overall, I was able to effectively achieve all my goals while assessing which additional frameworks would be beneficial to support my learning outcomes. This once again supports my goal of showing how different social work theories can be applied to settlement work, and in what ways these theories may be beneficial or limiting to client work.

Exploring Additional Therapy Approaches

As previously mentioned, additional theories were implemented throughout the advanced practicum process. This included solution focused therapy, which is connected to strengths-based therapy in a way that practitioners identify client's strengths and use these strengths to create an action plan that solves problems as quickly and efficiently as possible (Hartwig, 2020). This form of intervention is highly effective through short term therapy approaches as it focuses on reaching the desired outcome quickly (Hartwig, 2020) . For many struggles immigrant clients face, they need an approach to solve their issues as fast as possible. For example, clients who needed a job were in a time crunch, because it was critical for them to find employment to provide for them and their families. By using a solution focused approach, I was not only able to

help them identify their strengths, but also use agency resources such as child care, job search workshops, and other trainings to assist them with their journey. Throughout the advanced practicum process, I found solution focused therapy to be a continuous approach used while working with many clients.

Open communication and use of questions to find what was helpful for clients was significant when using this theory. I read case studies of the use of solution focused therapy with immigrants to guide my personal practice. A specific case study by Arild Aambo (1997) demonstrated the use of solution focused therapy with immigrant women experiencing muscle pain. The article explores numerous instances of using solution focused therapy with immigrant women. It demonstrated how this theory can be used as a form of empowerment amongst participants in a short period of time (Aambo, 1997). I actively listened to the clients and helped them navigate what positive attributes they themselves highlighted, as a method of determining their strengths. In the first session we would often go over what they were currently doing in order to find out what else could be done. Going from there consequent sessions using this theory encompassed focusing on if and what became better, what they did, and what they can continue doing. Often clients would mention simply speaking to someone about their problems helped put things into perspective for them to create a clear action plan. It was from there I found that the use of task centered practice would also be extremely helpful in this learning environment while assisting clients with their goals.

Engaging with a Task Centered Approach

The task centered practice approach was extremely efficient to use with clients who recognized their issues right away and were looking for assistance in creating a settlement plan

to identify the issues at hand and assist with goal setting to fix the issues they were facing (Kallies, 2007). However, task centered practice was difficult to implement with clients who were in intense stress, as it was hard to concisely clarify what their problems were. This issue has been seen when using task centered practice with clients who are extremely frustrated, or obsessed with their problems, as they are not able to communicate effectively at times (Lo, 2005). When rapport was built with clients it became easier to identify their problems and assist them with creating goals and tasks to meet their needs. As we worked together on addressing how these tasks could be completed, clients were able to address their problems step by step.

Another issue I came across when using this method was clients who had created unrealistic goals to address the tasks at hands. I spoke to clients about this and created settlement plans with small steps that would be achievable to begin with in order to get them on the right path and avoid creating large unmanageable tasks for clients. With this framework, clients were able to navigate through their problems, goals, and tasks and create a time frame for completing these tasks and coming back for follow up appointments. I saw many clients with positive reactions to using this framework as the amount of resilience in the immigrant population carried through with them while completing their tasks and achieving their goals.

Overall, the theories and practices I incorporated throughout my advanced practicum were chosen based on the literature review conducted prior to beginning the practicum. Due to the empirical research and data, I was able to choose forms of intervention that have been proven to be effective with newcomers, thus having a positive experience integrating these theories into my practice despite a few limitations. Originally this advanced practicum proposed to only focus on the use of critical race theory, strengths-based theory, and ecological systems theory; however, during the advanced practicum process it became evident that other theories might be

beneficial for working with clients throughout the settlement process. I adapted an eclectic approach which incorporated numerous theories, and found that solution focused therapy and a task centered approach would be helpful to incorporate in a time sensitive placement while working with clients for a short term.

Challenges and Barriers

Challenges and barriers throughout the advanced practicum were anticipated due to the short-term nature of a full time one semester advanced practicum. The practicum time constraint created two major issues, both of which were based on delivery of services to clients. This included a limited caseload, and a short-term relationship with clients.

Since I was not going to be a settlement worker at the agency permanently, this limited the amount and type of clients that were put on my caseload in order to avoid issues with transferring clients at the end of my practicum period. Clients who were seen immediately to require a longer-term relationship through the intake process, were not typically assigned to my case load. Clients assigned to work with me were mainly those that would benefit from a task centered approach that suited my practicum goals, and those needing immediate guidance rather than crisis intervention. This was a limitation to the overall practicum experience, as I set out to use and evaluate numerous theories in the field, but was assigned mainly clients who would benefit from short term work in which as task centered approach and solution focused therapy are better suited. Therefore, this resulted in the use of task centered and solution focused practices to be used often throughout the practicum period. I was still able to meet with clients and use the other theories I set out to use, which included critical race theory, strengths-based theory, ecological and systems theory. However, there was a time constraint created, which

clients were aware of when building rapport. I informed clients of my status at the agency and the procedures following when I left and how they would be helped within the agency. This was continuously discussed throughout meetings and sessions with clients in order to allow for them to know that another settlement worker would help them if they needed help when I left, and would be updated about their settlement plan.

This created a limitation as I was not able to explore the effectiveness of long-term therapy approaches with newcomer clients. However, I combated these challenges by connecting clients to all available resources and navigating them to other settlement workers or crisis counselors in the agency. I also continuously saw clients with my supervisor in order to continue enriching my learning alongside his expertise. This allowed for me to not only see many more clients that were not on my caseload, but also learn professional skills from someone who had over 15 years of experience in settlement work. In creating my caseload I created extensive case files and notes of clients so that if they were to return to the agency, another settlement worker would be able to appropriately assist them throughout the transition. Moreover, because the settlement worker to take over my caseload was my supervisor, I was able to discuss many of my client encounters with him throughout my supervision.

Supervision Methods

My supervision was vital in creating a successful learning environment throughout the advanced practicum process. I had weekly supervision meetings with my advanced practicum supervisor Faisal Cheema, who allowed me to reflect and navigate my own thoughts and feelings. As a social worker, he was also able to provide me with reflective feedback about my process and improve ways I could incorporate the theories I set out to use in my work. He

created an environment that allowed for me to ask any questions and identify areas for my improvement. We would engage in discussions regarding creating settlement plans for clients and what avenues I could explore in my sessions. Moreover, we worked together to ensure my learning objectives were met.

Similarly, my first reader Dr. Sandra Hoy, and second reader, Dr. Elizabeth Carlson remained connected throughout the advanced practicum process, while providing the opportunity to connect anytime I had questions. We also were able to connect with my practicum supervisor and go over my learning goals and transitions throughout the practicum process. All of the assistance and supervision from all my supervisors was critical in fostering my learning and growing my professional practice skills.

Practicum Experience

Overall, this advanced practicum opportunity at Peel Multicultural Council provided me with the perfect environment to learn and improve my skills as a social worker. I was able to explore all areas of the agency and have the support of not only my supervisor, but all the staff in the agency as I completed my advanced practicum. I was able to work towards achieving all my learning goals and learn from all my interactions within the agency. I set out to evaluate the use of critical race theory, strengths-based theory, and ecological systems theory, while using cultural competency frameworks and an anti-oppressive model. Throughout the practicum I came to learn that although these theories were helpful when working with newcomers, there was room for growth in my approach, and there were limitations within the advanced practicum model. This is where I introduced solution focused therapy and a task centered approach, whilst exploring alternative cultural practice models.

Practicum Limitations

As a social work student, the advanced practicum process is designed to enhance knowledge, value, and skills (Petra et al., 2020). However, the advanced practicum process consists of a predetermined amount of hours that students are subject to within their learning (Petra et al., 2020). The 450 hour practicum period allowed for me to explore the use of different practice theories, however, worked as a time constraint which created difficulties along the way. These difficulties are mentioned within the learning goals-- that solution focused therapy and task centered approaches were found to be more beneficial with immigrant clients throughout this advanced practicum, due to the short nature of the placement. This was also due to the time sensitivity of newcomer problems, which required short term intervention and goals. According to a study conducted by Petra et al (2020) which looked at the preparedness of students from limited hours throughout the advanced practicum process found that increased advanced practicum hours with social work students in the field aided in skills development. My personal experiences found this to be true, and I believe that with more time and hours allocated towards the advanced practicum period, I would be able to more effectively attain all my learning goals.

Furthermore, there is growing concern that social workers are not equipped to provide competent services to newcomers (Sethi, 2019). While engaging with the literature throughout the period of this advanced practicum, it became clear that many gaps still exist in addressing effective intervention skills as social workers targeting major issues faced by the newcomer population. The social work profession has a lot of room for growth to better equip students and practitioners with the skills to foster newcomer growth (Sethi, 2019). Discussing the systematic barriers that effect newcomers, and the limitations of social work approaches to address these

limitations, is a step towards improving social work intervention with newcomers and was the aim of this advanced practicum and thesis report.

Personal feelings

The advanced practicum process was filled with a rollercoaster of emotions, all of which I reflected on and journaled through to keep me going. I often found myself having to be mindful of my personal and professional feelings with clients, when I found myself relating to client's stories. This notion is discussed in my learning goals where I uncover the meaning of countertransference and how this can occur with clients in the field. This was a great learning experience for me as I not only learned how to be professional while recognizing the fact that I am also a human being with many emotions. Many times, I felt overwhelmed with a sense of anxiety when working in the advanced practicum setting because of the sensitivity of situations. I felt pressure I as a student to take the full measures to help clients while ensuring my personal well-being and limiting burn out. In order to prevent emotional exhaustion from being a problem in this advanced practicum, I relied on support from staff and my supervisor. This tool is seen as a prevention method which has been found to be effective when taking a look at social work students exhibiting burnout (Le Roux et al., 2018). Students often face burnout as a result of academic stress, practicum demands, and vicarious trauma through field work in social work (Le Roux et al., 2018). Therefore, it was extremely important to me for my personal mental health and well-being to use resources and my personal relationships with family and friends as a preventative measure to deter from this.

It was throughout this journey that I realized the tremendous number of positive outcomes that can come from the assistance of a settlement agency like Peel Multicultural

Council. I realized the importance of community outreach, as many immigrants can benefit from these services. I was consistently reminded of many of the traumatic experiences I faced as a child of immigrants moving to Canada and what my early years in this country looked like. I am grateful that many families access these services as they could have had a tremendous impact on my experiences, had my family known these services existed.

I wished that I had also had the opportunity to work with refugee populations who were also being served through Peel Multicultural Council. However, due to the time constraint of the advanced practicum and the nature of crisis work with refugee populations, it was not possible as I would've stretched myself in too many directions which would ultimately be counterproductive. I hope to continue my work with newcomers and gain experience with refugee populations and explore long term therapy approaches that would better suit their needs in a clinical setting.

Conclusion

I genuinely believe I gained extremely valuable experience working with newcomers as a settlement worker. More importantly, I learned that education is never ending and the journey of advocacy as a social worker is also never ending in both my professional and personal life. There is a tremendous amount of work to be done for all social workers to effectively work with sensitive populations such as newcomers, and this was a small steppingstone for me to get there. Upon completion of my 450-hour practicum, completing this paper was a significant part of my learning which allowed me to relive my practicum experience and create a form of exploring my experiences and hopefully sharing it with others as a form of guidance for future placements in a settlement agency.

In conclusion, I am extremely grateful to have had this learning experience. It greatly improved my professional skills and allowed me to explore an area of social work which I am deeply passionate about. Immigrants bring so much light and resiliency to not only the social work profession, but also this country. There is so much strength to be derived from working with this population, and I am extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to meet and work with so many wonderful individuals.

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