

## Community Development Halton

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## **Sheridan Centre for Elder Research, Community Development Halton, and community partners launch new toolkit to older immigrant adults.**

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**Burlington, Ontario June 14, 2019**

To mark Seniors' Month in Ontario this June, the [Sheridan Centre for Elder Research](#) is excited to launch the *Building Connected Communities: Social Isolation and Loneliness Toolkit*.

The toolkit assists individuals who interact or work with older adults such as caregivers, healthcare workers, faith leaders and community organizations. It includes a checklist to determine if an older adult might be at risk of social isolation and a list of research-informed tips for older adults to get connected within their communities.

"Older immigrants are at an increased risk for social isolation and loneliness because they have complex lived realities, which can multiply barriers and the potential for discrimination and elder abuse," says Sirena Liladrie, a professor in the Faculty of Applied Health and Community Studies at Sheridan and the project's principal investigator.

Heather Thompson, of Community Development Halton, states, "We were excited to collaborate on this project, given our research on a report entitled *Seniors: Loneliness and Social Isolation*.

From the research that informed the toolkit's development, professor Liladrie found that 78% of participants experienced language barriers when accessing services and supports. To address this issue, several of the toolkit's resources have been translated into 12 languages including Arabic, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Spanish, Tagalog and Urdu.

Community partners on the project include Community Development Halton, Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre, Indus Community Services, Peel Senior Link and Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care. They've piloted several of the resources in the toolkit and are encouraged with how they can support older members of their communities in their role as key service providers.

"The Sheridan Centre for Elder Research is thrilled to support work that brought together academics, community partners, faith leaders, an interdisciplinary student team and the older adult population at large to address this growing issue," says its director, Dr. Lia Tsotsos. "The strategies

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and resources that emerged from this project will undoubtedly have an impact on our local regions and beyond, hopefully sparking change at a provincial and national level.”

The *Building Connected Communities: Social Isolation and Loneliness Toolkit* was developed as part of a four-year [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada](#) grant for the Sheridan-led research project titled “Building Connected Communities: Improving Community Supports to Reduce Loneliness and Social Isolation in Immigrants 65+”.

The toolkit is now available for download on [SOURCE](#) - Sheridan’s Scholarly Output Research Creative Excellence website.



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**Pictured top right (from left to right, back row):** Sirena Liladrie, Professor and Principal Investigator – Sheridan College; Gurpreet Malhotra, Chief Executive Officer – Indus Community Services; Tulsi Radia, Friendly Visiting Coordinator – Indus Community Services; Joey Edwardh, Executive Director – Community Development Halton; Thomas Howe, Project Coordinator – Sheridan Centre for Elder Research. **Pictured bottom row (left to right):** Deepika Jeyakumaran, Health Promotions Specialist – Indus Community Services; Lynn Petrushchak, Executive Director – Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre; Aisha Mian Malik, Information Management Officer – Peel Senior Link

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