



Examining The Experiences of Punjabi Women in Alberta Accessing Mental Health Services

Rajneek Thind and Dr. David Nicholas
Faculty of Social Work

Abstract

This research explores lived experience related to mental health service utilization among Punjabi women living in Alberta. The Punjabi diaspora has roots connecting to the state of Punjab in India, which has witnessed significant historical trauma. The Punjabi population in Alberta is increasing with immigration and migration from other areas in Canada. Punjabi women face challenges seeking appropriate support for their mental health.

There are significant gaps in the literature in this area, warranting further exploration to better understand and support mental health service delivery for this population. Based on an Interpretive Description methodology, seven Punjabi women living in Alberta participated in semi-structured interviews to share their mental health service access experiences. Findings convey a range of challenges related to mental health service utilization. Recommendations are offered to inform mental health support for this population.

Research Aims

- Examine the experiences of Punjabi women who have accessed mental health services
- Address gaps in the literature around Punjabi women as service users of mental health supports

Theoretical Foundation: Transnational Feminism

- Challenging Intersections
- Gender Inequity (patriarchy)
 - Colonialism
 - Class Inequality
 - Racial and Ethnic Inequality (racism)

Methods

- Qualitative
- Interpretive Description
- Semi Structured Interviews
- Transcription and line-by-line coding and analysis

The Sample

- Recruited via social media & networks
- Recruitment posters in English and Punjabi
- 7 Punjabi women > 18 years
- Resided in Alberta at the time of interviews
- Received mental health services within the last two years

Key Findings in the Literature

Impact of Immigration Process	Trust
Language Skills	Patriarchal Colonialism & Intersectionality: Izzat
Stigma	Coping with Mental Health Concerns – Cultural Competency vs Humility

Results

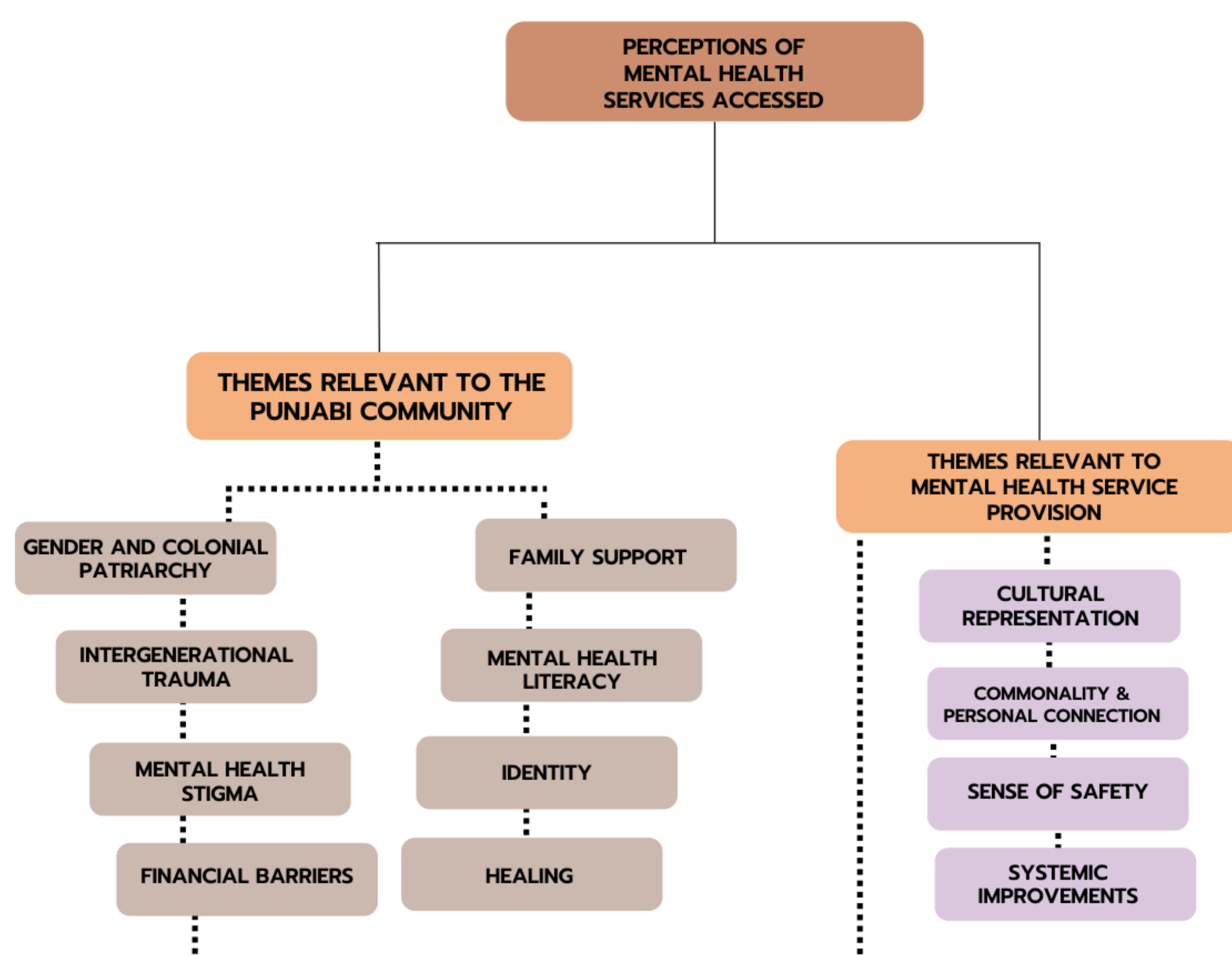
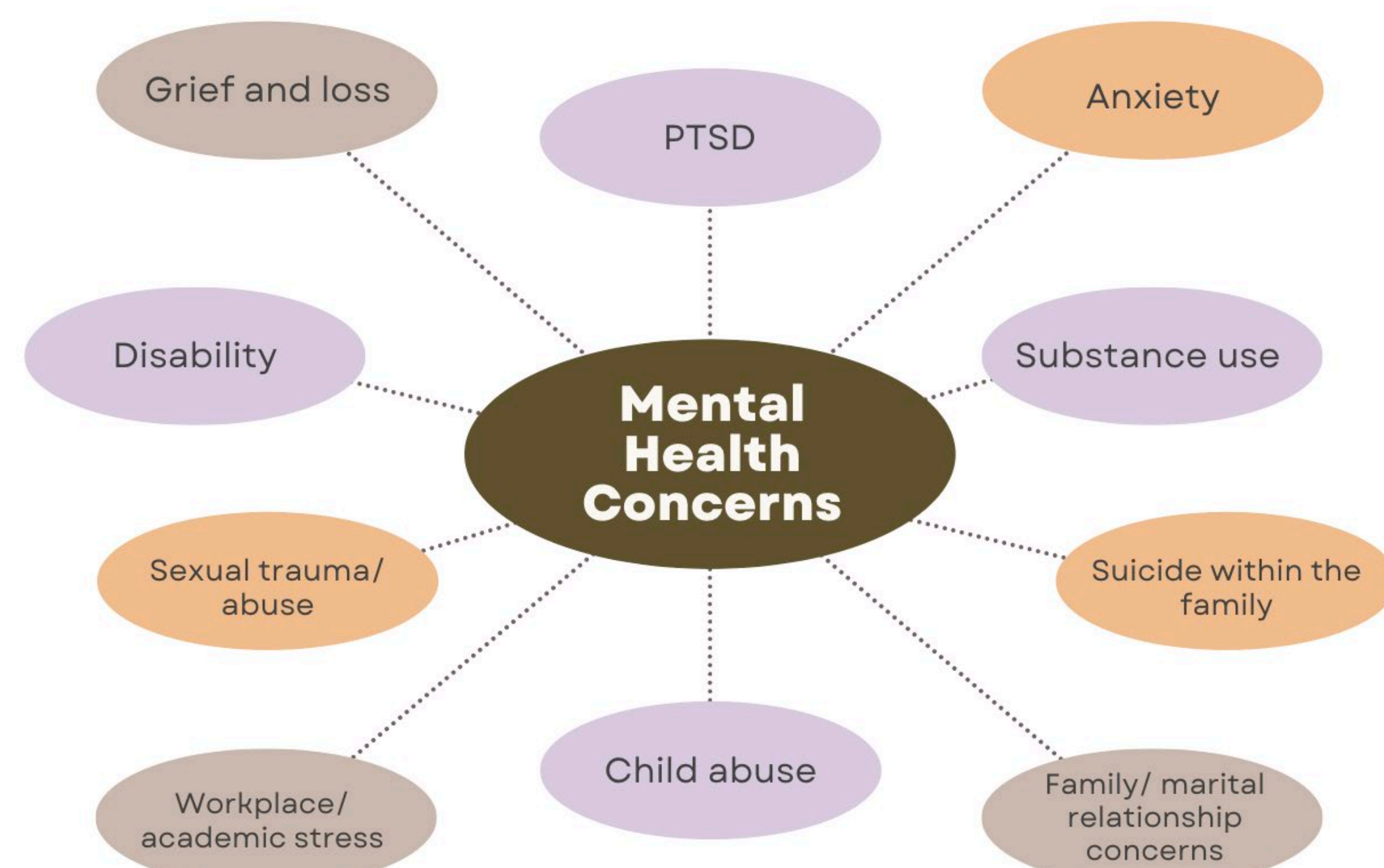


Figure 4. Three punjabi women in watercolor. Adapted from "Punjabi girls celebrating" by Sukhpal Grewal, 2018. Retrieved from <https://fineartamerica.com/featured/punjabi-girls-celebrating-sukhpal-grewal.html>.

Recommendations

Micro level

- Practice from a non-judgmental, non-assuming way
- Perceived benefits of finding commonality and personal connection with the service provider, including lived experience and representation
- Importance of service provider seeking to ensure therapeutic alliance

Mezzo & Macro level

- Diverse recruitment: cultural representation among mental health service providers
- Structural and systemic changes; More inclusive spaces needed for diversity within leadership and academia
- Learning opportunities for service providers are needed to encourage practicing from a place of cultural humility.

Contact: rajneek.thind@ucalgary.ca
nicholas@ucalgary.ca