The RAJO Project aims to empower Somali youth and families living in Ottawa and Edmonton through culturally sensitive engagement strategies. We envision a community where Somali youth have access to opportunities, skills, resources, and the support they need to achieve their full potential.
What is RAJO?
## Trauma Experiences of Somali Canadians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least one lifetime trauma</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a loved one who had been killed</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen someone killed or seriously injured</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had an experience in which they thought they may be seriously hurt or killed</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had been robbed or present during a robbery in which the robbers had a weapon</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit or beaten up by someone other than a family member</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen or heard family violence</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost valuable possessions</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Refugee Youth Core Stressors

- Social Support
- Environment
- Emotion Regulation
- Trauma
- Family Relationships
- Language Learning
- Acculturation
- Cultural Learning
- Resettlement
- Basic needs
- Legal
- Financial
- Healthcare
- Discrimination
- Isolation
- Alienation
- Loneliness
Trauma and the Social Environment

- Culture, nation
- Community, neighborhood
- Family, peers, school
- Child
Immigrant and Refugee Mental Health

- Those with high exposure to trauma at risk for PTSD, depression, anxiety, sleep problems, somatic complaints, behavioral, conduct, and school problems

- Symptoms may diminish and recur over time (Honeymoon phase)

For summary of literature on Children and Adolescents see http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/refugees-full-report.pdf
The Misunderstood Child
BEHAVIOUR

TRAUMA
The Trauma System
Traumatic stress is mediated by...

Survival circuits

fight  flight  freeze
Survival circuits are adaptive... 
Unless they are triggered in non-threatening situations
Survival circuits - what’s supposed to happen?

Step 1: Picking up the threat information

Step 2: Deciding on its importance for survival

Step 3: Making a more accurate appraisal

Step 4: Doing something about it
Survival circuits - what happens in a child with traumatic stress?
“The amygdala leads a hostile takeover of consciousness by emotion”  
(Joseph LeDoux)
The Trauma System

A traumatized child who experiences *Survival-in-the-Moment* States in specific definable moments

A social environment and/or system of care that is not able to help the child regulate these *Survival-in-the-Moment* States
Survival Circuits are regulated by...

safe and healthy relationships
Understanding regulation through the trauma systems model

It’s about the A’s and R’s
The 3 a’s OF REGULATION

- **Affect**: Emotions
- **Aware**: focus of attention, sense of self
- **Action**: behavior
The 4 r’s of regulation states

- Regulation: Being in control
- Revving: Getting upset
- Re-experiencing: Losing control
- Reconstituting: Getting it back together
**WHAT DOES A SURVIVAL-IN-THE-MOMENT EPISODE LOOK LIKE?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulating</th>
<th>Revving</th>
<th>Re-experiencing</th>
<th>Reconstituting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child is in calm, continuous emotional state and well engaged with his or her environment.</td>
<td>Child has been triggered by a provocative stimuli and is engaging coping skills to manage emotion.</td>
<td>Child’s coping skills have been overwhelmed. He or she has entered into a state of extreme emotion.</td>
<td>Child’s state of emotion has diminished. Child is using existing coping skills to manage emotion and to reengage with the environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 phases of treatment
Trauma systems therapy (TST)
WHAT’S DIFFERENT?

Culture
Neighborhood
Peer Group
School
Family
Individual

Social environmental interventions

Self-Regulation Interventions
Barriers to Mental Health Care

- Distrust of Authority/Power
- Linguistic & Cultural Barriers
- Stigma of Mental Health Services
- Primacy of Resettlement Stressors

Strategies to Address Barriers

- Community Engagement
- Partnership of Providers & Cultural Experts
- Embedding Services in Service System
- Integration of Concrete Services
Structure of TST-R Services

- **Tier 1:** Community Outreach
- **Tier 2:** Skills-based Groups
- **Tier 3:** Regulation-Focused & Beyond Trauma
- **Tier 4:** Safety-Focused
Project SHIFA

parent outreach focused on anti-stigma and psycho-education,
school-based groups for students and trainings for teachers and
direct intervention for youth using an empirically-supported model of treatment, Trauma Systems Therapy.
HUMILITY
Cultural Awareness
Cultural Sensitivity
Cultural Competence
Cultural Humility
Cultural Humility

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Mbu8bvKb_U
Cultural Brokering Is...

- The act of bridging, linking or mediating between groups or persons of different cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change

(Jezewski, 1990)
Case Scenarios
1. Why does he/she act the way he/she does?

2. What is at stake if we ignore him/her?

3. What can we do to help?
CASE SCENERIO #1

Haroon
CASE SCENARIO #2

Kaha
CASE SCENERIO #3

Nasser
CASE SCENERIO #4

Muna
CASE SCENERIO #5

Abdi