



NEWCOMERS

In a Changing Climate

Climate Migration

Climate change is anticipated to displace 200 million people around the globe by 2050. As a result, urbanized regions of Canada will likely see an influx of climate refugees. There may also be a rise of internal displacement as some regions of Canada become uninhabitable while others remain less affected. The risk of internal displacement is particularly true for Indigenous people living in Canada's northern communities where melting permafrost is of growing concern.

So what are the impacts for those being displaced by climate change? And how might regions like the Greater Golden Horseshoe prepare to accommodate climate migrants?

The Mental Health Impacts of Displacement

Newcomers to Canada often experience trauma and distress due to relocation, particularly if they have been displaced in the past by colonization, war, or resource scarcity. Newcomers may also experience a loss of social and community connection, leading to alienation and isolation, which can compound existing trauma. A recent Canadian study revealed increased admission to emergency departments for mental health issues amongst immigrant and refugee youth.

Displacement can be directly linked to:

- Substance misuse
- Homelessness
- Discrimination
- Suicide

“*Newcomers may experience a loss of social community and connection.*”

Importantly, newcomers may also experience an increased sense of resiliency to climate change over other groups. This is because they have previously experienced traumatic events and have established coping mechanisms.

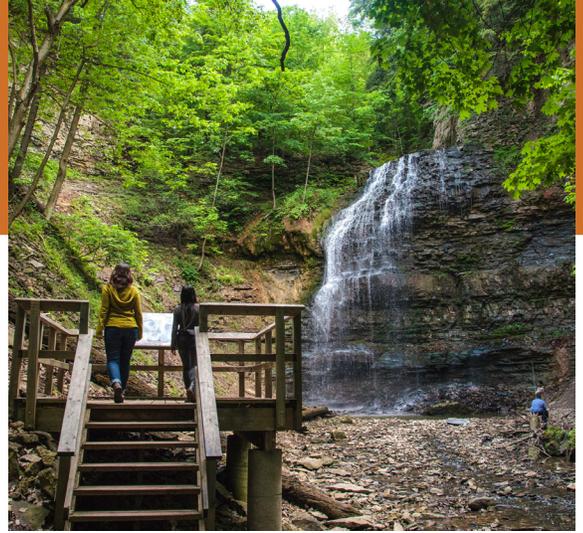


Possibility grows here.



Alliance for Healthier Communities
Advancing Health Equity in Ontario

TAKE ACTION



How can we build resilience?

There are steps that can be taken to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the health of newcomers. Local community centres, cultural groups and primary health providers in the Greater Golden Horseshoe offer a variety of resources and programs.

Action for Organizations



Support health professionals in gaining culturally-relevant mental healthcare, first aid, and psychological-recovery training.



Advocate for peer-to-peer mental healthcare interventions, so newcomers can engage with other newcomers about shared trauma.



Pilot community-based activities that reduce social isolation for newcomers and help build community connectivity.

Support for Individuals

Staying active, spending time in green space and being part of a community all contribute to physical and mental resilience. The Greenbelt Foundation supports programs, such as ***Into the Greenbelt***, that connect newcomers and other underserved communities to outdoor recreational opportunities. This kind of programming allows participants to forge a meaningful connection with the landscape, empowering them with a sense of place. Here is a bit more on that program, as well as some other local initiatives:



Into the Greenbelt is a project of the *Greenbelt Foundation*, in partnership with *Park People*, that brings individuals from underserved communities, including newcomers, into Ontario's Greenbelt for fun, educational day trips.

Access Alliance Newcomers Cooking Together program is a space for newcomers to share recipes and practice English.

Grand River's Equal Ground Community Gardens program fosters a passion for healthy food and friendships.

Flemingdon Health Centre Healthy Environments program includes community gardening, farm trips, and environmental engagement workshops.