

# What Matters Most to Young Immigrants Living with Mental Health Concerns: A Community Priority Setting in Alberta

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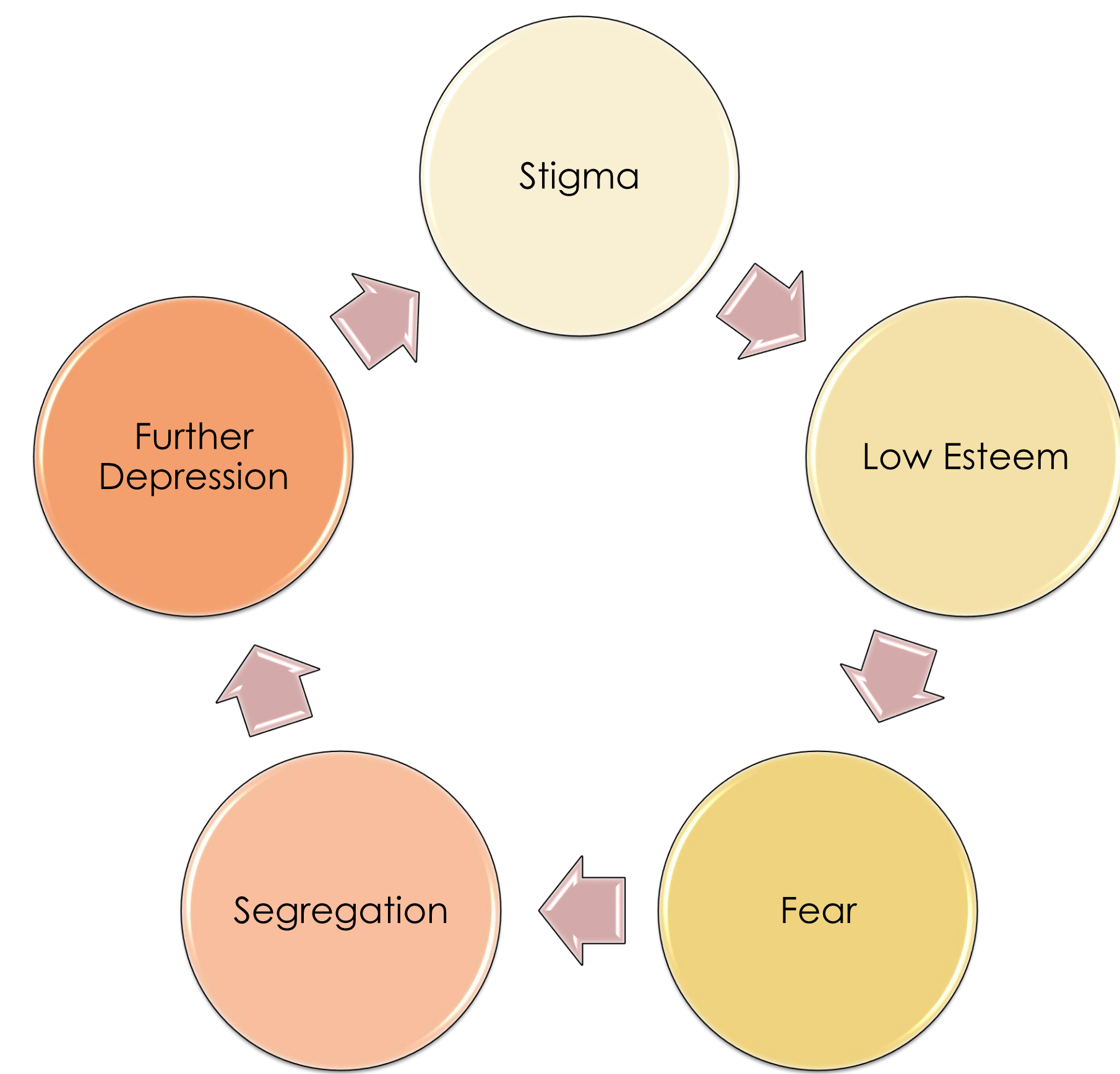
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## Background

- Mental illness is defined as internal or environmental conditions which primarily impact cognition, emotion, and behavior (1,2)
- It has been reported that 75% of adults with a mental health diagnosis have an onset before the age of 25 (3)
- It has been estimated that around 677, 900 children and youth are affected with mental health issues in Canada (4)
- In Alberta alone, 74 youth under the age of 24 died of suicide in 2021 (5)
- Youth make up 19.2% of the Canadian population
- 37.5% of these Canadian youth belong to immigrant families
- Canada received almost 140,000 new immigrants in the past year and had Alberta taking in 10.4% of the portion (6)

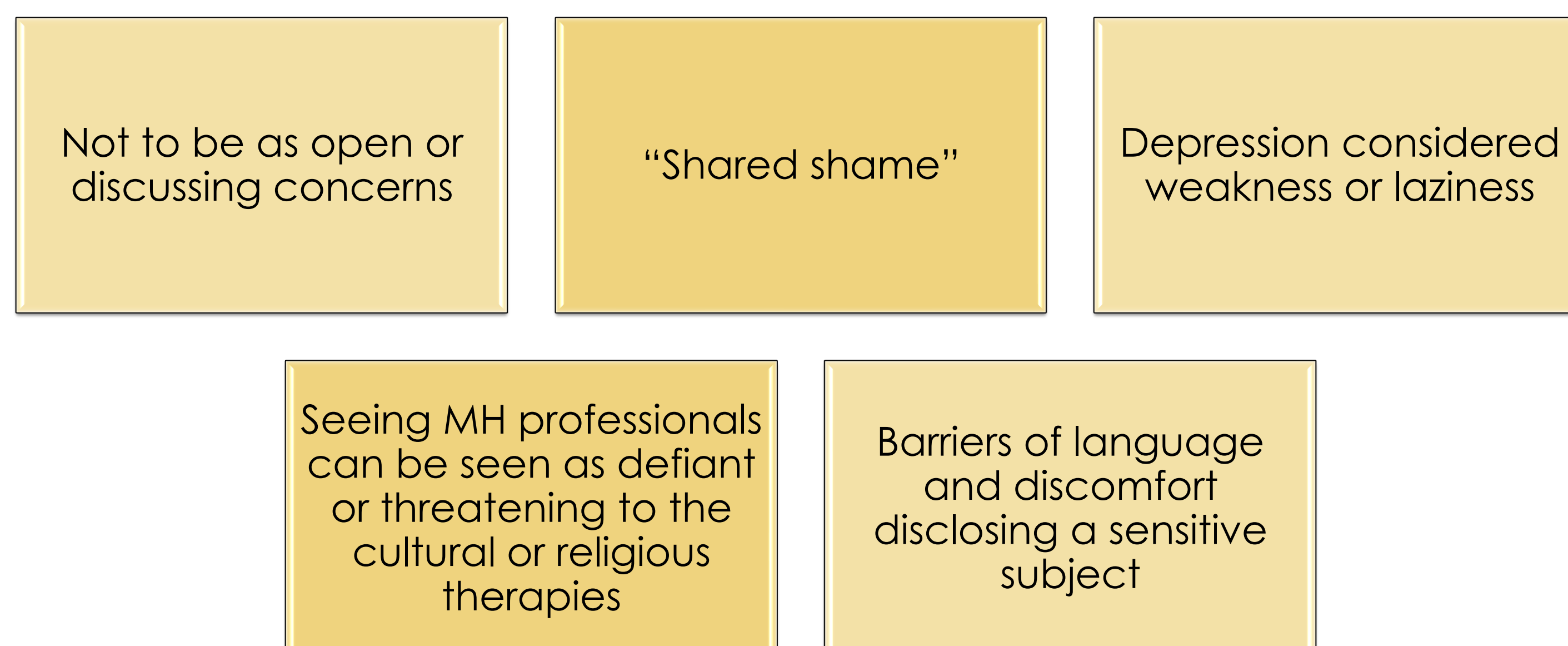
Figure 1: The cycle of experiencing mental health concerns



## Population

Self identified immigrant youth between the ages of 15-25 residing in Alberta, Canada

Figure 2: Reasons why MH is so poorly addressed in Immigrant families



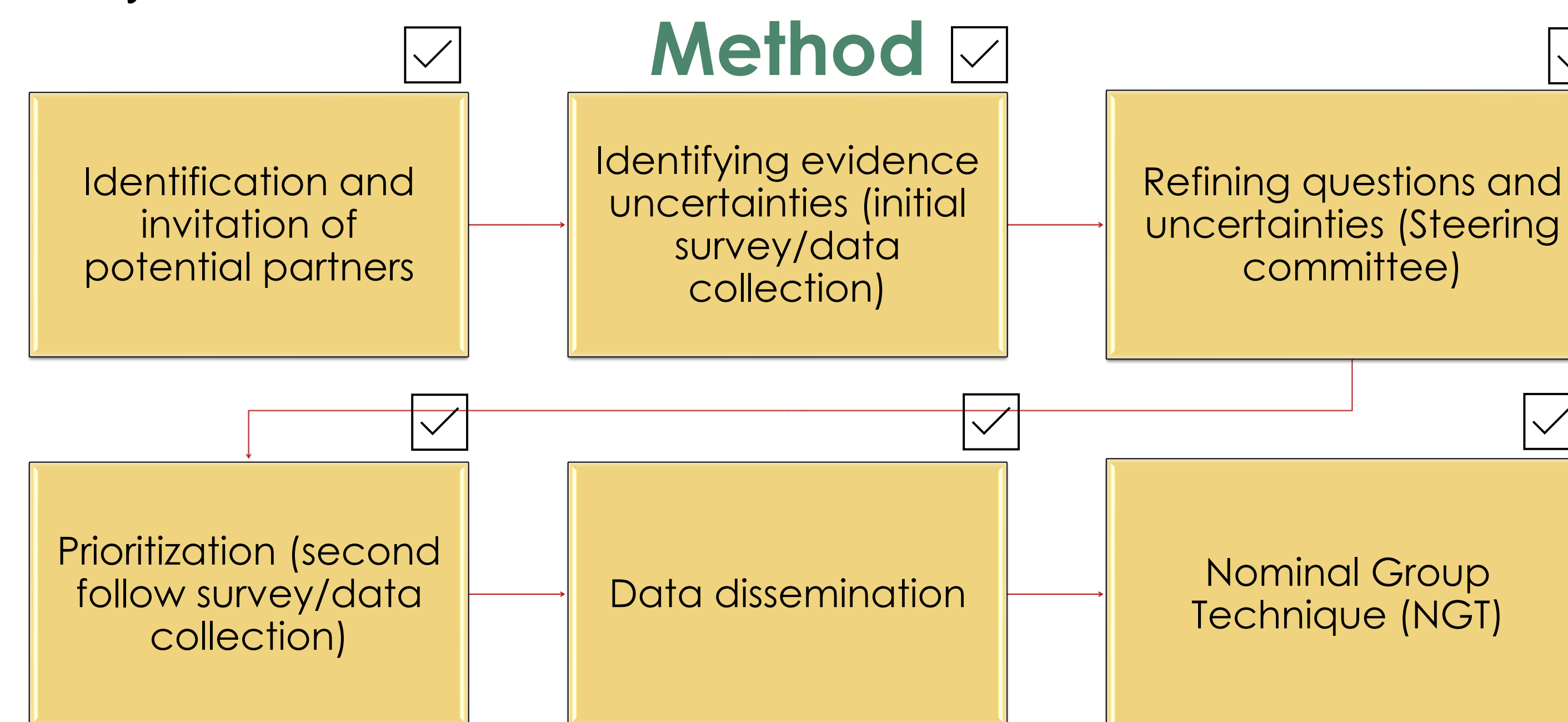
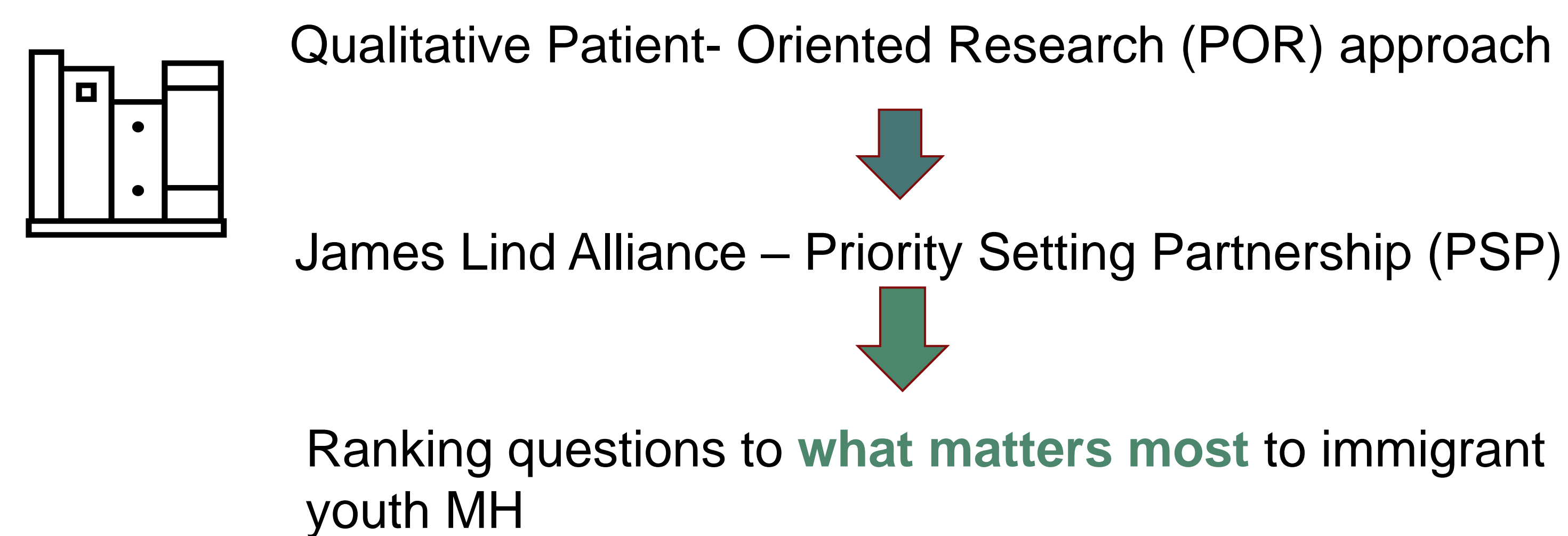
## Objective

To give immigrant youth in Alberta an opportunity to tell us what their main priorities are for their MH

## Research Questions

- What are the priorities of immigrant youth living with mental health concerns?
- How could these priorities be used to inform healthcare policies to create MH improvements for immigrant youth?

## Study Design



## EDI and SGBA+ Integration

- Encompassed urban and rural communities of Alberta
- Virtual focus groups to provide an equitable and accessible platform
- Diversity in age group, racial/ ethnic background, sexual/gender identity, language, and mental health experiences

## Rankable Questions From 13 Focus Groups

- How can mental health be improved?
- What resources exist specifically for immigrant and newcomer youth, ethnocultural youth, and refugees in Alberta?
- Are there cultural differences in how individuals and communities can approach or seek treatment for mental health issues?
- How does mental illness affect education, employment, and job opportunities?
- How can I support someone struggling with mental health?
- How do we address mental health in culturally and spiritually relevant ways?

## Rankable Questions From Modified Nominal Group Technique(mNGT)

- Top 10 priorities from the earlier JLA focus groups
- 10-15 participants (immigrant youth, clinicians, community stakeholders; steering committee)

### Why mNGT?

It quickly identifies priorities, finds solutions to differing perspectives and creates an enhanced list of priorities

- What resource exist specifically for immigrant and newcomer youth, ethnocultural youth, and refugees in Alberta?
- What are the individual factors that might prevent someone from reaching out or seeking help for mental health issues?
- How can schools better address mental health challenges?
- How can communities reduce stigma to help youth access care?
- What is the impact of isolation on youth during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What are the structural barriers to receiving care, and how can we improve access?

Final analysis and creation of report for relevant immigrant organizations, health policy officials and stakeholders

## Strengths & Limitations

- Platform for the voices of immigrant youth
- Creating inclusivity, respect, and acknowledgement by accounting MH priorities in an equitable manner
- Covid-19 limits potential non-verbal observations such as body language and demeanor of participants
- Language barriers and lack of interpreter

## References

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