



THE WORLD IS BRIGHT

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The World is Bright discussion guide

Notebene: This is a rough structure for The World is Bright discussion guide. Its purpose is to ensure post-screening discussions are fulsome and empowering even when no moderator or guest is available, e.g. classroom screenings, small community screenings, etc. The organizer of the event should read through this brief document and use it to guide the conversation.

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Foreword by Dr. Jaswant Guzder

Dr. Jaswant Guzder is a Professor in the McGill Department of Psychiatry, working with Indigenous child and youth mental health and the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre for southern Vancouver Island. She continues to be a trainer, researcher and has global health projects in Jamaica since 2005, teaching in Nepal, India, Brazil, Italy. She currently has a clinical role in founding the McGill Cultural Consultation Service serving adults, families and children.

The World is Bright (the translation of the name of the young man from the film) is a documentary by an award winning filmmaker that shares a tragic story of an immigrant youth suicide relevant to many youth who migrate alone. The film bears witness to his parent's journey from China to Canada seeking answers about their son's mysterious death in a state of overwhelming bewilderment and grief. They slowly piece together bits of evidence and fragments of information revealing their son's undisclosed mental breakdown ending in suicide... but they are left holding unanswered questions on the last moments of his life.

This young man's immigration dreams were full of hope and enthusiasm to find a life embracing study, music and work in Vancouver. His story includes encounters with the challenges of immigration, the loss of his network of relationships, his frightening experience of psychosis and the impact of his uncertainty after a threat of deportation; all of which were kept secret from his parents who were thousands of miles away in Beijing.

At a time of global movements across boundaries and constant shifting across cultural worlds, the migrant journey is often understood as both a hopeful beginning of migration but also of meeting unpredictable and uncertain times in the journey of resettling in a new country. The film invites us to imagine each migration story as creating their own special world of relationships: a world of new relationships that meet them on arrival and the worlds they bring with them. Migration experiences ask us to understand that each person brings many stories. All of those stories are about our stages of life, our histories, our strengths and our loved ones as the resettlement process progresses. There are always obvious and invisible challenges for new citizens with hopes to build connection and belonging in their adopted homeland. This is a film that leaves us reflecting on realities of migration experiences over generations and reminds us of mental health risks for our unaccompanied students and youth.

This film allows us to wander through several stories of this young man's relationships with his parents and family in China. The filmmaker intrigues us with unresolved questions, as well as leaving us with questions about invisible barriers of immigration resettlement. While Shi-Ming's parents are left with their unknowns and their grief, the film allows each of us to encounter their son's Canadian story that considers some of the current complex and unresolved challenges of migration stress, otherness, stigma, social connection, legal frameworks and mental health care. It is a documentary that opens us to questions and reflections on belonging and becoming.

Introduction

Before you begin the discussion, it's important to frame the discussion as a safe space to ask questions, and make sure the conversation is relevant to participants. The following should take no longer than 5-10 minutes.

Territory Acknowledgement

Find out the traditional territory of your community and acknowledge the role we play as settlers and immigrants on Turtle Island (Canada). You can find out your traditional territory at www.native-land.ca

Create Safe Space

Demonstrate you have created a safe space for this sensitive topic by taking some or all the following actions.

1. Any audience member can leave at any time, and can return or not based on their comfort.
2. Do not permit anecdotes of personal mental health challenges to be shared. This is not a clinical setting and these experiences can be triggering for both the person sharing, and the people listening.

Localise the Issue

Make the issue relevant to the audience by asking some of the following questions. It is okay if they answer in the chat, or don't have answers.

1. How would you describe the immigrant populations/demographics of your community?
2. What are some relevant issues that might affect immigrants in your community? Could those issues affect the mental health of those immigrants (however many generations they have lived here)?
3. Are you aware of the available mental health support services and how to access help? Does your community have pathways to be allies or advocates for immigrants or refugees during their resettlement?

Discussion Guide

Touch on each of these questions and give space to the audience to explore the issue if it resonates with them. The goal here is to engage the audience to make them comfortable talking about mental health.

The Film

Start by discussing the film to give a degree of separation between the narrative of the film, the topic, and the audience.

What is the family story of *The World is Bright*?

1. Based on the film narrative, what do you think might have contributed to depression and suicide of the son, Shi-Ming Deng?
2. Why do you think the parents did not believe their son died by suicide?
3. What do you think might have contributed to the parent's experience of distress, depression and suicidal thoughts?
4. What parts of their story are common experiences? Which parts seem uncommon?
5. Does this story help us to question hidden or less obvious issues contributing to mental health journeys?

When you think of “immigrants”, what do you think of them as?

- People who move to a new country to live there to find a better life, or fleeing danger
- Migrant workers who relocate to an area to find employment
- International students at a crucial point of youth development

What are different sorts of mental health challenges?

- Mental disorders like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder
- Anxiety, panic attacks, nightmares, trauma flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, self-harm impulses
- Hopelessness, lasting sadness, mood changes
- Being easily overwhelmed or irritated, fatigue, pain or body symptoms; distress that is related to stress or trauma that resolves or remains with us
- How do new immigrants access help in your area?

How does mental illness and mental health challenges affect immigrants specifically?

Does immigration create any mental health challenges?

- Is there a stigma - a fear or taboo - around speaking about mental health that you relate to your cultural influences? In other cultures? Can stigma appear in different ways that are obvious or hidden?
- How could stigma affect existing mental health challenges or seeking help?
- Do you think the stigma around mental health is a concern for your local community or immigrant communities ? [*local immigrant community*]? How might these taboos influence them?

- What about second generation Canadians who are born in the country their parents immigrated to? How might cultural taboos or stigma influence other generations than the first generation?
- Do you think mental health professionals in general give enough consideration to barriers to access mental health services, and the stigma, or cultural factors when they treat immigrant patients? Do you think these issues need more consideration by mental health professionals?
- Do culture or language skills create any barriers to care for young immigrants?

What's the broader relevance of the film in the current time of world pandemic?

- World-wide increase of mental health problems? Underfunding of mental health service development?
- How does isolation, dislocation, anxiety, and financial situations affect people's mental wellness? How does the impact of arriving from conflict or war regions impact mental wellness?
- What is the role of poverty, social or economic class, racial or systemic discrimination or gender in how our communities find resources and treatment of mental illness?
- Do young immigrants in schools or universities have special challenges and needs?

How can mental health professionals better support immigrants?

- Provide multilingual mental health resources and improve access to culturally competent mental health care
- Mental health promotion and outreach programs that reflect diverse community needs across the life cycle and isolation of some vulnerable members of our communities
- Reflect a culture change for our current communities dealing with Covid and increased awareness of indigenous and racialized minorities
- Engaging with role of art, the power of storytelling in addressing the issues and making the change
- Considering healing that might involve movement, meditation or other ways of supporting wellness or coping with stress

LINKS IN FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

1. Feedback form: www.storymoneyimpact.com/wibe (English)
2. The World is Bright - Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/theworldisbrightfilm>
3. The World is Bright - Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/theworldisbrightfilm>
4. The World Is Bright Official Trailer - Vimeo Video <https://vimeo.com/460836446/25e4c28be1>
5. Donate - SMI Website <https://www.storymoneyimpact.com/donate>
6. Organize a screening: <https://www.storymoneyimpact.com/organizetwib>

RESOURCES FROM CMHA

CMHA-BC manages the HeretoHelp.bc.ca website, a great resource around mental health and mental illness.

- We also have translated materials here on the site: <https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/other-languages>
- And very low-literacy English materials here intended for adults learning English: <https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/plainer-language-series>
- People also find the Q&A section very helpful: <https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/questions-and-answers>

NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGES

Understanding mental health and substance use issues and how to get help can be hard for anyone, but it can sometimes be even more difficult to talk about in some cultural communities.

Below are various resources in fourteen different languages collected from the Centre for Addiction & Mental Health, and the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Amharic
Arabic
Simplified
Chinese
Traditional
Chinese

Farsi (Persian)/
Dari
French
Hindi
Italian
Japanese

Korean
Polish
Portuguese
Punjabi
Somali
Vietnamese

PLAIN LANGUAGE RESOURCES

These booklets are written in plain, clear language to help anyone learn more about mental health and mental illness. Each booklet is recorded, so you can listen along while you read.

These booklets are written at a Grade Four reading level for children or low-literacy adults dealing with anger, anxiety, depression or suicide. Each booklet is recorded, so you can listen along while you read.

Survey

Please request all audience members fill out the survey.

English: <https://www.storymoneyimpact.com/wibe>

Chinese: <https://www.storymoneyimpact.com/wibc>