

Yussuf Shafie
April 29th 2019

UNDERSTANDING EAST AFRICAN CLIENTS (SOMALI 101)





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Today's topics

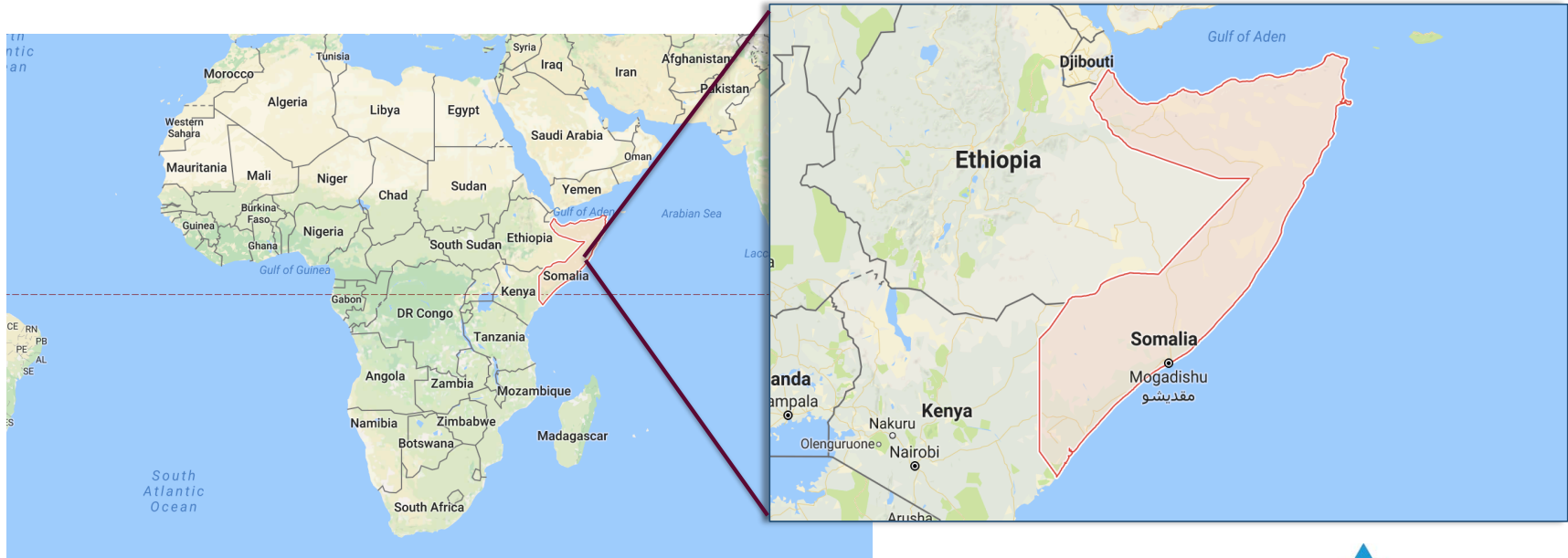
Cultural information

- Country of Somalia
- Somalis in Minnesota
- General Interactions
- Cultural facts

Treatment information

- Over-Arching Issues
- Mental Illness and CD issues
- Treatment approach

Somalia

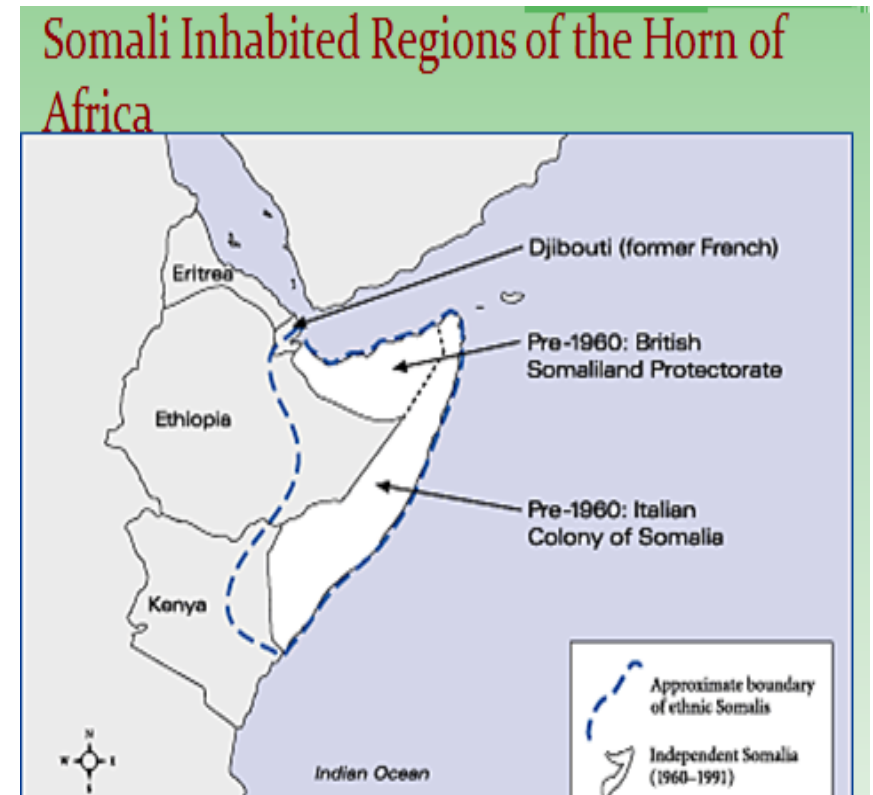


Basic Information

- **Area:** 246,000 sq miles
- **Current Politics:** Federal Government elected in September, 2012. (weak)
- **Capital City:** Mogadishu
- **Nationality:** Somali (singular); Somalis (plural)
- **Population:** 9 million
- **Language:** Somali (native), Arabic, English
- **Religion:** Islam

Collapse of Somali Government

- 1988, Hargeisa was bombed
- 1990, President forced out of power
- Somalia left with no government
- 1991, Civil war broke out



Somali Civil War 1990 - Now

- Most Somalis forced to leave their homes
- Murders, rapes, robbery, widespread looting
- Most in the refugee camps
- Estimated toll of war
 - Nearly 400,000 dead
 - Millions homeless
- UN & Red Cross provided (still provides aid)

Refugees



Forced to leave their homes

Somali at Refugee Camp



Immigrants vs. Refugees

IMMIGRANTS

- Have a choice
- Have time to plan for resettlement
- Usually bring entire family
- Adapt more quickly to social environment
- Self-sufficient
- Can return to country of origin

REFUGEES

- Have no choice
- Have no time to plan
- Often separated from family
- Difficult to become self-sufficient, to adapt and access employment because of stress (mental health)
- Usually can not return to country of origin

Resettlement of Refugees

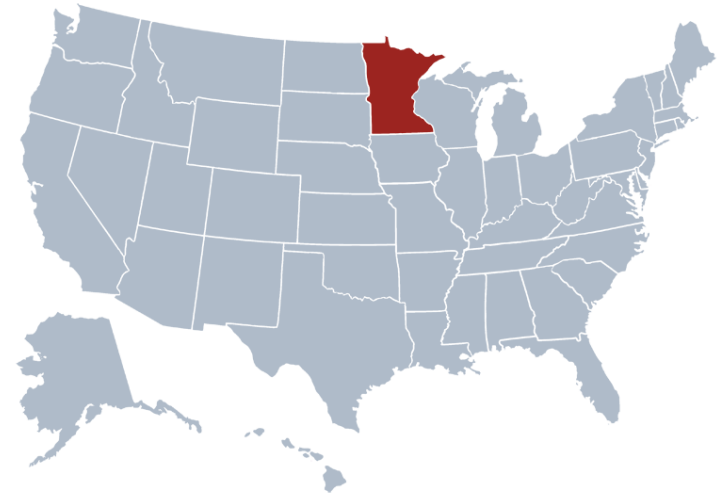
- Survival at refugee camps
- Learning new language
- Learning mainstream culture
- Navigating thru social services
- Workforce – dress code



Why Minnesota?

Social Situation in Minnesota

- Lutheran and Catholic Church
- Social Services
- Labor Jobs
- Education (Special Ed)
- Tight knit community



MN Somali Population Estimates

- Minneapolis/St. Paul is the “Capital” Of American Somali Community
- Over 50% of all USA Somalis live in Minnesota
- Over 95% of Minnesota Somalis are refugees
- 2010 census estimates 32,000 but community estimates more than 60,000
- Areas of concentration: Twin Cities Metro, Rochester, Faribault, Owatonna, Marshall, St. Cloud, Willmar, Mankato

Greetings in Somali

How are you? Iska-waran?

Fine (Peace) !Nabad!

Thank you! Mahad-sanid!

You welcome! Adaa mudan!

General interactions

- Maintaining physical space with the opposite gender.
- Minimizing direct eye contact with opposite gender.
- Feeling uncomfortable with gestures that include touching, especially from the opposite gender.
- Many Muslims may feel great fear or discomfort around dogs and pigs due to the belief that the saliva and waste products of these animals are ritually impure and must be washed scrupulously before one can pray.
- Restrain dogs in close proximity to Muslims.

Somali Family Structure

- Extended family structure
 - Grandparents
 - Parents
 - Uncles and aunts – treated like parents
 - Cousin – treated like brothers and sisters
 - Other relatives
- All families are members of tribes

Somali Language

First written in 1970

- 21 Consonants:
 - B T J X KH D R S SH DH C G F Q K L M N W H Y
- 5 Vowels - A E I O U
- English used as second language in the North ... Italian in the south

Marriage/ Divorce

- **Traditional marriage**
 - Arranged
 - Approval of bride and groom's fathers required
 - "Marry within"
 - Dowry goes to bride
- **Divorce**
 - Formerly taboo, difficult and rare
 - Increasing
 - Family involvement required



Religion

- Almost all Somalis are Muslim
- Somali are Sunni-Muslim



What Does "Islam" Mean?

- The word "**Islam**" itself means "Submission to Allah"
- The Arabic word "Islam" means the submission or surrender of one's will to the will of the only true God worthy of worship, "Allah" (known as God)
- Anyone who does indeed submit to the will of Allah as required by Islam is termed a "**Muslim**"

Five Pillars of Islam

- Declaration of faith (Shahada)
- Prayer (Salat) – 5 times a day
- Charity (Zakat) – required amount goes to charity
- Fasting (Sawm)
- Pilgrimage (Hajj) – an obligation to travel to Mecca at least once in a person's life

Prayer Times*

April 29th, 2019

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Fajr (morning)	4:33 AM
Dhuhr (noon)	1:11 PM
Asr	5:06PM
Maghrib (evening)	8:16 PM
Isha (night)	9:49PM

*Prayer times vary by location and date



Islamic Holidays

Muharram (Islamic New Year)	August 30 th 2019
Ramadan	Sunday, May 5 th 2019
Eid al-Fitr (Ramadan ends)	Tuesday, June 4 th 2019
Eid al-Adha (Hajj) (Festival of Sacrifice)	Monday, August 11 th 2019

Male / Female Interactions

- Opposite sexes not to be physically close and publicly intermingle (emergencies excepted)
- Traditionally sit in separate areas
- Maintaining physical space with the opposite gender at puberty and beyond
- Minimizing direct eye contact with opposite gender
- Restrain dogs in close proximity to Muslims
- Women must be covered in the presence of men from outside the family
 - In home, not required

Somali Food

- Sambusa
- Beans and rice
- Halal beef, goats, chicken
- No pork
- Intoxicants or alcohol forbidden
- Tea or Camel milk
- Italian influence – pasta



Names and Birthdays

- Common male names
 - Mohamed, Ahmed, Liban, Guled.
- Common female names
 - Fadumo, Asha, Ubah, Hodan.
- Somalis officially use three names
 - Given name
 - Father's name
 - Grandfather's name
- No family surname
- Somali women do not use husband's surname after marriage

Birthdays

- Somalis do not generally celebrate birthdays
- January 1st is a common birth date for many Somali immigrants

Video

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JmzOSuu12w>

Approach to Health Care/Mental Health

- Less than 20% of Somalis have access to safe drinking water.
- Close to 80% of the population have no access to healthcare and trained medical personnel attend to just 10% of births.
- Cerebral malaria is the main killer.
- Due to Islamic Social practices, HIV/AIDS not as common

Issues in the US

- Health
 - Diabetes
 - Hypertension
 - Mental illness
 - Autisms spectrum
- CD Issues
 - Integrational gap (Youth)
 - Alcohol
 - Marijuana
 - Homelessness
 - No family support

Over-Arching Issues

- Cultural
 - Generational disparities
 - Identity crisis with young people(covering of young girls and change in dress code with youth males)
 - Change of social status
 - Language and system navigation barriers
 - Concerns about values and culture
- Education
 - Special Education
 - Lack of quality education for immigrant children

Mental Health

- **Illness Prevention Traditional Somali view of prevention is through prayers and living life according to Islam. Health care services, both traditional and western, are used for acute illness, while minor illnesses are care for in the home.**
- **Pain open expression of pain is a sign of weakness.**
- **Touching Traditionally, men and women do not touch members of the opposite sex outside of close relatives.**

Mental Health

- An estimated $\frac{3}{4}$ of those who witnessed the war were traumatized by the events.
- Depression and anxiety are common to many Somalis in Minnesota. Many have lost family members or are separated from them.
- An estimated 30% of all refugees have been victims of torture.

Chemical Health

- Most Somalis struggle with...
- Alcohol
- Marijuana (youth)
- Khat

What is Khat?

- Khat is considered (Cathinone is a Schedule I drug)
- Khat gives an amphetamine-like stimulant, which can cause loss of appetite, and euphoria.
- Khat is commonly chewed amongst Somali's.
- Khat is culturally acceptable but illegal.



Chemical Health Cont'd

- Stigmas surrounding chemical dependency
- Islamic religion prohibits use
- Men/Women removed from family for use
- Very little resources to assist those suffering with addiction
- Women in the Somali community have a harder time seeking help for addiction

Helpful information to know

- Remember that many Somali refugees have experienced horrific events and may be experiencing post-traumatic stress.
- Somalis have no word in their language for stress.
- Culture shock and the struggle to adapt are also a cause of stress for many Somalis.
- Health education materials may need to be given verbally with an interpreter.
- Do not use finger gestures to get attention, as it is viewed as disrespectful.

Helpful information to know (Cont.)

- If medication are not prescribed during a health visit, providers need to explain why not because many Somalis associate good medical care with prescription drugs or injection.
- Ask patients to describe specific symptoms. Many Somalis will describe pain in a general manner by saying they hurt all over.
- Remember that there is always great variability among people in any group. Health care providers are encouraged to view individuals as unique persons within their cultural framework.

Resources for MH & CD



Phone: 952-562-3740

Fax: 952-405-9723

- Adult Chemical Dependency Treatment
- Adult Rule 25 Assessment (conducted in English and Somali)
- Community Education and Awareness (conducted in English and Somali)
- Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention (conducted in English and Somali)
- Day and Evening, weekend Services
- Relapse Prevention
- Lodging Services for men only (12beds, Driving with Care Level I & Level II)
- Domestic violence programming
- Anger management Programming

Resources



Phone: 952-693-0080

Fax: 952-955-6567

- Adult Rule 25 Assessment (conducted in English and Somali)
- Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention
- Relapse Prevention
- Mental Health Assessment and Counseling
- Medication Assisted Treatment
- Psycho-Education Groups (M-F)
- Crisis Intervention
- Peer Support Services offered



Thank you!

Questions?

Thank you!



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