

Alcohol use disorder (AUD) has become a significant problem in present day society, especially within the South Asian community. Excessive alcohol consumption results in negative health effects along with many other problematic issues in the household such as, family violence, financial burdens, and legal troubles. Current trends show that South Asian males in particular tend to use alcohol as an escape from unsolved trauma, family tensions and other stressful sources. One of the main issues of AUD exists due to mental health issues that get overlooked and neglected. It is very common for South Asian males to avoid confronting their mental health due to the stigma, lack of resources, and lack of representation from the South Asian background pertaining to mental health. That being said, incorporating critical education about mental health in early stages of school would assist individuals by normalising seeking help for mental health matters at a younger age. Being able to address the root cause of the issues is vital. In addition, another helpful practice would be to support, assist and be emphatic towards the individual who is fighting this battle with alcohol. As well, assisting them through locating a rehab or treatment facility that focuses on providing stability in terms of recovering and controlling the condition is essential.

Currently holding a degree in Criminology, alongside previous and current work experience, my commitment and passion towards social justice continues to grow. Social work provides me with the opportunity to work with other individuals who are also committed and passionate of being a voice for individuals and families who are not able to advocate for themselves. Fighting against discrimination, oppression, and injustices is crucial for me because I want to be able to assist people through their lives, journeys, and transitional periods. The criminology field has taught me a lot but pursuing a career in social work will teach me more about vulnerability, people's choices, their trauma, the relationships, and the experiences people

carry with them. Learning about the responsibility social workers have in order to provide the valuable care to the vulnerable populations, is something that has sparked my interest. My intentions to pursue this career is to empower individuals and families to find their voice, create solutions and make life-altering choices. Values I hold closely with me in this practice are integrity and dignity when fighting for social justices. My experiences of working with vulnerable populations and being able to care and attend to their needs, places me in a suitable position for pursuing social work. Some of my skills that I will bring to this practice will be my interpersonal skills, being an active listener, maintaining organization, managing time well, applying critical thinking and most importantly, expressing empathy with others.

My socio-economic status has placed me in a position to be a privileged woman with an abundance of resources, leading me to pursue social work to assist other women and vulnerable peoples, who were not offered the same level of resources or opportunities as I was. Although my parents immigrated to Canada, they were able to build a stable and secure lifestyle in order to provide for me and my sibling. They were happy to enroll me in soccer at a young age, which led me to receive numerous scholarships and to ultimately play for the University of Fraser Vally Women's Soccer Team. As well, I received my bachelor's degree because of my parents, who were able to afford sending me to university. Many youth do not have these opportunities because their caregivers face financial barriers in a society with raising costs every year. With the post- secondary education, I have received, my knowledge and motivation has grown on how to assist those who are struggling to find the resources they need.

Being a woman, a unique perspective will be brought into my practice of social work, where I will assist in eliminating misconceptions, inequalities, and oppression that women face when seeking resources. Experiencing discrimination and adversity in many forms in my own

life has made me a stronger and determined woman. Fighting against social injustices has become one of my life goals, as I am aware the positive impact change can have on individuals. Opportunities have been taken away from me due to my gender and this continues to be a reality for others facing gender discrimination. These influences in my own life have shown me and led me to choose the practice of social work where inequities and inequalities in care continue to create challenges for others.

Sincerely,

Simi Lehal