

Access to healthcare is a systemic issue. Finding solutions must happen at a systems-level.

Here's
Jamilaah's
story:

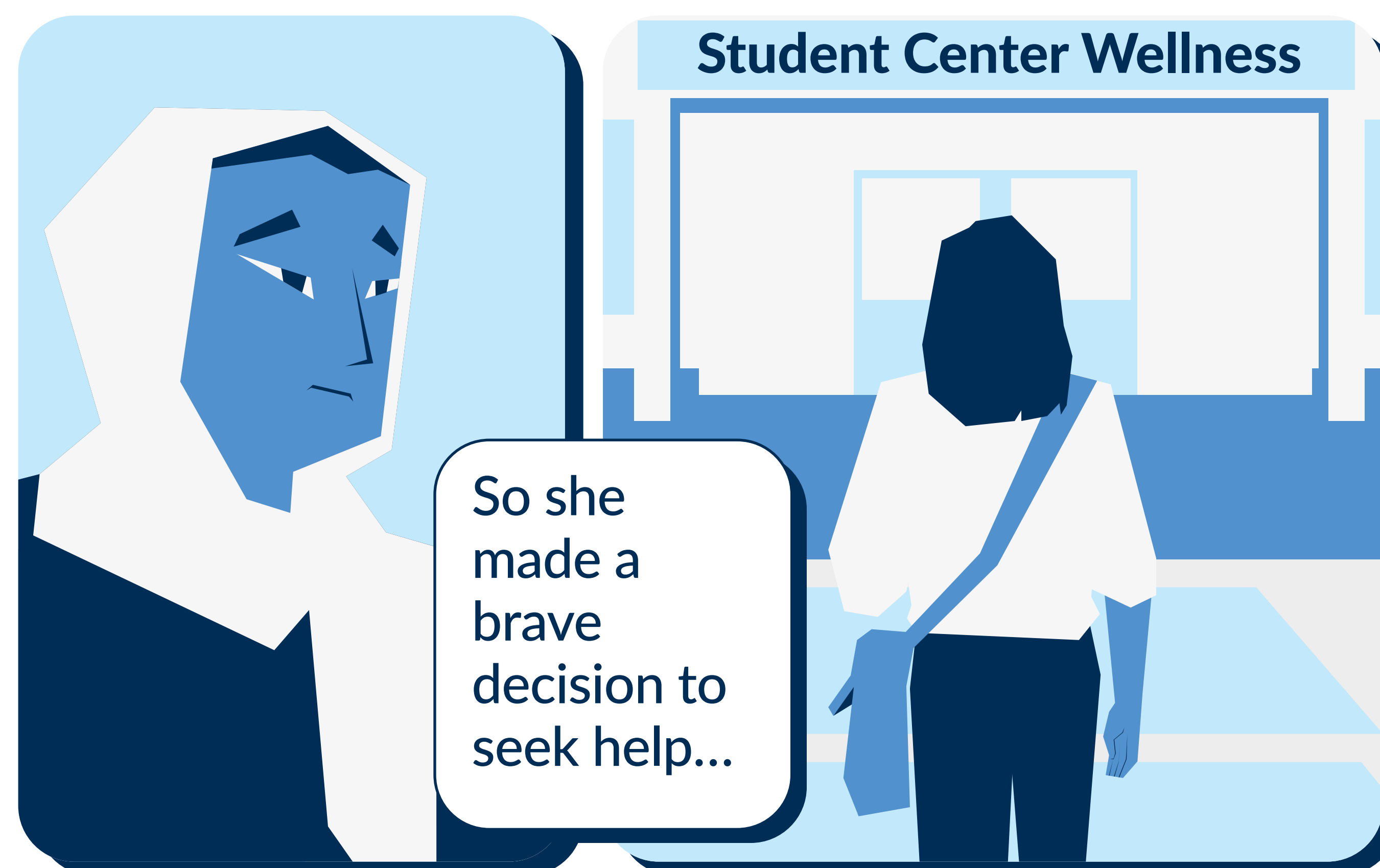
Meet Jamilaah, a journalism student at Lorrain University. The first in her Pakistani-American family to attend college.



After a car accident and news of her father losing his job, Jamilaah's mental health began to spiral.



She didn't grow up talking about mental health. Her mom had bipolar disorder, but no one explained it. No one talked about therapy.



But what she found wasn't support—it was judgment.



The therapist mispronounced her name, minimized the role of her faith, and made off-handed comments about her accent. That one session shut the door to care.



But what if things were different? What if mental health education was part of community life?

Mental health
matters

If clinicians were trained in cultural competence...



Jamilaah might have found someone who saw her—truly saw her.



Changing the system means changing lives. For Jamilaah, and for so many like her.



Access to Healthcare among Arab American and South Asian Muslims in Southeast Michigan: A Systems Approach

How might a systems approach to addressing stigma, health communication, and the availability of culturally appropriate healthcare help Jamilaah, Hasan, and the Shalash family?

Research from the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) provides foundational knowledge for Arab and South Asian Muslims in Southeast Michigan to successfully and systematically advocate for accessible, equitable, unbiased and quality health care.

Through the use of a community-based approach, the insights learned are grounded in the local context, expertise, and experience of American Muslims living in Southeast Michigan. This study used community-based system dynamics (CBSD) methods which included holding a series of workshops with Muslims in SE Michigan as well as interviews with community leaders. The goal of the workshops was to address the following problem statement developed by study participants:

“Which factors affect access to healthcare experienced by Muslim communities in Southeast Michigan?”

This research empowers American Muslim communities with an innovative playbook on how to bring together multiple stakeholders from multiple sectors to solve a complex community challenge (e.g., Islamophobia, access to health care, Islamic education, and community resiliency) using a systems approach.

Systems are the sum of their parts and when no one sector or organization can solve or address a complex community challenge, then systems-level innovations provide a way forward as long as there is the capacity and resources to do so.

Recommendations

- #1:** Design and implement new ways to increase the ability of American Muslims to access, afford, and trust the healthcare system.
- #2:** Design and implement prevention strategies that prioritize the demographics, immigration experience, and socioeconomic makeup of neighborhoods.
- #3:** Address hard-to-reach and minoritized populations.
- #4:** Increase the number of Muslim community health workers (CHWs).
- #5:** Holistically address social determinants of health.
- #6:** Build bridges with community organizations, healthcare systems, and local governments.

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Partners

