

# Jessica (Ji-yoon)

## THE “SHY STUDENT”

**Gender:** Female

**Gender Identity:** Cisgender

**Age:** 19

**Sexuality:** Straight

**Religious Faith:** Catholic

**Type of Disability, if any:** None

**Relationship Status:** Single

**Number of dependents:** 0

**Employment status:** Unemployed

**Citizenship:**

- Not a Canadian citizen
- Immigration status: Student Visa
- Country of Origin: South Korea
- Languages spoken at home: Korean
- Language Skills: Korean full proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing, English limited working proficiency. Learned some English before immigration, but shyness is a large barrier to improvement.

**Living Arrangements:**

- Lives off campus in an apartment in Chinatown

**University currently attending:**

- UofT (International and ESL student)

**Program – Field of Study:**

- Undergraduate – Psychology

**Year of Study:**

- Second year

**Transportation Arrangements:**

- Does not have a car
- Mostly walks or uses public transportation
- Walks to school

**Financial Status:**

- Not financially independent
- Depends completely on parents for income
- Both parents have university degrees and work business jobs in Korea
- Did not get OSAP funding
- Was not eligible for any scholarships or bursaries due to parents high income

**Involvement in campus activities:**

- Member of the Korean Canadian UofT Students Association
- Also participates in off-campus church/faitH-related activities

**Personality Traits:**

- Studious
- Punctual
- Quiet
- Shy
- Introverted

**Tasks:**

- Finding living arrangements
- Course registration and fees payment
- Weekly homework from school

**Needs:**

- Friends that she’s comfortable with interacting with and asking questions
- Academic support due to language skills and help on writing projects
- Social support from UofT to feel more a part of the community
- Financial security to continue living in Canada
- Stable home environment to be comfortable and productive doing work
- Long studio hours from the school so she can stay late and work on projects if need be

**Problems:**

- Lived on residence first year and moved off campus second year; having troubles adjusting to living on her own
- Relies heavily on parents for income and has trouble staying within her budget
- Balancing stress from school and pressure from parents to do well
- Feels isolated and misses her friends and family in Korea
- Challenges with applying English to studies (writing exams, essays...)
- Limitations in language skills creates a barrier to engagement; previous language skills did not fully prepare her to the demands of university level (marks are a little below average)-
  - o Fear of judgment by native speakers (both instructors and peers)
  - o Pressure on oneself to participate
- “Expectation of Active Contribution in Class,”
- “Expectation of Autonomous Learning and Originality”
- “Negotiating Group Projects.”
  - o Difficult to work in group projects because she cannot communicate with some team members at times, which negatively impacts relationships within the team
- Her shy qualities make her uncomfortable with speaking about her ideas/opinions/views out of fear that others may not understand
- Feels isolated and unaided
- Feels marginalized at school and only able to speak with other Koreans

**Map Needs**

- Clear succinct language
- Easy to read call to actions
- Icons or images for easy visual comprehension
- Memorable URL for access
- Inclusion of services with professionals who can speak Koreans
- Services that are within range of home location



**Background Info:**

Jessica is a shy international student studying Psychology at UofT. She’s an incredibly creative and intuitive person but feels her lack of English skills creates strong barriers between her and her peers. She tries to keep positive but often feels isolated and lonely at school.

**In Her Voice:**

*“I could speak English just not as well as the other kids, so that was just like an insecurity, and . . . there were a whole bunch of bullies that came with that and they threw me in ESL for so long. I didn’t speak for 2 years, I just didn’t talk. I find I do that a lot when I go into a newer surrounding. I just won’t talk and then finally I will talk. And I did that when I first came to university, I didn’t talk for a year.”*

*“It’s hard to come to Canada and make new friends. I don’t only want to hang out with other Koreans, it makes me feel isolated from the other students.”*

*“My parents put a lot of pressure on me to do well in school so I can graduate and get a good job. I took a big risk coming here and I can’t fail, I have to be successful.”*

# Max

## THE “NICE GUY”

**Gender:** Male

**Gender Identity:** Cisgender

**Age:** 18

**Sexuality:** Straight

**Religious Faith:** Agnostic

**Type of Disability, if any:** None

**Relationship Status:** Single

**Number of dependents:** 0

**Employment status:** Employed (Part-Time)

**Citizenship:**

- Not a Canadian citizen
- Immigration status: Dual citizenship, Canadian & German.
- Country of Origin: Germany
- Languages spoken at home: German
- Language Skills: Speaks fluent English and German
- Immigrated at the age of 8
- Parents are fluent in German and English

**Living Arrangements:**

- Lives with parents off campus in Etobicoke

**University currently attending:**

- Ryerson (Domestic student)

**Program – Field of Study:**

- Undergraduate – Computer Science

**Year of Study:**

- First Year

**Transportation Arrangements:**

- Does not own a car but occasionally drives his parents car.
- Mostly walks or uses public transportation
- Commutes to school via TTC

**Financial Status:**

- Not completely financially independent
- Family income level: High
- Parents: Father is a senior level executive who moved to North America to expand his company; Mother is a pharmaceutical representative
- Source of funds for educational expenses: Parents and income from part-time job
- Did not receive OSAP because of his parents high income

**Involvement in campus activities:**

- Went to FROSH week and enjoyed the activities but didn’t make many new friends
- Didn’t sign up for any on-campus activities due to time constraints between commuting and part time job
- Likes spending time at home and playing video games or watching movies

**Personality Traits:**

- Introverted
- Playful
- Calm
- Considerate
- Leisurely

**Tasks:**

- Course planning and registration
- Weekly homework
- Keeping up with hours at work

**Needs:**

- Needs academic support and guidance
- Down time to relax and take a break from obligations
- Quality time with friends and family

**Problems:**

- Problems with adjusting to campus life and the increased academic demand
- Because he commutes it iss difficult for him to become involved in activities outside of class
- Also is trying to balance a part-time job while in school along with commuting
- Is uncertain about his major and is having difficulties getting appropriate academic advising
- Felt that he could not turn to his professor for personal matters when he struggled with an assignment
- Felt that teaching assistants are not helpful in his program
- Not involved in campus activities
  - o Does not attend on-campus activities
  - o Social/cultural events
  - o Recreational and sports program
  - o Community service/volunteer activities
  - o Home games of university athletic team
- Lack of guidance and structure for education: Absence of help with school planning, course selection, time management, study skills
- Because parents did not attend school in Canada, it leads to the lack of support or guidance from parents
- Pressure to meet parental expectations and do well in school even though he feels lost and directionless
- He does not enjoy socializing with others, as such, he has little friends to ask and discuss his issues; most of his friends from high school went to other universities and moved away
- Because he has little contact with others in school, he know little about the things going on on campus and knows little about the services offered at school.

**Map Needs**

- listings of counseling services that are close to home
- services that do not cost money or very little as he is dependent on parents for income and would not want them to know
- inclusion of services that could redirect him to local meet ups or study groups



**Background Info:**

Jacob is a first year student living at home attending Ryerson University for Computer Science. Straight out of high school, he’s having difficulty becoming acclimated to the workload and increased pressures from his parents to do well. He wants to seek advice but has difficult in finding people with the time and patience to help him.

**In His Voice:**

*“I honestly have no idea what I’m doing with my life. My parents put a lot of pressure on me to go to school and get a degree, but I don’t know what I’m doing.”*

*“I’m not worried too worried about getting a job when I graduate, it’s more so doing something to make my parents happy. They’re always on my case about absolutely everything.”*

*“I’ve tried asking my friends and classmates for help but everyone seems just as lost as I am. It’s hard getting time with professors if I need advice after class too because they’re just so busy.”*



# Aakash

## THE “GO GETTER”

**Gender:** Male

**Gender Identity:** Cisgender

**Age:** 26

**Sexuality:** Straight

**Religious Faith:** Atheist

**Type of Disability, if any:** None

**Relationship Status:** Long term relationship with his girlfriend

**Number of dependents:** 0

**Employment status:** Employed (part-time) at a law firm

**Citizenship:**

- Born in Canada, parents are immigrants

**Living Arrangements:**

- Lives with his girlfriend off-campus in the Annex

**University currently attending:**

- University of Toronto (Domestic student)

**Program – Field of Study:**

- Professional Designation – JD Program

**Year of Study:**

- First Year

**Transportation Arrangements:**

- Does not have a car
- Mostly walks or uses public transportation
- Walks to school

**Financial Status:**

- Financially independent but has a lot of debt
- Has a line of credit taken out for school
- Has OSAP debt from undergraduate degree
- Family income-level: Low

**Involvement in campus activities:**

- Member of the UofT’s Students’ Union and is resource/contact for many students on a daily basis
- Participates in on-campus after class lectures and events related to law to network
- Goes to department-organized and advisor/research-group-organized social activities
- Less interested in university-wide activities due to the size of the university

**Personality Traits:**

- Extraverted
- Ambitious
- Principled
- Analytical
- Organized

**Tasks:**

- Finding time to juggle school work, a part time job, and time with his girlfriend
- Constantly trying to find ways to network and meet other professionals
- Course registration and payment

**Needs:**

- Time to relax
- Financial support to continue on with his degree
- Needs to find “work-life balance” to improve mental health and prevent burnout

**Problems:**

- Stressed about school work, maintaining high grades, and coordinating schedules to work in groups at school
- High financial debt from his undergraduate degree and worries about the future
- Did not receive...
  - federal granting council scholarships/fellowships
  - provincial granting council scholarships/fellowships
  - university funded fellowships
  - graduate teaching assistantships
  - graduate research assistantships
- Unsatisfied with availability of financial support and frustrated with lack of opportunities
- He is from a low-income family, yet his family supports him to study until he graduates from the master’s program. He feels bad because he cannot immediately find a full-time job to support the family, and needs to repay his loans after he graduates (which is another stress factor).
- He also needs to maintain his marks because his part-time job (at a law firm) is dependent on his grades. Keeping a good performance at work and simultaneously maintaining high marks becomes his primary stress factors.
- He does not have any free time because he is too committed to his work/study
- Never really had a chance to relax

**Map Needs**

- Because he has a limited amount of time and attention, the navigation of information and number of steps should be as succinct as possible
- Clear categories and labels to avoid confusion



**Background Info:**

Aakash is a Master of Laws student attending the University of Toronto. He’s an exceptionally keep and bright academic student whose worked his whole life to be on the right career track. Even with his great time management skills, he often feels stretched thin between responsibilities on a day to day basis and feels there is not enough hours in the day to do all the things he wants to do.

**In His Voice:**

*“UofT is an incredibly competitive school and I’m happy that I got in. I’m happy I got in but now I’m just stressed all the time about doing well and finishing.”*

*“I’m efficient and good at time management but there are only so many hours in the day. I spend most of my time at school and then at work and I hardly ever get to see my girlfriend because we have opposite schedules, and we live together. I know she understands but I feel like I’m neglecting her.”*

*“I have a bad habit of cramming right before tests and presentations and pulling all-nighters. I just drink a lot of energy drinks and make pages and pages upon notes or rehearse over and over. I can’t sleep unless I feel like I know enough to get at least a 90% or higher.”*

# Sarah

## THE "SOCIAL BUTTERFLY"

**Gender:** Female

**Gender Identity:** Cisgender

**Age:** 21

**Sexuality:** Straight

**Religious Faith:** Mormon

**Type of Disability, if any:** None

**Relationship Status:** Single

**Number of dependents:** 0

**Employment status:** Employed (Part-Time)

**Citizenship:**

- Canadian born, Canadian parents

**Living Arrangements:**

- Lives at home with parents in North York

**University currently attending:**

- Ryerson University (Domestic Student (on academic probation))

**Program – Field of Study:**

- Early Childhood Education

**Year of Study:**

- Fourth year

**Transportation Arrangements:**

- Does not have a car
- Mostly walks or uses public transportation
- Walks to school

**Financial Status:**

- Not completely financially independent
- Family income level: Low
- Parents: Parents are divorced. Father works in retail and his girlfriend is unemployed due to mental health problems. Mother lives in North Bay.
- Received OSAP and needs-based bursaries for her studies

**Involvement in campus activities:**

- Goes to on-campus pub nights on a weekly basis

**Personality Traits:**

- Extraverted
- Talkative
- Sensitive
- Socialable
- Reckless

**Tasks:**

- Finding living arrangements
- Course registration and fees payment
- Weekly homework from school

**Needs:**

- Needs social support from friends and people outside of family life
- Quiet time to do homework in the evenings when she gets off work late at night
- Better ways of coping with stress from life

**Problems:**

- Experiences abuse at home, which directly affect her school performance.
- Abusive caregiver (Father). Her father is an alcoholic and consequently, she has developed Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder from a childhood incident
- Her father abuses her mother as well, and so she always feels the need to stay at home to protect her. She is constantly worried about her mother's safety.
- Even though she has a lot of friends, she feels socially isolated because she feels that no one will understand her and feels that she should not share her home issues with others.
- She does not want to report her father and get him into trouble, thus, she hesitates to find support services. Thus, she sometimes feels socially isolated even with lots of friends.
- Because of her academic probation her funding has been frozen and there are limited opportunities to make more income until the probationary period is over
- Cannot keep up with marks and do well in part-time job because of her troubled home life.
- She also parties a lot to avoid being at home which contributes to her low marks

**Map Needs**

- She is not the most technologically savvy so the map needs to be intuitive and easy to use; possibly borrowing conventions from many other map applications



**Background Info:**

Sarah is an energetic student with a friendly demeanor and a love of people. However her personal issues with her family at home prevent her from succeeding academically in school because of the constant distractions. As such, she is on academic probation and currently unable to attend classes for a semester. She wants to succeed in life but is unaware of how to go about doing so.

**In Her Voice:**

*"I really wanna move out but I don't have the money to. When I'm at home I hardly get anything done and as a result my grades at school just sucked."*

*"My father is an alcoholic and he can be hard to handle. I don't know why my mom is still with him, he's completely unbearable at times and can be just downright mean."*

*"I love kids and I wanna graduate and work with kids some day. But I'm barely getting through school now and I don't know if that'll happen for me."*



# Linda

## THE “SINGLE MOM”

**Gender:** Female

**Gender Identity:** Cisgender

**Age:** 30

**Sexuality:** Straight

**Religious Faith:** Buddhism

**Type of Disability, if any:** None

**Relationship Status:** Single

**Number of dependents:** 1

- Child (Age = 12)
- Custody Status: Sole, no visitation

**Employment status:** Employed (Full-Time)

**Citizenship:**

- Canadian born, born in Quebec
- Language spoken at home: English, French and Mandarin
- Cultural background: Chinese

**Living Arrangements:**

- Lives at home in Scarborough with child

**University currently attending:**

- Ryerson Student (Domestic student (Part-Time))

**Program – Field of Study:**

- Undergraduate – Accounting & Finance

**Year of Study:**

- First Year

**Transportation Arrangements:**

- Has a car, mostly drives

**Financial Status:**

- Financially independent but has a lot of debt
- Earns between \$10, 000 - \$19, 999 annually
- Sources of income:
  - Child tax benefit
  - Paid Full-time Work
  - Student Loans (OSAP - Very minimal)
  - Loans from Family Members (Parents)
  - Use of private bank loans
- Financial obligations:
  - Mortgage
  - Car payments
  - Living expenses
  - Child care

**Involvement in campus activities:**

- Not involved at school at all

**Personality Traits:**

- Reflective
- Self-critical
- Shrewd
- Caring
- Supportive

**Tasks:**

- Find childcare support somewhere close to Ryerson
- Manage her time properly
- Desires to graduate and receive the degree, rather than solely receiving specific amount of knowledge and skills from certain courses as determined by employer needs or personal interest.
- Need to find support that has flexible operating hours (that caters to her needs and accommodates to her schedule)

**Needs:**

- Family Services
- Financial support
- Childcare support
- Distress
- Help with time management
- Needs counseling for her disability

**Problems:**

- Challenges with juggling school, full time job, and taking care of her child
- With so many responsibilities, she carries considerable emotional and financial burdens
- Also struggling with the fact that her child is going through a transition stage and becoming more independant
- Mature, part-time students are not eligible for most provincial financial assistance programs
- Provincial student employment programs are limited to individuals under 30, regardless of status as a full- or part-time student
- Face challenges in terms of evening course available and evening service accessibility, as well as a lack of financial assistance
  - May face restricted course choice, in particular if she is only able to take evening classes, which may make it difficult to fulfill degree requirements.
- In addition, as mentioned previously, student support services, including campus health services, academic and personal counseling, and career advising, are often not available during evening or weekend hours.
- There are very few academic awards and scholarships available to recognize the merit and achievement of part-time students, many of whom are mature.
- feel isolated from younger students who dismiss her
- Difficult to find social support among other student because she cant socialize with them when and where they are being social; needs time off from school/work when child is ill/injured
- Other barriers commonly cited include financial struggles, a lack of time, difficulty organizing and prioritizing, and difficulty balancing the needs of work, home, partners and children with the demands of full- or part-time study.

**Map Needs**

- Needs access to a wide range of services that won't be financially stressful
- Needs someone to show her how to use the map and ease her into using the application



**Background Info:**

Linda is a single mom working full-time during the day and attending Ryerson University part-time in the evenings. She faces academic and social challenges and often struggles with time management between all her obligations. She wants to graduate with her degree and secure a better job for herself and her child, but finds the path in doing so extremely difficult.

**In Her Voice:**

*“I knew having a full-time job and taking courses part-time in the evenings would be difficult with also having a child, but I didn’t forsee all the barriers that have caused me to struggle so much.”*

*“I hardly ever have time to sleep or do anything for myself. In between work and school and seeing my child, it’s always go go go.”*

*“I had dreams of going back to school and finishing my degree. But now that I’m back I’m not sure if I made the right decision.”*

# Alex

## THE “MISUNDERSTOOD YOUTH”

**Gender:** Male

**Gender Identity:** Cisgender

**Age:** 17

**Sexuality:** Gay

**Religious Faith:** Atheist

**Type of Disability, if any:** None

**Relationship Status:** In a Relationship

**Number of dependents:** 0

**Employment status:** Unemployed

**Citizenship:**

- Canadian citizen

**Living Arrangements:**

- Living off campus in an apartment in Kensington market
- Originally from a small town up north (Oro-Medonte)

**University currently attending:**

- OCAD University (Domestic student)

**Program – Field of Study:**

- Undergraduate – Integrated Media

**Year of Study:**

- First Year

**Transportation Arrangements:**

- Does not have a car
- Mostly walks or uses public transportation
- Walks to school

**Financial Status:**

- Not financially independent
- Family income level: middle
- Source of funds for educational expenses: Parents and OSAP

**Involvement in campus activities:**

- Not involved (does not know about LGBT services or groups)

**Personality Traits:**

- Talkative
- Energetic
- Trusting
- Outspoken
- Verbose

**Tasks:**

- School and homework obligations
- Making time to see his partner (also lives in the city)
- Looking for campus activities to be more involved in school

**Needs:**

- Significant social support to keep from feeling alienated
- Suspected symptoms of depression and needs emotional support

**Problems:**

- Trouble adjusting from a rural to urban environment
- Making friends and fear of being judged from peers
- Anxiety around large groups of people
- Feels as though no one understands him
- Properly expressing his interests and himself
- Experience discrimination, bullying, harassment, and marginalization.
  - Concerned with physical safety
- Deals with frequent mood swings and low moods
- Rejected by his father over his sexual orientation -> source of conflict
  - Bad relationship with father
  - Mother is supportive, but she has no say in the family
- Since it is his first year, he does not know where to find help and support. He is not aware of the services that are available to him.

**Map Needs**

- Not just clinical/counseling services but resources specifically for LGBT youth as well
- Low barrier to access map and good descriptions of locations to encourage using the services



**Background Info:**

Joe is an undergraduate student at OCAD University studying Integrated Media. He struggles with strong social barriers because of his sexuality and feels alienated from both himself and the community at large. He loves to be around people but often fears feeling rejected and can be sensitive to others.

**In His Voice:**

*“It’s hard to connect with people. When I’m anxious around people I tend to talk a lot but it usually annoys people more so in the end.”*

*“They tell you that you should just be yourself, but what if yourself is someone that’s repulsed by the community at large? Sometimes I wake up and don’t know how to be both “me” and someone that people will like as well.”*

*“My dad barely talks to me these days. Telling him I was gay was probably one of the most scarring experiences of my life; he was trying to hide his disappointment from me but it was just all over his face. It was horrible.”*



# Tala

## THE “CREATIVE”

**Gender:** Female

**Gender Identity:** Cisgender

**Age:** 26

**Sexuality:** Straight

**Religious Faith:** Spiritual

**Type of Disability, if any:** None

**Relationship Status:** Married

**Number of dependents:** 0

**Employment status:** Employed (Part-Time)

**Citizenship:**

- First Nations status (Mohawk)

**Living Arrangements:**

- Living in housing rented off-campus with spouse. All costs are paid by herself and her partner.
- Originally from a reserve in Brantford

**University currently attending:**

- OCAD University (Domestic Student)

**Program – Field of Study:**

- Undergraduate – Sculpture & Installation

**Year of Study:**

- Third Year

**Transportation Arrangements:**

- Does not have a car
- Mostly walks or uses public transportation
- Walks to school

**Financial Status:**

- Total annual household income = Less than \$15, 000
- Relies on bursaries and grant funding to go to school
- OSAP
- Band funding

**Involvement in campus activities:**

- Bhakti Meditation Club, OCADU Mindfulness
- Enjoys Yoga and meditation activities
- Peer Health Mentor at OCADU and is involved with the Health & Wellness Clinic on campus

**Personality Traits:**

- Extraverted
- Confident
- Perceptive
- Outspoken
- Frugal

**Tasks:**

- Finding financial aid for school
- Balancing school work with responsibilities of living independently
- Finding free time to relax
- Finding ways to be apart of the Aboriginal community in Toronto

**Needs:**

- Quiet time to herself to do work
- Financial security to continue on with her education
- Social support and academic support from the university

**Problems:**

- Marginalization
- Having difficulty connecting on a personal level with an Aboriginal community in Toronto after coming from a reserve in Brantford
  - contributed by being in a different environment amongst different people/different lifestyles
- Concerned about having sufficient funding to complete university education, may not have enough funds
- Concerned with limited funding and that the amounts provided by First Nations or Métis funding sources did not cover actual costs.
- Applied for OSAP because band has cut funds for her
  - Increased stress because she needs to apply for so many applications for funding and is worried about deadlines and the amount of funding she is eligible to receive. If applications are not completed properly, she will not get the funding that she needs and may not be able to attend school.
- Could not afford to go to a previous institution because her Band funding was cut for the program she was enrolled in. Thus, she was forced to attend another institution.
- High school was on reserve
- Parents and friends (on reserve) do not live in city, so making new friends is a challenge
- The responsibility to take care of household duties adds to her stress
- Oftentimes, she comes into conflict with her husband when deciding on the division of household responsibilities
  - When she comes into conflict with her husband, she has no one to go to and no one to talk to.

**Map Needs**

- Inclusion of services that are free
- Inclusion of services which are informed about the unique challenges of First Nations students



**Background Info:**

Tala is a First Nations student studying Sculpture & Installation at OCAD University. She struggles with making ends meet financially for her and her husband and finding time to do her artwork as well as juggling other responsibilities. She deals with her stress by doing yoga, meditation and art but often gets sidetracked by her search for financial support.

**In Her Voice:**

*“I'm constantly looking for outside resources to help. Education costs a lot and there just isn't enough money.”*

*“Financial support is also limited – if you start to fall behind in school, band funding is cut.”*

*“Going to school for a creative discipline can be difficult when you're constantly stressed over other things in life. You need time to relax and do your work but it's easy to get distracted.”*